

Reducing youth disproportionality through a Restorative Justice Approach

Lincoln (NE) Police Department

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Lincoln, Nebraska

- 295,000 population
- 2.6% unemployment rate
- 78% of households have all parents in the workforce
- \$289,000 average home value
- 59 % home ownership
- 12.8% people in poverty



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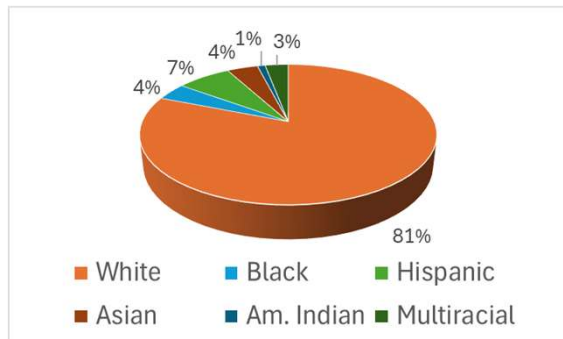
Lincoln Public Schools

- 2nd Largest School District in Nebraska
- 42,000 Students
- 51% Free or Reduced Lunches
- 2,700 English Language Learners
- 100 Different Languages
- 92% Attendance Rate
- 62% Caucasian

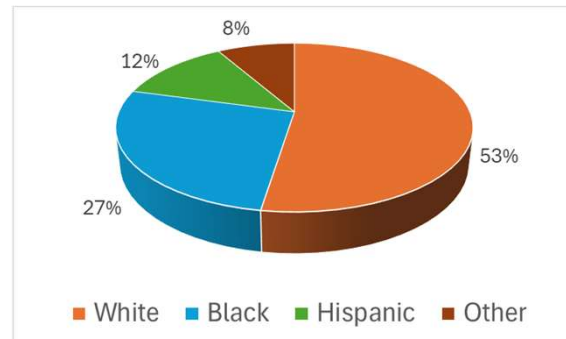
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Brief Overview of the Population's Demographics

Percent of Total Population by Race

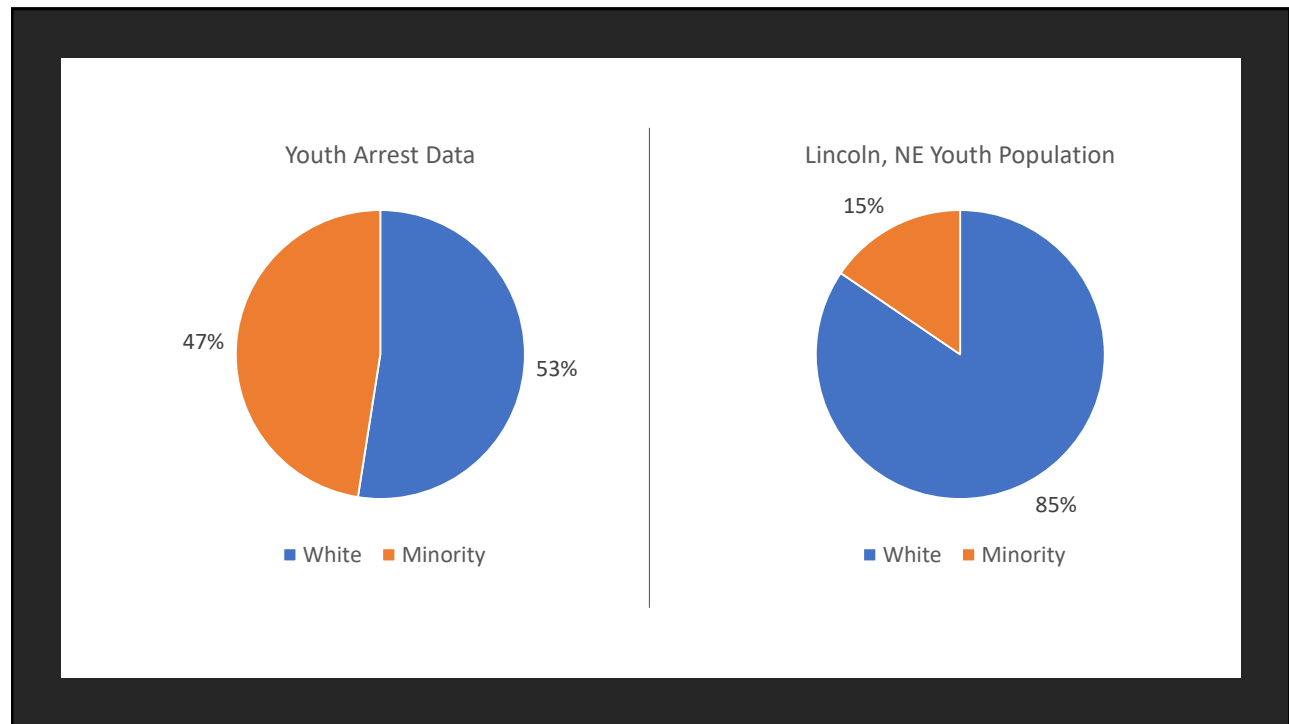


Percent of Youth Arrests by Race

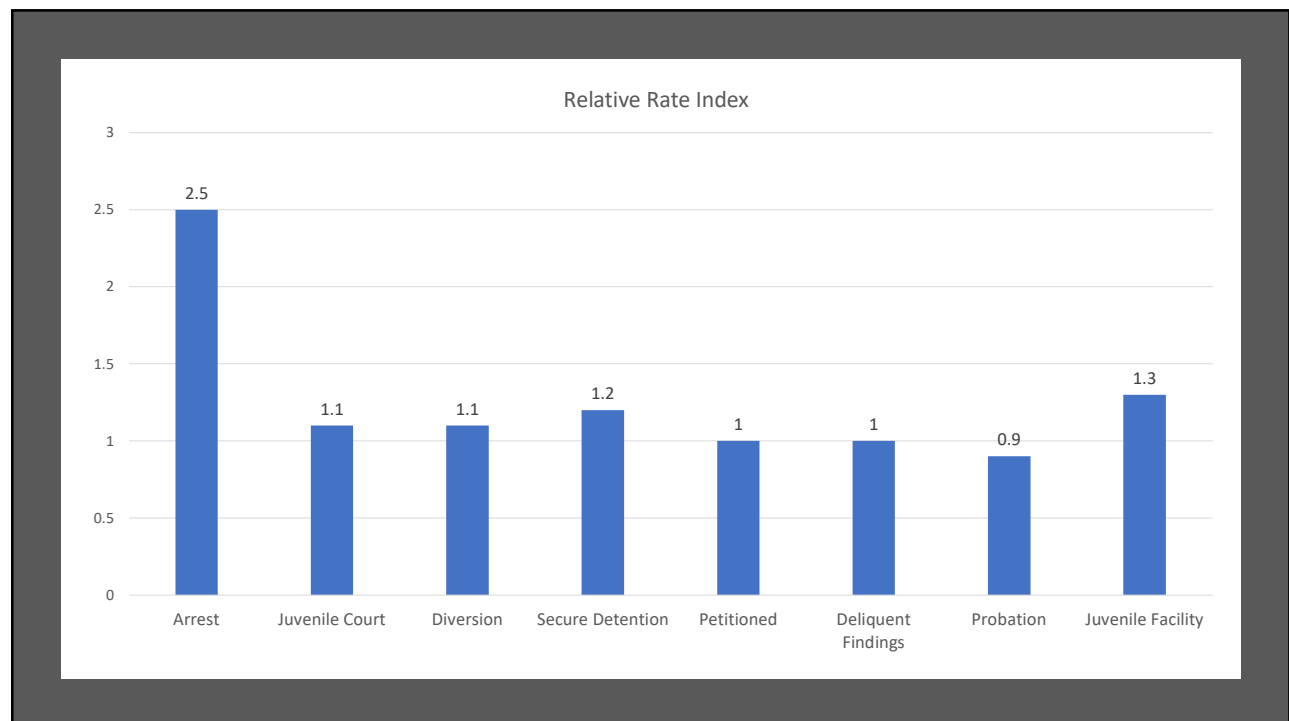


Total Youth Population Ages 10-17 is 32,400

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Data, Data, Data

15 and under

Referrals by Offense		
	Frequency	Percent
Alcohol	3	0.8%
Arson	4	1.1%
Assault	162	44.5%
Disturbance	43	11.8%
Interfering	0	0.0%
Larceny	2	0.5%
Littering	0	0.0%
MIP	1	0.3%
Narcotics	47	12.9%
Sex	17	4.7%
Theft	26	7.1%
Trespass	12	3.3%
Urinating	0	0.0%
Vandalism	45	12.4%
Weapons	2	0.5%
	0	0.0%
Total	364	100.0%

16 and Over

Referrals by Offense			
		Frequency	Percent
Assault		56	37.8%
Disturbance		19	12.8%
Interfering		1	0.7%
Littering		1	0.7%
MIP		3	2.0%
Narcotics		31	20.9%
Sex		4	2.7%
Theft		17	11.5%
Trespass		4	2.7%
Urinating		1	0.7%
Vandalism		7	4.7%
Weapons		4	2.7%
			0.0%
Total		148	100.0%

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Why Diversion?

Reduce	Reduce Unnecessary Social Control
Provide	Provide Services
Avoid	Avoid Labeling Effects
Reduce	Reduce Recidivism
Reduce	Reduce System Cost

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RESTORE Components

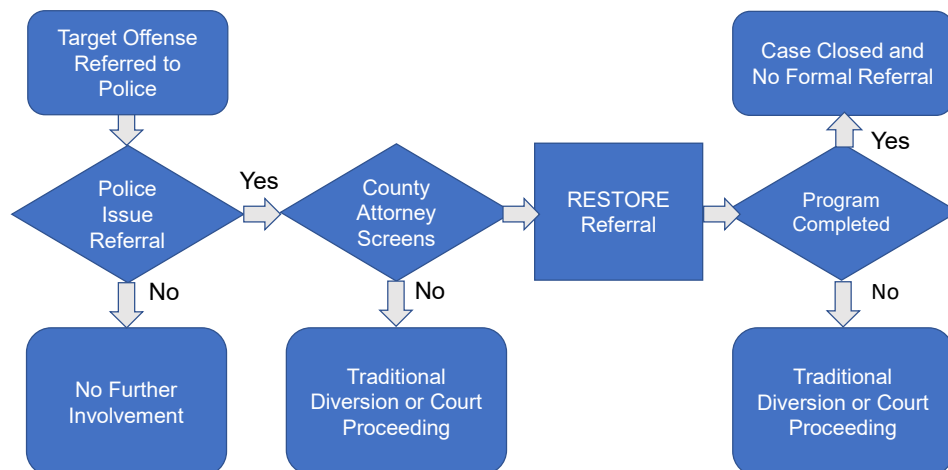
- Referral based diversion for Disturbing the Peace or Assault offenses occurring at school
- Immediate intervention
- Restorative Justice principles applied to case plan
- 11 to 17 years of age
- Evidence-based
- 60 days or less
- Data Driven

DIVERSION




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Model & Core Components, Procedures and Decision-making Points



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Project RESTORE Components

Connection with Project RESTORE case manager:

- Visits youth at school
- Ensure timely completion of program components

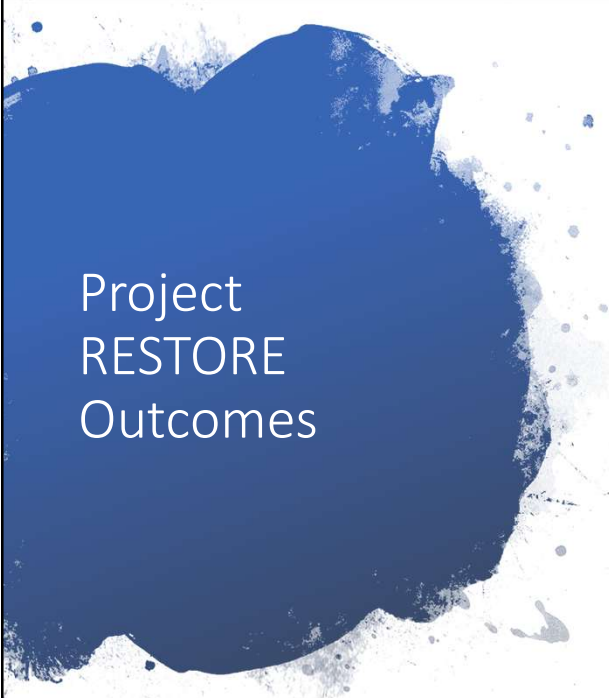
Victim-Youth Conferencing by Trained Mediator:

- Obtains perspective of youth and victim separately
- Conference with youth and either victim or a surrogate
- Discuss impact of offense physically, emotionally, and financially

Outcomes from Victim-Youth Conferencing:

- Apology (verbal or written)
- Restitution
- Community service
- Services for the youth
- Other remedies agreed upon

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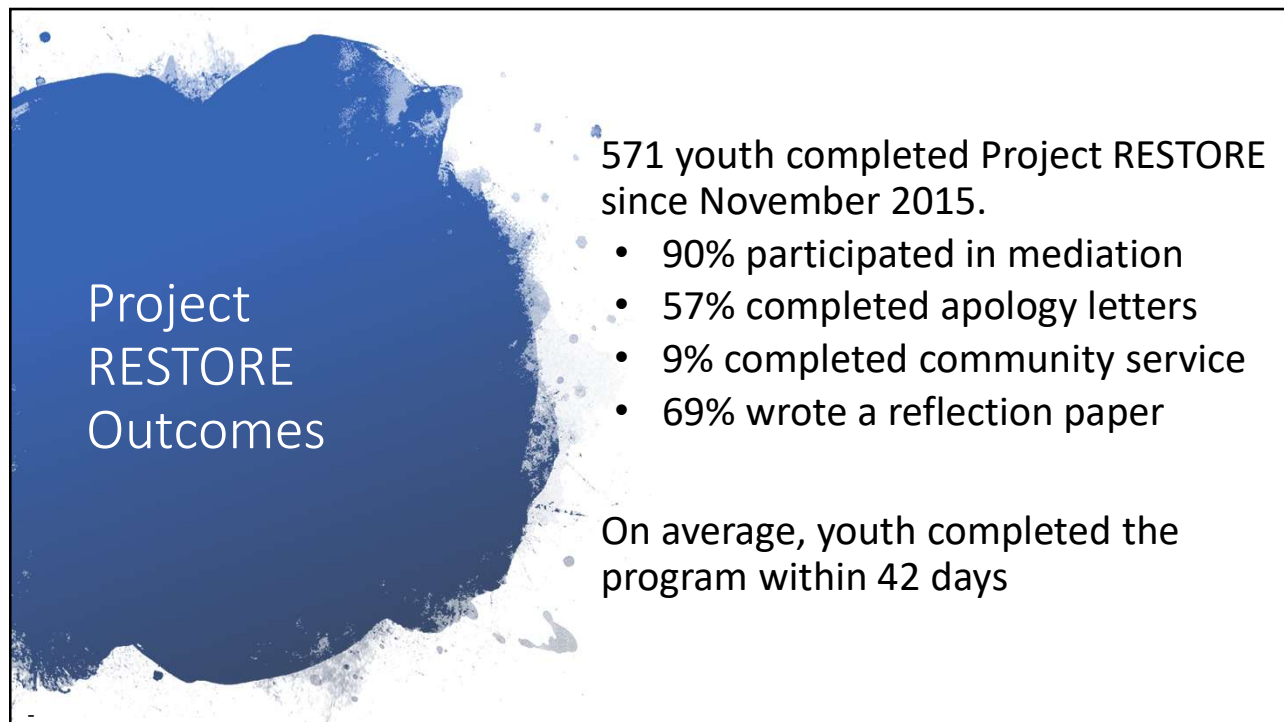
Project RESTORE Outcomes

76% of all offenses are reviewed by the County Attorney and received by Project RESTORE within one day.

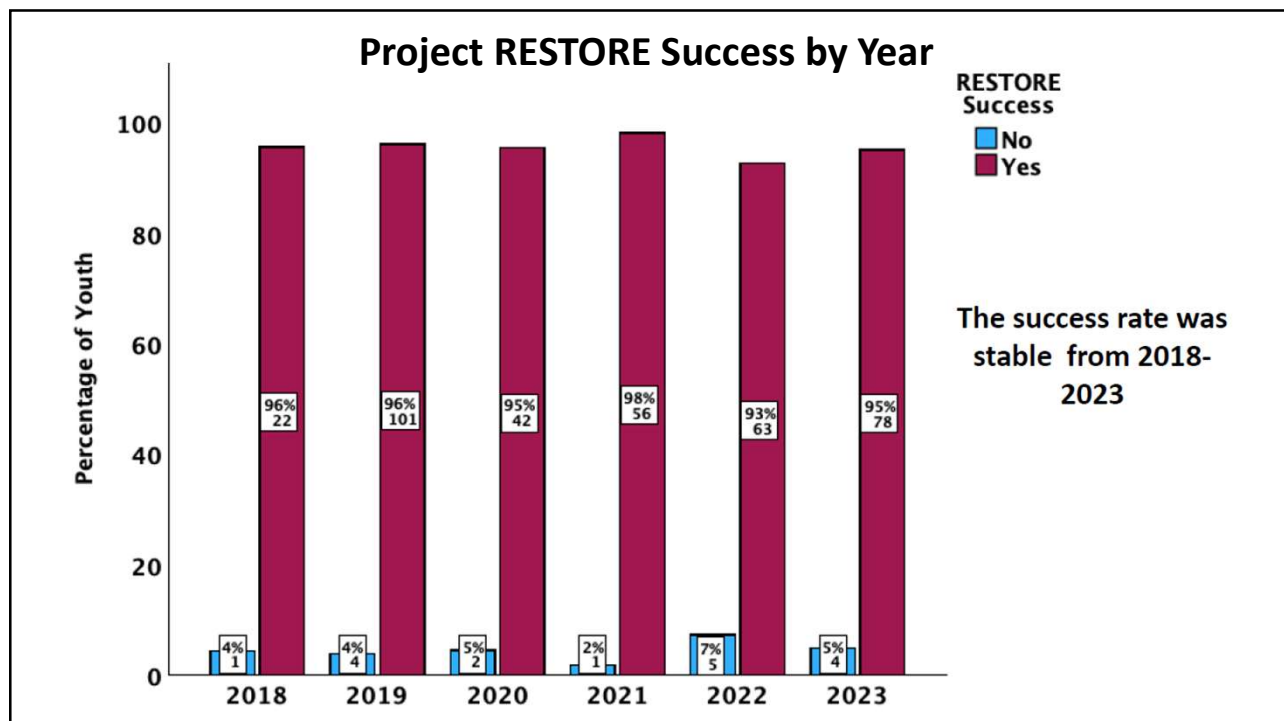
Average number of days for Project RESTORE staff to make contact with the family is 1.7 days. 46% of contacts are made the same day of the offense.

Average number of days from offense to 1st meeting with family is 18 days

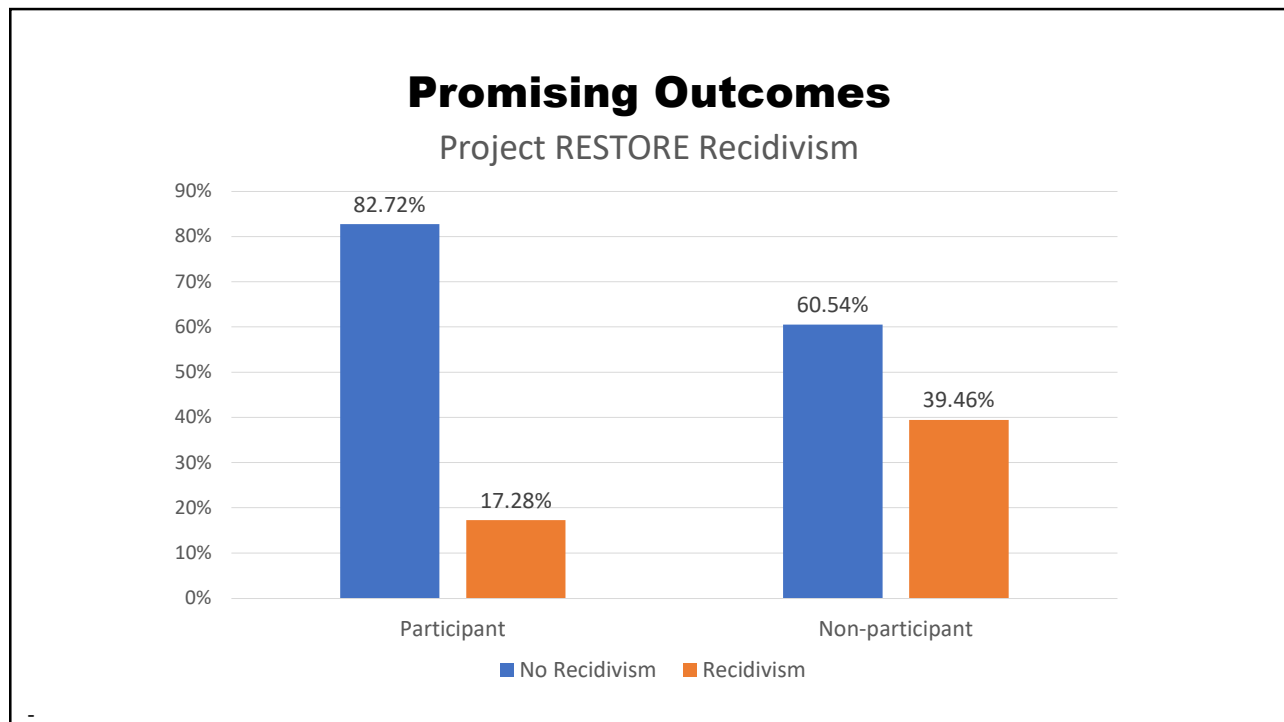
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- Messaging is key.
- Start the MOU process ASAP.
- Ensure you have the right stakeholders at the table.
- Include independent evaluator from beginning.
- Continuously evaluate at all touchpoints.
- Re-evaluate systematic structures and procedures.
- Funding is not always needed.
- Everyone has a role in prevention.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

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Collaborating Partners

- Mediation Center
- Lancaster County Attorney's Office
- Lincoln Public Schools
- Lincoln Police Department
- Human Services
- Georgetown University
- YWCA

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Thank You!!!

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Tipping Point

Intervention and Prevention Strategy

Asst. Chief Jason Stille
 Lieutenant Jeff Sorensen
 Matt Baker



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“Advocate for the youth in the school’s culture”

-Matt Baker

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Overview

Lincoln, Ne

- Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird
- Government: Mayor - City Council
- Population: 294,750
- Square Miles: 102.4
- LPD Authorized Strength: 371 Officers
- Gang Members/Associates: 1163

Lincoln Police Department Gang Unit

- FBI Capital Region Safe Streets Task Force
- 1 Sergeant
- 1 Firearms Investigation Coordinator
- 6 Gang Investigators
- 2 Gang Prevention Specialists
 - 1 Prevention Specialist
 - 1 Intervention Specialist



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Program History

- Started in summer of 2015
- Full time Prevention coordinator began in October of 2015.
- Positions have always been grant funded.
 - State grant funds: Office of Violence Prevention awarded yearly
- June 2024: Grant funding, supplemented by additional funding from the Lincoln Public School system created a second Intervention/Prevention Specialist.
- Biggest partnership: Lincoln Public Schools
- Original Goals that stand today:
 - Individual mentorship
 - Build partnerships within the school system
 - Identify the individual needs of the youth to assist in their success.
 - Supplement with existing resources. Many times, these resource are unknown or inaccessible to our youth.



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Community Mobilization: LPD/OTP Gang Presentations to the community, Coordination with Lincoln Public Schools/Probation/Diversion, Coordination and education of local social service organizations.

Opportunities Provision: OTP working with youth on job applications/interviews, coordination with LPS councilors to facilitate post secondary education, coordination with local sports programs and social services. Prosocial activities that insulate against the negatives of gang affiliation.

Social Intervention: Tipping Point is the only local gang prevention program, additional coordination between OTP and local social services and Lincoln Public Schools strengthens this intervention.

Suppression: Lincoln Police Departments strategy for addressing violent gang activity in Lincoln, NE.

Organizational Change and Development: Using our gang expertise we have assisted in developing policies/procedures/best practices within the Lincoln Police Department, Lincoln Public Schools, Juvenile Probation, various social service programs, State Legislators, Courts, etc.

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2024 OTP Focus area

The Prevention Specialist works as an informal mentor to a larger number of youth in the following areas:

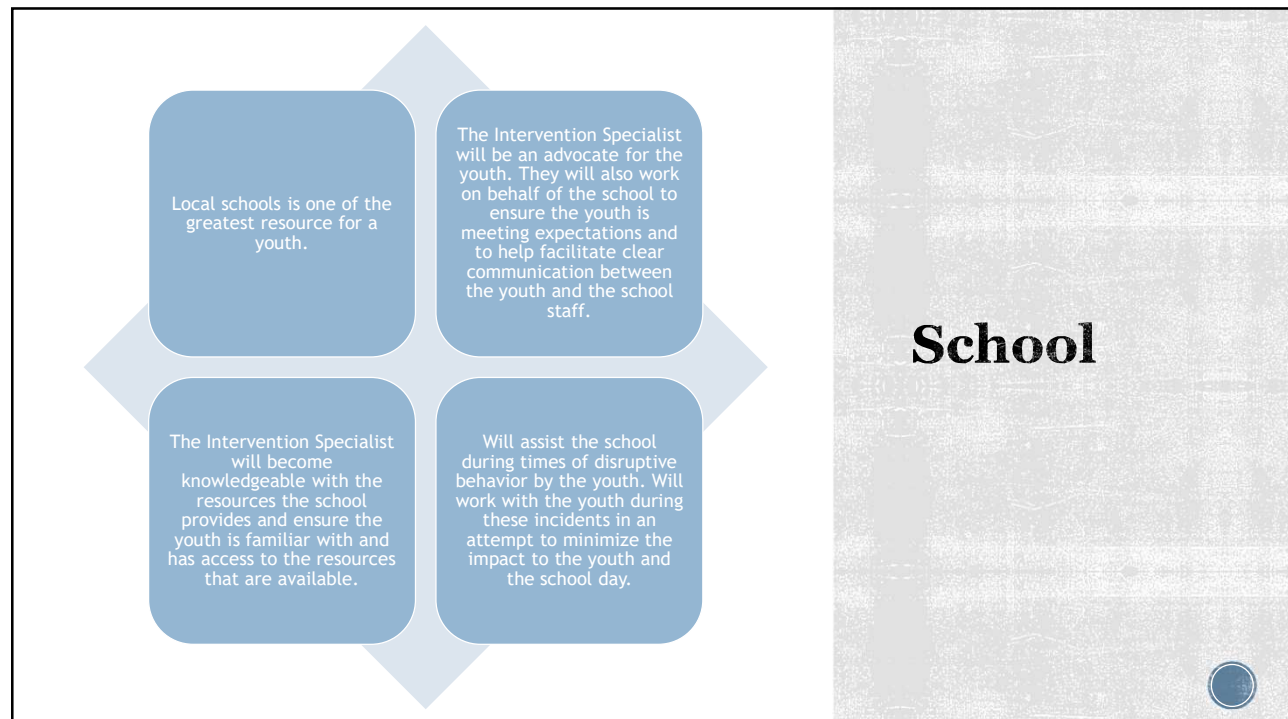
- School
- Community Outreach referrals
- Home Life

The Intervention Specialist works as a mentor and advocate for the youth in the Intervention Program focusing on the following areas:

- School
- Community Outreach
- Criminal Justice System
- Home Life



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Community Outreach

Spending time with and building relationships with local social service programs.

These services will be used in the layered approach discussed previously.

Spending time with these partners will also provide an opportunity for the Intervention Specialist to get to know other youth attending and for the youth to become familiar with Specialist.

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Advocating for the youth with different criminal justice services.

Juvenile Probation

Diversion

Courts

They will NOT act as representation or provide legal advice. Intervention Specialist will provide support for the youth throughout the process and assist youth with meeting expectations.

Criminal Justice System

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Home Life

Home life has been one of the biggest obstacles in a youth's success with the OTP Prevention Program.

Parents and home life many times conflict with the positive influences the OTP Program provides.

Identifying and providing resources to the youth's families will add one more layer of support to influence the youth. While these resources will most likely not be provided by the OTP Program, having community partnerships that do provide these services will greatly aid in positive outcomes.

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Success will take time, most likely until High School Graduation.

Success will be different for each youth. Reporting should be done as a narrative which includes where they started and where they ended. Reporting should not be done with traditional statistical categories, as each youth will need different support systems.

The program will strive to help each program participant reach for the stars. However, a success may be as simple as a reduction in gang activity, victimization rates (both self and others), less police contacts, all resulting in an overall gang activity reduction in Lincoln, Ne.

A narrative will be more effective at "painting a picture" of success for the individual.

What does success look like?

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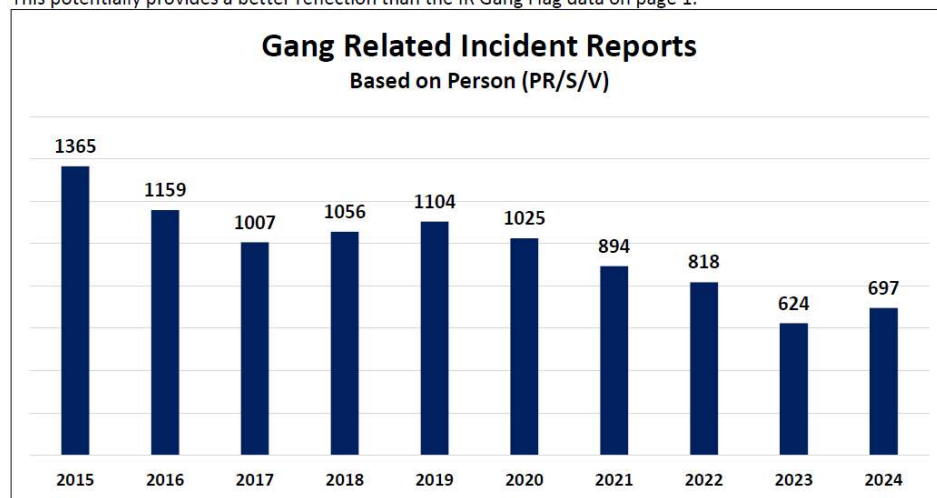
Hurdles Encountered

- Funding
- Finding the right personnel
 - Longevity of that person to be able to commit to the youth.
- Community buy-in early in the program
 - Had to sell the “why”
 - Example: LPS initially didn’t want us in their schools, now we have two permanent desks in their district office.
- Balancing the time required for statistical reporting required by a grant vs. spending as much time as possible with the youth.
- Honest evaluation of your community gang dynamics and needs.
- Educating yourself with the resources available in your community and then building a relationship with them.



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Incident Reports with a PR/S/V listed in the gang database.
This potentially provides a better reflection than the IR Gang Flag data on page 1.



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Gang members by age

Age	2015 Total	2015%	2018 Total	2018%	2019 Total	2019%	2020 Total	2020%	2021 Total	2021%	2022 Total	2022%	2023 Total	2023%	2024 Total	2024%	2025 Total	2025%
14-18	86	8%	56	5%	51	4%	54	4%	39	3%	36	3%	30	2%	38	3%	34	3%
19-23	351	33%	299	24%	236	19%	226	18%	195	15%	180	13%	164	13%	144	11%	122	10%
24-28	303	28%	428	34%	393	31%	392	31%	366	27%	351	26%	298	23%	275	20%	217	19%
29-33	146	14%	198	16%	267	20%	267	21%	332	25%	360	27%	382	29%	391	29%	312	27%
34-38	75	7%	126	10%	159	12%	159	12%	192	14%	193	14%	186	14%	221	16%	217	19%
39-43	36	3%	56	5%	78	6%	78	6%	102	8%	105	8%	118	9%	139	10%	124	11%
44-48	26	3%	36	3%	37	3%	37	3%	41	3%	48	4%	53	2%	61	5%	64	6%
49-53	14	1%	19	2%	24	2%	24	2%	30	2%	31	1%	29	1%	33	2%	28	2%
54-58	13	1%	16	1%	14	1%	14	1%	17	1%	17	1%	16	1%	21	2%	15	1%
59-63	5	1%	10	1%	11	1%	11	1%	13	1%	12	1%	16	1%	13	1%	10	1%
64-68	5	1%	5	0%	6	1%	6	1%	7	1%	8	0%	9	0%	9	1%	9	1%
69-73	0	0%	1	0%	3	0%	3	0%	4	0%	4	0%	4	0%	6	0%	4	0%

- Ages 14-18 and 19-23 continue to age out
- The percent column is based on the age group of the gang population for that year.

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Questions?

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