



# Youth in action

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OJJDP

Shay Bilchik  
Administrator

FACT SHEET

## **The National Youth Network**

by Paul Gruber

Youth can play a positive role in their communities when they are given a chance. The actions of the National Youth Network provide this opportunity.

### **Who Are We?**

The National Youth Network was officially established on June 16, 1997, in Baltimore, MD. This Network consists of diverse youth leaders, ages 14 to 21, from across the Nation who are sponsored by youth-serving organizations. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) founded and manages the Network. The youth meet regularly to address ways their organizations can team up to involve more young people in preventing and solving youth problems. These national meetings empower youth to collaborate across youth organizations and to develop projects that prevent crime and violence in communities. The

most unique component of this assembly is the special partnership between youth and adults.

### **Vision and Mission**

The National Youth Network builds upon and recognizes the power and importance of youth leadership by uniting young people and adults, through communication and action, to enable youth organizations and nonaffiliated youth to have a positive, formidable impact in our communities and in our Nation.

The mission of the National Youth Network is to serve as a catalyst for youth across the country to prevent crime and victimization and make a difference in their communities by collaborating among youth-focused national, statewide, and community-based organizations; distributing information on successful programs and strategies; advocating youth perspectives to policymakers; promoting the need for

positive youth activities through the media; and reaching out to nonaffiliated youth, especially those in the juvenile justice system.

### **Organizational Structure**

Youth work together through direct, ongoing communication to develop and draft new solutions to the concerns that face teens today. A three-member Leadership Council, made up of youth, oversees all plans and activities of the Network. It also serves as the direct link between the Network and OJJDP. All work done by the Network is reviewed and approved by OJJDP. Teens, Crime, and the Community, a project funded by OJJDP, coordinates the daily operations of the Network. The sponsors provide financial, technical, and material resources for the participating youth.

The Network is organized into five committees of youth and sponsoring adults. To meet the objectives stated in the Network's mission, each committee has established priorities to be accomplished during the continuing development of the Network.

The **Events Committee** plans each Network meeting and other large-scale events and organizes the Network's presence at national and regional conferences.

The **Publications Committee** develops fact sheets and bulletins on how youth can get involved in their communities for the Network's Youth in Action series and coordinates information for the Network's Web site.

The **Public Policy Committee** produces materials to involve youth in understanding the legislative and advocacy processes and informs youth of legislation impacting young people.

The **Public Relations Committee** conducts media training and distributes information to youth-focused newsletters and the press.

The **Sponsors/Outreach Committee** engages sponsors in Network efforts and involves nonaffiliated youth in Network activities.

### **Resources**

To learn more about the National Youth Network, visit our Internet Web site at [www.usdoj.gov/kidspage/getinvolved](http://www.usdoj.gov/kidspage/getinvolved).

If you have a story to share about what you or others have done to make a positive difference in your community, write to the National Crime Prevention Council, National Youth Network, 1700 K Street NW., Second Floor, Washington, DC 20006.

For a copy of other Youth in Action Fact Sheets and Bulletins, call the Juvenile Justice Clearinghouse at 800-638-8736 and ask to be added to the youth mailing list.

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*Paul Gruber, age 17, wrote this Fact Sheet with help from the Network's Publications Committee. A student at University School of Nashville, in Tennessee, Paul is a member of the Street Law program. He has volunteered his services to community programs since the eighth grade. This year Paul is the youth cochair for the American Bar Association's Young Lawyers Division youth summits.*

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### **Sponsoring Organizations**

The role of the sponsors is to help their youth representatives. Youth are able to use whatever resources their sponsoring organizations can contribute. Current participating organizations include:

Barrios Unidos  
Boys & Girls Clubs of America  
Child Welfare League of America  
Children's Express  
Coalition for Juvenile Justice  
Communities In Schools, Inc.  
Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America  
Mothers Against Drunk Driving  
National Association of Counties  
National Campaign to Stop Violence  
Sergeant Henry Johnson Youth Leadership Academy  
Southern Regional Violence and Substance Abuse Prevention Center  
Teens, Crime, and the Community  
United National Indian Tribal Youth, Inc.  
Youth Crime Watch of America  
Youth for Justice  
Youthbuild USA, Inc.

