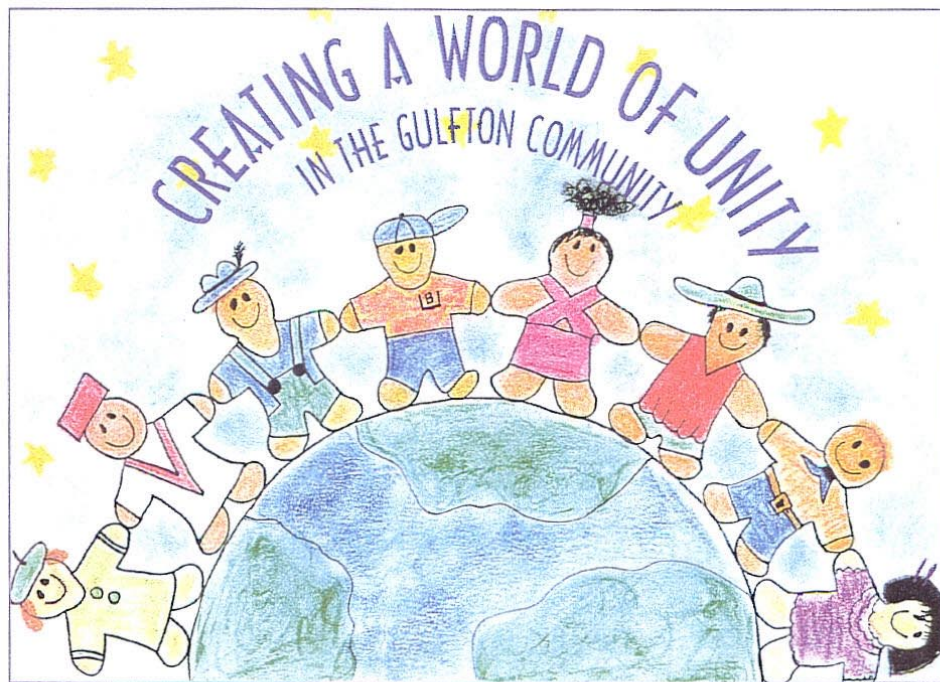


GULFTON COMMUNITY

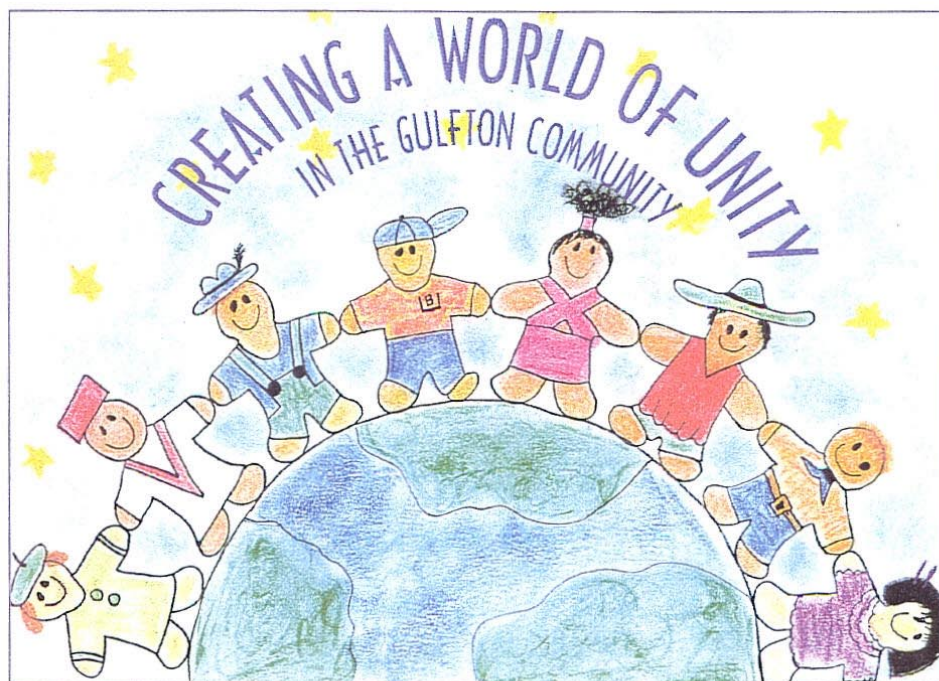
FIVE YEAR PLAN



JUNE 1999
HOUSTON, TEXAS

GULFTON COMMUNITY

FIVE YEAR PLAN



JUNE 1999
HOUSTON, TEXAS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's (OJJDP) Comprehensive Strategy is a community focused, research based framework for combating juvenile crime that incorporates two components: 1) targeting prevention efforts for youth at risk of engaging in delinquent behavior and crime, and 2) improving the juvenile justice system's response to delinquent offenders through a system of graduated sanctions and treatment alternatives. Together, delinquency prevention programs, early intervention, and graduated sanctions provide a "continuum of care" to prevent and interrupt the progression of delinquent and criminal behavior (OJJDP, 1997).

OJJDP's goal is to provide national leadership, helping state level policy makers and local practitioners design, implement, and strengthen effective strategies that prevent juvenile victimization and respond appropriately to juvenile delinquency. The Comprehensive Strategy is guided by the following five principles:

- **We must strengthen the family in its role to instill moral principles and provide guidance and support to children.**
- **We must support core social institutions (schools, religious organizations, youth service agencies, and community organizations) in their role to develop capable, mature and responsible youth.**
- **We must recognize that delinquency prevention is the most cost-effective approach in combating juvenile crime.**
- **We must intervene immediately and effectively when delinquent behavior first occurs and ensure that appropriate sanctions for misconduct are delivered in a timely fashion.**
- **We must identify and control the small group of serious, violent and chronic offenders through a range of graduated sanctions, including placement in secured facilities.**

A RISK-FOCUSED APPROACH TO DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

The Comprehensive Strategy is based on a "risk-focused" prevention model that makes it possible to examine communities for known risk factors associated with youth violence. These risk factors exist at the community, family, school, and individual/peer levels. Based on thirty years of research on factors related to adolescent problem behaviors, OJJDP identified nineteen risk factors that contribute to these problem behaviors and twelve protective factors that buffer a child against the development of problem behaviors. Approaches that reduce risk factors while enhancing protective factors are likely to provide the strongest form of prevention.

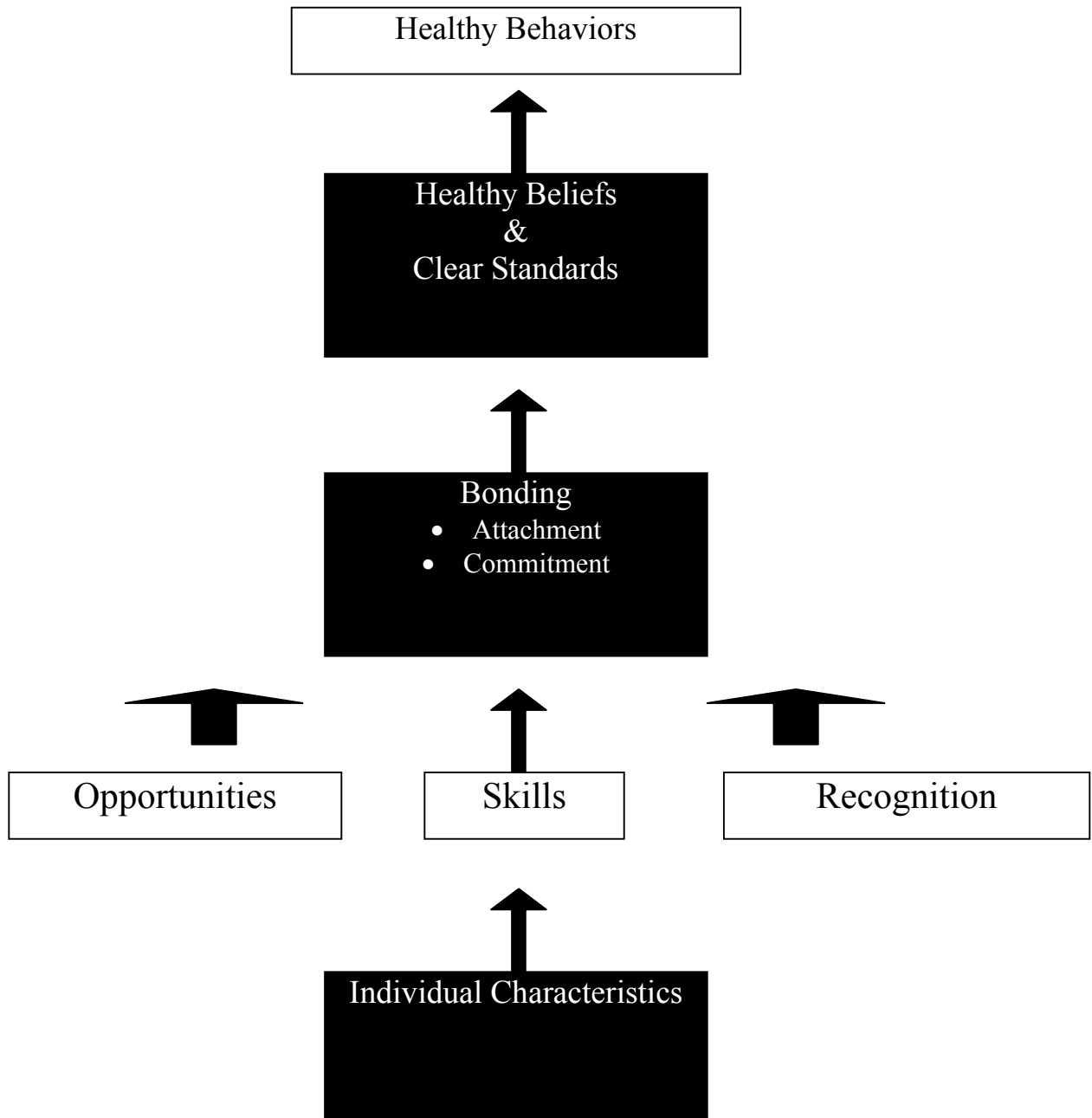
Table of national risk and protective factor (following page).

Adolescent Problem Behaviors

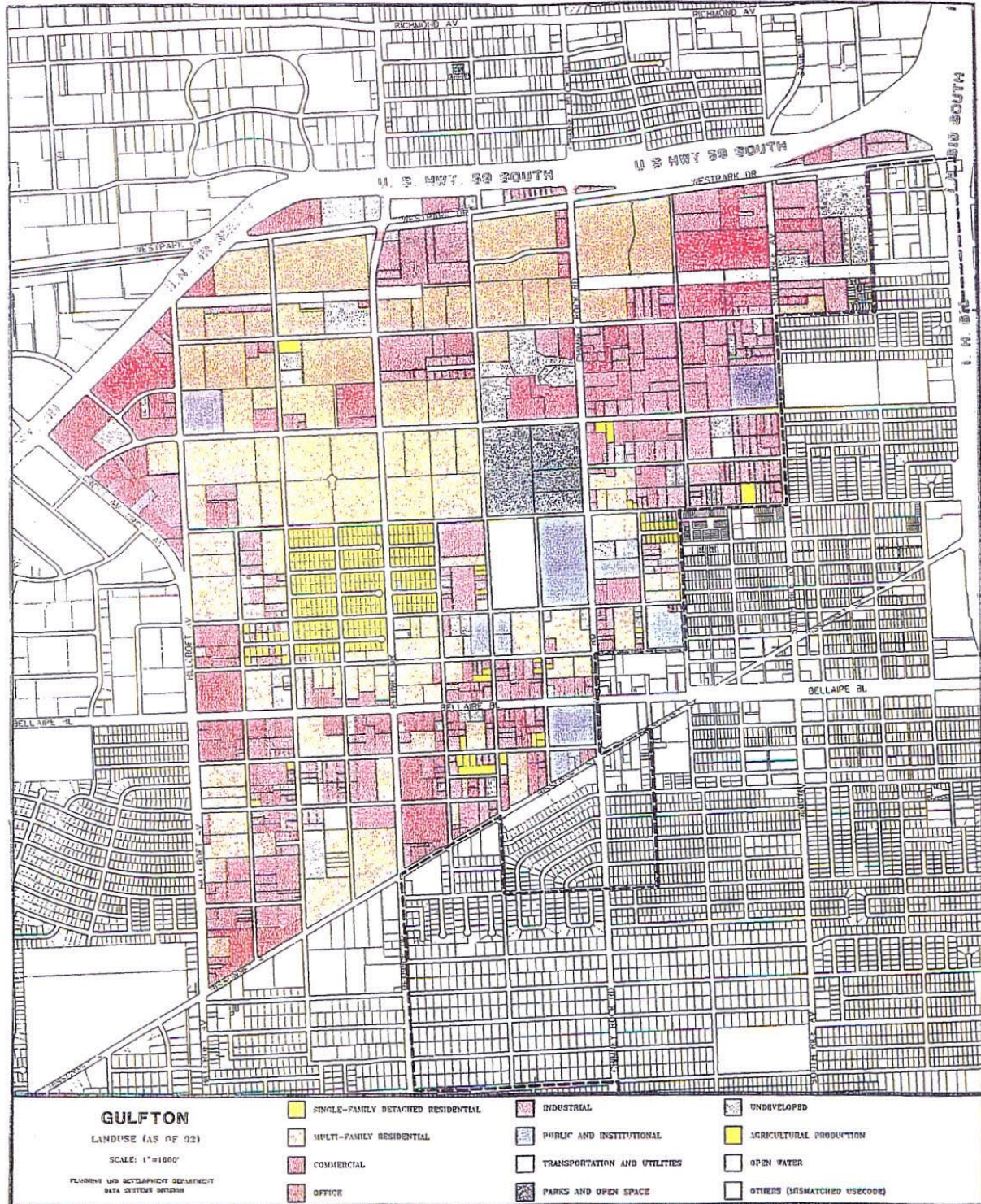
Risk Factors	Substance Abuse	Delinquency	Teen Pregnancy	School Dropout	Violence
Community					
Availability of Drugs	✓				✓
Availability of Firearms		✓			✓
Community Laws and Norms Favorable Toward Drug Use, Firearms, and Crime	✓	✓			✓
Media Portrayals of Violence					✓
Transitions and Mobility	✓	✓		✓	
Low Neighborhood Attachment and Community Disorganization	✓	✓			✓
Extreme Economic Deprivation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family					
Family History of Problem Behaviors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family Management Problems	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family Conflict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behaviors	✓	✓			✓
School					
Early and Persistent Antisocial Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of Commitment to School	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Individual/Peer					
Alienation and Rebelliousness	✓	✓		✓	
Friends who engage in the Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Favorable Attitudes Toward the Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Constitutional Factors	✓	✓			✓

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Protective factors are an integral part of OJJDP's Social Development Strategy. This concept proposes that healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior modeled within the family, school and community directly encourage healthy adaptive behaviors in children. The Social Development Strategy is illustrated below:



Map of Gulfton



GULFTON AREA OF HOUSTON THE HISTORY

The Gulfton area consists of 3.4 square miles in the southwest part of Houston, Texas, surrounded by the Galleria, a trendy shopping/business district; the upscale Bellaire area; Sharpstown and Southwest Houston. This small community was initially developed as an apartment community targeted at the single lifestyle of the middle income, single adult population of the seventies. Some of Gulfton's larger apartment complexes housed thriving and lively nightclubs that drew patrons from all over the city in search of that "perfect single lifestyle." Gulfton has undergone extreme economic, sociological and demographic changes over the last 15 years, causing unprecedented violence and crime in the region. Economic downturns in the 1980's, out-of-state investors, poor housing construction and substandard infrastructure, and mass immigration of unskilled blue-collar workers transformed this once safe and appealing neighborhood into one of Houston's most crime-ridden and dangerous areas.

In the mid to late 1980's, Gulfton found itself not only the most densely populated 3.4 square miles in the city of Houston, but also one where crime was rampant; drugs were sold on most street corners or out of backpacks by juveniles; prostitution was practiced at most every intersection; streets were collapsing of their own weight; and sidewalks were dark due to lack of street lighting. The demographics began to change from a middle income, single adult population to a low income, immigrant population.

From 1985 to 1989, this new Gulfton population started to include a rapidly growing number of females and children. They lived in fear, not only from living in a new country, but also because of the violent crime that surrounded them. These new Gulfton families seldom ventured outside of their substandard apartments after dark. Schools quickly became grossly overcrowded. The lack of public health care facilities for these indigent persons became very evident, with immunizations for children seldom up to school minimum standards. Few had employment that included health insurance coverage. In addition, the police department's service needs and demands changed much quicker than the establishment was able to adapt. Finally, the Gulfton economy was unable to absorb the drastic change in its labor pool, and the unemployment rate skyrocketed forcing families to "double-up" in housing. This, in turn, further increased the density of the immediate community.

THE CHANGES

In 1988, the residents of the community took a look at themselves and their community and began the long and seemingly impossible task of restoring civility to the Gulfton Area. Initial meetings resulted in a consensus that focused on public safety and housing standards. Work with HPD and City Council resulted in a greatly increased police presence and the establishment of the Gulfton Police StoreFront operation in the heart of the community. This local police facility had to be entirely funded by the serviced community, so local businesses and apartment owners responded to insure its longevity. It was around this facility and its dedicated officers that the community chose to further correct the problems in Gulfton.

The coalition that evolved brought the community closer together through the hosting of the Annual Gulfton Spring Festival. As much as 20 % of the Gulfton residents have participated in this event over the last 7 years, with an attendance high of 15,000 in 1997. Participation has included the full spectrum of the community from schools to churches to businesses to police to housing. While the community could see that there may be light at the end of the tunnel, they still lacked the economic resources to provide the "answers" to many of their problems.

In response to the outcry from the Gulfton Area, the City of Houston and Harris County, for the first time, cooperated and shared in the administration of the only public park in the immediate area. Park Program Coordinators developed and implemented minimal activities for the area's children. The City of Houston, through Mayor Lanier's "Neighborhoods to Standard" program, addressed some of the more serious infrastructure deficiencies. At the same time, HISD built a new elementary school which, on opening day, had to refer 400 students to other schools. Residents living one street south of the new school were not even in that school's population base. A free clinic was established within walking distance of the area. Local businesses and apartment owners expanded their base and not only supported the StoreFront operation, but also persuaded other efforts to become focused on the community. The most recent of these initiatives include Community Youth Development funded by DPRS, a Weed and Seed program funded by the OJJDP and the Comprehensive Strategy Initiative.

The success which Gulfton achieved in getting the community to work together has encouraged the City of Houston to look at the Comprehensive Strategy Initiative as a unique tool. Instead of attempting to have it apply globally to the City, Mayor Brown has encouraged it to have a more “neighborhood oriented” base, which can in turn be replicated in other neighborhoods throughout Houston. This approach affords the initiative the ability to be tailored to the needs and problems of Gulfton, while still being outcome focused. As a result, many previously solitary organizations are coordinating and collaborating to benefit the residents of Gulfton. “UNITY/UNIDAD” has become the vision of the Comprehensive Strategy Initiative.

THE VISION

The goal of “UNITY/UNIDAD” is to develop, maintain, and sustain a Gulfton community that is committed philosophically and financially to the well being, education, and success of its children.

THE TEAM

The Gulfton “UNITY/UNIDAD” Team has six primary planning workgroups:

Data Collection and Analysis:	Collects and organizes data using the national risk factors to form a baseline community profile for Gulfton. From the profile, this team was able to prioritize five target risk factors for the Gulfton community. This team will also be involved in providing data for policy planning as well as evaluation of the success of the Comprehensive Strategy in Gulfton. On an on-going basis, they will also update the database and attempt to encourage the multitude of data sources to maintain data in useful forms. They will examine current information management and sharing systems, and identify obstacles to developing a Management Information System that can support the Comprehensive Strategy.
Resource Assessment:	Conducts an inventory of Gulfton’s programs/services along the prevention-graduated sanctions continuum and locates gaps along that continuum.
Outreach, Communication &Media:	Develops a plan to solicit community involvement in Comprehensive Strategy efforts and utilizes the media to support the initiative.
Legislative, Policy & Systems Issues:	Reviews and assesses current laws and policies to make legislative, policy and systems recommendations.
Objective Decision-Making:	Identifies and assesses decision points during the Comprehensive Strategy process to make recommendations for further study and refinement of the current system.
Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation:	Collects, reviews, assesses, and evaluates all workgroup reports. Synthesizes information into the Community Assessment Report and the 5-Year Comprehensive Plan.

THE TIME LINE

October 1998	Key Leaders citywide were convened by the Mayor's Office and the U.S. Attorney's Office for a Comprehensive Strategy orientation.
November 1998	Key leaders focused on the Gulfton Area were convened for a two-day Comprehensive Strategy training session. The team structure and workgroup structure was created. Work began to identify each workgroup's pros and cons.
December 1998	Team leaders traveled to the OJJDP National Conference in Washington, D.C. for a four-day training session.
January & February 1999	Workgroups convened independently to assess their needs and develop their initial reports. Key leaders convened to begin work on the identification of the community's specific risk factors and initial development of this assessment report.
March 1999	Key leaders reconvened, selected and ratified five Risk Factors for the Gulfton community. OJJDP trainers met with "UNITY/UNIDAD" Team for a one-day training. The Steering Committee was developed.
April 1999	OJJDP trainers met with "UNITY/UNIDAD" Team for a two-day training on Comprehensive Strategies, Best Practices, and technical assistance for workgroups.
May 1999	Workgroups convened independently to work on their reports. Steering Committee works on organizing and prioritizing needs and gaps in Gulfton.
June 1999	Community Assessment Report completed and submitted to The Governor's Office. The 5-Year Comprehensive Plan completed and submitted to OJJDP. All 5 Texas Comprehensive Strategy sites gathered in Houston for a "Lessons Learned" round table discussion to evaluate the Comprehensive Strategy process.

SUMMARY OF WORKGROUP REPORTS

Each of the Workgroup Reports that follow provide the reader with an overview of Gulfton's problems, its needs, and a strategy to address those identified in our priority list. We will use this Community Assessment of the Gulfton Community to develop our 5-year Comprehensive Plan to reduce juvenile delinquency in the Gulfton area. As an integral component of the Comprehensive Strategy process, it is our sincere hope and belief that this Community Assessment Report will set into motion the continued revitalization of a formerly distressed, but culturally rich, community. The children and families in our small community deserve the opportunity for an economically enhanced as well as healthy and enriching future.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS SUMMARY

Gulfton's unique multicultural character, coupled with extreme economic deprivation, unemployment rates of 12%+, and the high mobility of its residents, presents a challenge in dealing with the problems that contribute to juvenile delinquency. Between 37,295 and 60,000 people live in the most densely populated area in the City of Houston. It is the largest single settling ground in Houston with newcomers from around the world, including Mexico, Central America, Bosnia, Rwanda, and Cambodia. Many of the Gulfton immigrant community fled their homelands attempting to escape uncontrolled inflation, unemployment, poverty, and civil war. They now live in a community with extreme economic deprivation, poverty, and an ever-increasing violent crime problem.

With almost 90% of Gulfton residents speaking a language other than English, the 70 apartment complexes, which house most of Gulfton's immigrants, are teeming with cultural diversity and, at times, communication breakdowns. Occupancy rates average 90%, with one or more families sharing an apartment. The population of Gulfton is relatively young (median age = 22), with about 28%-40% being children and youth under age 18. The ethnicity of Gulfton's schools give the most reliable picture of its cultural make-up. In 1997-98, Hispanic students led the enrollment at 72.6%, African American 11.4%, White 10.4%, Asian 5.6% and Native American at <1%.

The "UNITY/UNIDAD" Team, upon the recommendation of the Data Collection and Analysis Workgroup, approved the selection of the following five Priority Risk Factors. Future funding, program development, and community mobilization in the Gulfton Area will be focused on these Priority Risk Factors over the next 5 years.

COMMUNITY DOMAIN

1. Priority Risk Factor: Extreme Economic Deprivation

Children who live in poor, deteriorating neighborhoods where the community perceives little hope for the future are more likely to develop problems with delinquency, teen pregnancy, and school dropout. Also, children who live in these areas and have behavioral or adjustment problems early in life are more likely to have problems with drugs later on.

- Extreme Economic Deprivation is measured by: people in poverty; AFDC/TANF recipients; subsidized housing; Medicaid recipients; food stamps recipients; unemployment rate; low birth weight and infant mortality; students receiving free and reduced lunches; economically disadvantaged students; limited English proficiency.

FAMILY DOMAIN

1. Priority Risk Factor: Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior

Parental attitudes and behavior towards drugs, crime, and violence influence the attitudes and behavior of children. Children of parents who approve or excuse their children for breaking the law are more likely to develop problems. Children whose parents engage in violent behavior inside or outside the home are at greater risk for exhibiting violent behavior. If family members use illegal drugs around children, if there is heavy recreational drinking in the home, or if adults in the family involve their children in their drinking or other drug use, such as asking a child to go get a beer or light a cigarette, then the children have an increased risk of developing problems with alcohol or other drugs as well. Parental approval of children's moderate drinking, even under supervision, increases the risk of their children's use of alcohol and other drugs.

- Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior is measured by: adult alcohol related arrests; adult violent crime arrests; adult arrests.

SCHOOL DOMAIN

1. Priority Risk Factor: Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School

Children who do poorly in school in approximately the fourth through sixth grades have increased risk of engaging in problem behaviors. Children fail in school for a variety of reasons: boredom, lack of ability, mismatch with a poorly skilled teacher. It appears that the experience of failure itself, not necessarily the children's ability, increases the risk of problem behavior.

- Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School is measured by: students passing TAAS 4th-8th grade; Math Proficiency (TAAS Math Scores 4th-8th grade), Reading Proficiency (TAAS Reading Scores 4th-8th grade), SAT scores; grade retentions; at-risk student classification.

2. Priority Risk Factor: Lack of Commitment to School

Children who are not bonded to school for whatever reason are more likely to engage in alcohol and other drug use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and school dropout. Factors such as how students like school, time spent on homework, and perception of the relevance of courses are also related to their involvement in problem behaviors.

- Lack of Commitment to School is measured by: Head Start enrollment and eligibility; school dropout rates; average daily attendance; truancy.

INDIVIDUAL/PEER DOMAIN

1. Priority Risk Factor: Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior

The earlier young people drop out of school, begin using drugs, commit crimes, and become sexually active, the greater the likelihood that they will have chronic problems with these behaviors later. For example, the earlier the onset of any drug use, the greater is the probability of the individual's involvement in other drug use, the frequency of use, and their involvement in deviant activities such as crimes and selling drugs. Children who begin use before age fifteen are twice as likely to develop problems with drugs than are children who wait until they are older. Waiting until age 19 to try alcohol and other drugs dramatically decreases the risk of drug problems.

- Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior is measured by: grade at first use-alcohol; grade at first use-marijuana.

PROBLEM BEHAVIOR INDICATORS

Problem Behavior Indicators are indicators that fall outside the Priority Risk Factors, but have a tremendous impact on multiple Risk Factors.

1. Priority Problem Behavior Indicators are:

- Adolescent Pregnancies and Births to Adolescents
- Alcohol And Drug Use By Adolescents
- Juvenile Crime

LIMITATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

LIMITATIONS

Data collection was limited by several barriers. These barriers can be separated into two general categories.

Systemic Issues

- Data for most of the data indicators are not collected specifically for the Gulfton community. Information for a geographical area of one ZIP code is not readily available. Data that included Gulfton were often part of a larger data set for the City of Houston or Harris County and could not always be extracted, either by the workgroup or the agency contacted.
- Several agencies contacted for data by the workgroup were unable to provide information. Some of these agencies could not release the data due to issues of confidentiality. Other agencies collect a wide assortment of data; however, the data are not readily available.

Data Collection

- Survey data for many of the indicators are not standardized. Comparisons of information from national, state, and local sources were, therefore, less accurate.
- Data are not collected using equivalent parameters from agency to agency.
- Overall, much of the data identified for the risk factors was not available.
- Data regarding the same indicator from different sources had discrepancies that were beyond the scope of this report to address. These discrepancies are so noted in the text.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has sought to provide a baseline of information about the Gulfton community as it relates to Houston, Texas, and the United States. The information in this report is intended as a tool for the development of a Comprehensive Strategy for Gulfton. The following recommendations are suggestions to enhance the efficacy of the Data Collection and Analysis Workgroup in preparing future reports about Gulfton.

- **Recommendation:** Communication between agencies should be improved for a more efficient data collection process.

Better communication between agencies would improve access to critical information, reduce duplication of effort in the data collection process. In addition, key community members with experience should be identified to serve on the workgroup, or in advisory roles. Inclusion of a wide range of people in the process will maximize the ability of the workgroup to obtain information about Gulfton.
- **Recommendation:** Data should be consistently available from agencies.

Although this recommendation implies large-scale systemic change, being able to aggregate data by one geographical area/zone (i.e. zip code, census tract, police beat) will make equivalent statistical comparisons more accurate. In addition, data should be free and readily accessible. Raw numbers as well as statistics should be available.
- **Recommendation:** Set a standard process for data collection.

The data collection process should be an ongoing effort with a standardized procedure determined by the Data Collection and Analysis Workgroup. These procedures should be aimed at streamlining the process and may include updating data collection forms and re-examining survey instruments in the effort to standardize the information obtained to provide more accurate comparative information.

- **Recommendation:** Better utilize resources in the community.

This expansion of the data collection process could involve: including a professional demographer on the Data Collection and Analysis Workgroup; collaborating with local universities to conduct surveys in Gulfton; and assessing community-based organizations in the Gulfton neighborhood to better determine if these agencies have collected information pertinent to the data collection process.

- **Recommendation:** Consider effective ways of overcoming the barrier of obtaining data about the undocumented population in Gulfton.

Anecdotal reports suggest a large undocumented population in Gulfton. Information about this population is critical to the accuracy and usefulness of future Data Collection and Analysis reports. Community-based organizations in the community may be able to provide suggestions for obtaining information about this population.

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

The Resource Assessment Workgroup was responsible for collecting information about existing prevention and graduated sanction programs in Gulfton. The Workgroup utilized this information to identify key issues and gaps related to the programs and to make recommendations.

The Resource Assessment Workgroup identified all known programs that are either located in Gulfton or provide services to children, youth, and families who reside in Gulfton. In all, the Workgroup listed 88 programs. Demographic information was compiled for each program, including: services, hours of operation, ages served as well as other restrictions, time frames for service delivery, location of program or agency, and funding source. The Workgroup's purpose was to assess the available programs and resources, not to create a resource directory. Many resource directories for children and youth services in Houston/Harris County already exist, including one designed specifically for the Gulfton community. The various programs were reviewed and evaluated for this report.

PROGRAMS

PREVENTION

Youth that are at risk of delinquency and their families. These youth are not currently involved on the Progressive Sanctions Guidelines. Participation in prevention programs is voluntary.

INTERVENTION (AT-RISK YOUTH)

Sanctions Levels One and Two offenders. These youth are commonly referred to as CHINS (Conduct Indicating a Need for Supervision). Sanctions Level One youth are identified due to status offenses and/or other class C misdemeanors. These youth are referred to City Municipal or County Justice of the Peace Courts. Sanctions Level Two youth commit Class A and B misdemeanors other than the misdemeanors involving use of a firearm. Sanctions Level Two youth are served in a three or six-month deferred prosecution program administered by the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department.

SUPERVISION (IMMEDIATE SANCTIONS)

Youth that have been adjudicated in a Juvenile Court. These youth are assigned to Sanctions Levels Three to Five where they are on court ordered probation at home in the community or placed in a county correctional facility. The institution may be secure or non-secure. Sanctions Level Six refers to youth committed to the Texas Youth Commission while Sanction Level Seven is certification to criminal court or determinate sentencing.

AFTERCARE (PAROLE)

The Texas Youth Commission serves Sanction level six offenders in state correctional facilities. Texas Youth Commission's Aftercare, also known as parole, is designed to ensure that progress made while in a Texas Youth Commission Program will be maintained once a youth has been released to his/her home.

IDENTIFIED GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The identified gaps and recommendations are organized around the Priority Risk Factors identified by the “UNITY/UNIDAD” team.

COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS

- **Recommendation:** Develop a plan for coordinating and enhancing outreach efforts to all residents in Gulfton. Many programs are located in the schools and at apartment complexes such as: Napoleon Square, Las Americas and Jefferson House Apartment Complexes. How do we communicate service and program information to families who are not well connected to the schools or do not reside in one of these selected complexes? The high number of illegal immigrants in Gulfton makes this an even more difficult challenge. With limited transportation, it is essential that programs and services be located in Gulfton and available to all families regardless of residence or the school the children attend.
- **Recommendation:** Develop and enhance linkages with the faith-based and business communities.
- **Recommendation:** Expand vocational training options beyond computer skills and G.E.D. preparation by developing collaborations with Houston Community College and other local universities as well as business schools and corporations to bring training programs in trades and technical skills to Gulfton.
- **Recommendation:** Address the lack of shelters and other support for homeless families in Gulfton or for those who have access to Gulfton.

FAMILY RISK FACTORS

- **Recommendation:** Consider an urban harvest project, similar to the one currently used in the fifth ward, family outings, and sports programs. Develop a new or expand an existing facility as a community-gathering place for these activities. The available family programs focus on skill-based training and/or intervention. There are few programs that offer social/recreational/enrichment activities on a consistent basis. The challenge of addressing this gap needs to be addressed. This is important since there is neither a public library nor a YMCA located in Gulfton.

Family violence intervention programs and shelters were not identified for, or accessible to, Gulfton residents.

- **Recommendation:** Establish family violence programs and shelters for Gulfton residents with easy accessibility for area residents.

SCHOOL RISK FACTORS

The following programs are only effective for youth that are attending school. No programs exist for youth not attending school.

- **Recommendation:** The creation of an ASAP Program currently in place in Precincts Six and Seven is recommended to address the problems of truancy, which is especially prevalent in Gulfton.
- **Recommendation:** Implementation of the planned Weed and Seed “Youth Watch” Program is also indicated.
- **Recommendation:** Address the recognition of, and intervention with, students displaying learning and other developmental disabilities prior to entering middle school.
- **Recommendation:** Implementation of Partners/5 West Helpful Intervention Program is indicated.
- **Recommendation:** Address the lack of programs and educational opportunities focusing on vocational and job training skills for high school age students in Gulfton.

There are no programs available that specifically address educational issues for Sanctions Levels One and Two youth.

- **Recommendation:** The WINGS and YEES Programs of the Harris Juvenile Probation Department need to expand to include these populations.

INDIVIDUAL/PEER RISK FACTORS

Youth sports are traditionally oriented toward boys. While Cub Scout programs are being held at two elementary schools, no mention was made of Girl Scout programs.

- **Recommendation:** Expand after school programs to include all elementary schools in Gulfton. Develop more after school options for girls.
- **Recommendation:** Consult with San Jacinto Council about ways to attract Hispanic youth to scouting.

There is a lack of programs for youth fourteen years of age and older. This is especially true for females. Solutions for how to involve Hispanic girls, especially in adolescence, are sought.

- **Recommendation:** Youth Leadership Programs (YMCA)
- **Recommendation:** Youth Entrepreneurial Programs (El Centro de Corazon)
- **Recommendation:** Outings, camping trips, and intramural sports programs at the middle and high school level are recommended.

The only short-term mental health facility located in Gulfton is restricted to youth placed by Children's Protective Services (CPS) or the Juvenile Court. In addition, apart from the limited home-based and school-based mental health services, other mental health treatment providers are located outside of the 77081 zip code.

- **Recommendation:** Address the need for Mental Health Services for children and adolescents in Gulfton.
- **Recommendation:** Address the need for short term, therapeutic residential placement.

The only known indigent substance abuse facilities for adolescents are Houston Recovery Campus located in the Fifth Ward and Riverside located in Southeast Houston.

- **Recommendation:** Address the need for substance abuse facilities for indigent adolescents in the Gulfton area.

The Chimney Rock Center is usually at or near capacity, except in the summer months.

- **Recommendation:** Address the need for increased emergency shelter facilities for indigent adolescents.

Expand resources at the Justice of the Peace and Municipal Courts serving Gulfton by placing case managers in each court.

- **Recommendation:** Develop the level of programs and services available to the juvenile judges for youth on probation.

The above analysis regards current availability of services and resources that are either located in Gulfton or serve children, youth or families who reside in Gulfton. The Resource Assessment Workgroup did not ascertain the numbers of children, youth and families receiving and benefiting from these services. It is our belief that many programs have not reached their full potential in this respect. Increased outreach and evaluation of local program effectiveness will contribute to the success of future services. Continued efforts will be required to assess and address the presence of gaps in the service continuum for children, youth and families. The following charts show current community resources existing in Gulfton that provide services to address the priority risk factors.

COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS

Extreme Economic Deprivation

Prevention	Intervention	Supervision
Houston Police Department- PANDA Program	Criss Cole Fund	Criss Cole Fund
CASA Maria	University of Houston School of Optometry- Annual vision screening and glasses.	University of Houston School of Optometry- Annual vision screening and glasses.
Christian Community Service Center		Youth Education/Employment Services (Y.E.E.S.)
Texas Department of Human Services		
WIC Program		
Summer Lunch Program		
Cunningham Elementary-Nutrition Parent Education		
Klein Day Care		
Bridge El Puente Day Care		
Jane Long Clinic		
CHRIST US Health		
Planned Parenthood		
DePelchin – Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Education (Jane Long M.S.)		
GANO CARECEN		
G.E.D. Classes (Las Americas, Cunningham and Sutton Elementary Schools)		
Adult ESL Classes (All Gulfton schools and CASA Maria)		
Computer Classes (Jane Long M.S. and Bridge El Puente)		
Citizenship Classes (Cunningham Elementary)		
CYD-Hope Intervention Team		

FAMILY RISK FACTORS

Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior

Prevention	Intervention	Supervision
Healthy Families Initiatives	Justice of the Peace (Precinct 5, Place 1)	Harris County Juvenile Probation Department- Field Services Office (CUPS V)
Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Cradles Program	Barbara Thomas & Associates-Contract Family Therapy	Contracted Short-term Family Therapy
Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority- Early Childhood Intervention Program	Escape Family Resource Center-Families Forward Program	Escape Family Resource Center-Families Forward Program
Southwest Houston Family Outreach Center		Parent Effectiveness Training
CHRIST US Health-Family Roads Program		Monthly Parent-Child Workshops
Literacy Classes (Sutton Elementary School)		Parents Anonymous
Monthly Speakers (Sutton Elementary School)		Phoenix Project
Annual Family Reading Night (Cunningham Elementary School)		
Books and Breakfast Program (Cunningham Elementary School)		
PIP Program (Benavidez Elementary School)		
Bridge El Puente		
DePelchin Children's Center-Jefferson House		
Las America-BI-lingual Parenting Classes		
Parents Anonymous		
Harris County CPS-Community Youth Services (CYS)		
CYS-Parent-Teen Survival Course		
Trinity Life Center-Services To At-Risk Youth (STAR)		
Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority- TRIAD Family Preservation Unit		
Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-School based Parenting Programs		
DePelchin Children's Center at Jane Long M.S.		
GANO CARECEN-HACER Program		

SCHOOL RISK FACTORS

**Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School
Lack of Commitment to School**

INDIVIDUAL/PEER RISK FACTORS

Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior

Prevention	Intervention	Supervision	Prevention	Intervention	Supervision	After-Care
Neighborhood Centers Inc.-Head Start Program		WINGS Program	Serve Houston After School Programs (Benavidez and Gordon Elementary Schools)	Justice of the Peace (Precinct 5, Place 1)	Harris County Juvenile Probation Department-Field Services Office (CUPS V)	Texas Youth Commission
H.I.S.D. Pre-Kindergarten (Las Americas Apt. Complex)		Youth Education/Employment Services (Y.E.S.S.)	Houston Police Department-DARE Program	Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-LCDC at TRIAD Prevention Program	CROSSROADS (Mentoring Program)	
Annual Prime Time Reading Program (Cunningham Elementary School)			GANO CARECEN-HACER Ballet Folklorico Program (Braeburn Elem. School)	Youth Educational Shoplifting Program (YES)	Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Operation Outreach	
CYD-Texas Starbase Program			Daily Dance Lessons (Gordon Elementary School)	Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Drug Free Youth Program	Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Drug Free Youth Program	
After School Tutorials (Braeburn, Gordon, Cunningham, and Benavidez Elem. Sch)			Cub Scouts (Cunningham and Gordon Elementary Schools)	LAW Program	Contracted Individual and Group Therapy	
Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Camp Twist and Shout			CYD-Campo Del Sol Summer Program		Mothers Against Drunk Driving-Victim Impact Panel	
Jane Long M.S.-GCAME Program			Big Brothers/Big Sisters		Sex Offender Treatment Program	
Jane Long M.S.-600 Minute Club			City of Houston Parks and Recreation Dept-Youth Sports Programs		Monthly Educational Workshops	
Jane Long M.S.-STARS Incentive Program			Houston Police Department-Police Athletics League (PAL)		Community Service/Restitution Projects	
Jane Long M.S.-TAAS Tutorials			Houston Police Dept-Bikes Program		LAW Program	
Jane Long M.S.-Extended Library Hours						
Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Reconnecting Youth Program			CYD-Campo Del Sol After School Program (Jane Long M.S.)			
Youth Advocates Inc.			DePelchin Children's Ctr at Jane Long M.S.			
Kaleidoscope Charter Program (Cunningham Elementary School)			Houston Police Department-Explorers Post			
Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP Academy)			Youth Advocates Inc.			
Jump Start Charter Program			Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse- Youth Empowerment Program			
The Bridge School			Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority-Child and Adolescent Clinic			
Barbara Jordan STRIVE Program			Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority-CAPES Team			
Kay On-going Education Center			TRIAD Residential Placement Funds			
Community Education Partners (CEP)			Harris County Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG)			
Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP)			Chimney Rock Center Emergency Shelter			

OUTREACH, COMMUNICATION & MEDIA SUMMARY

The Gulfton Media Workgroup is comprised of representatives from the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, the Houston Independent School District, Jane Long Middle School, Lee High School, the Gulfton Neighborhood Organization, DePelchin Children's Center and the Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. With the participants of this group having one common goal in mind, the improvement of the Gulfton community, it is our hope to work together as a collaborative effort to increase communication of ideas, information and well-being to the residents of this community.

Many of the Gulfton residents are unaware of the free services that are available to them within the community. The Weed and Seed program has developed a bilingual resource guide that will be distributed to Gulfton residents in order to increase the awareness of services that are provided in the Gulfton area. The guide also lists important numbers for all residents to access such as telephone, electric, cable, area hospitals, clinics, foreign consulates, ID information, etc. These resource guides will be distributed to residents during an ongoing apartment outreach effort that occurs monthly at Gulfton area apartments.

Because Gulfton is becoming a large cultural melting pot, it faces many challenges that most other communities would never face. Many of the residents of Gulfton do not have legal documentation to work; therefore, they are often forced to work for minimum wage or less. Developing a job resource bank for the Gulfton community will allow the people to search for a job that will pay a fair wage. It is also our hope to design a resource bank that will allow this community to form a pool of workers that employers city-wide will be able to access and select a candidate that would fit their needs. Although many residents of the Gulfton community are undocumented, they still are a labor resource for many of the employers throughout the city.

A bilingual, quarterly newsletter is being developed for distribution in the Gulfton community. By designing a format that is easy to read, and includes submissions from the community that it is being distributed in, we anticipate that the newsletter will create a stronger sense of community belonging. This newsletter will include information about existing programs that are happening in the community as well as information that is pertinent to this community, like the requirements to obtain a gold card or updated information on obtaining a Texas ID. Currently, many of the agencies do their own newsletters or calendars of events. We believe that creating one comprehensive newsletter will show the community, that all of the agencies are working together for their benefit and well being. It will also serve as a means for small family-owned businesses to advertise without being charged.

Many issues like gang violence, HIV, teen pregnancy, truancy, illiteracy, domestic violence and alcohol abuse plague the Gulfton community. Very few public service announcements are targeted toward the Latino community. With a collaborative effort of the Municipal Channel, Gulfton community-based organizations and actual Gulfton residents, the Comprehensive Strategy Media Workgroup would like to develop at least five Public Service Announcements (PSA) that will air on Latino radio stations and TV stations addressing the various issues stated.

In light of the current gun slayings in Colorado and the gang problem that exists in Gulfton, it has become increasingly clear that a bilingual info/tip line that would facilitate reporting of crimes, potential gang violence, graffiti and other crime-related information would allow the community an anonymous forum to better their community. Currently, there is a similar system being used in Conroe, Texas. By working with the Conroe system and tailoring it to the needs of the Gulfton community, it is our hope that it will assist in the reduction of crime in this community.

The Weed and Seed program currently conducts an apartment outreach initiative at Gulfton area apartment complexes. By collaborating with the Houston Police Department and local social service agencies, the community receives important information and becomes familiar with local police. Many of the people living in Gulfton come from countries where the police represent torture, oppression, cruelty, rape and immigration authorities. It stands to reason that they are fearful of the police and often unwilling to report crimes for fear that they will be hurt or deported. By continuing this already successful venture, we anticipate that the community will become more involved with reporting crime, increasing their knowledge of resources and bonding with their community.

Many of the parents in Gulfton work two or three jobs in order to make ends meet. Currently, there is no affordable daycare available to people in this community. By developing a daycare facility that has little or no cost, we believe that many more parents would be able to pursue some source of employment and would not find the need to keep their older children home to take care of the other children. Gulfton Youth Development, Weed and Seed, and the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department partner to provide a summer day camp for 6-17 year olds. Many of the parents find it a valuable resource for

them to be able to have their children participate in a well-supervised, educational center. By expanding this idea and creating a daycare facility for the Gulfton community, many parents would be able to pursue employment and educational opportunities.

Gulfton community key leaders will continue to hold neighborhood festivals like the Gulfton International Festival, Gulfton Neighborhood Cleanup and the Gulfton Community Festival. Each year these festivals draw larger crowds than the year before. We believe that by involving more residents each year, residents will continue to build a sense of ownership of this neighborhood and access information that is distributed by local Community Based Organizations as well as being able to sell their crafts for a source of income.

With a coordinated effort between existing agencies, many of the goals stated in the Community Assessment Report can be addressed in such a way that they will effectively combat problems facing the Gulfton community.

OBJECTIVE DECISION-MAKING SUMMARY

Risk Assessment and Classification Summary

The Risk Assessment and Classification Workgroup mapped the current Juvenile Justice System to identify the critical decision-making points and to document the current decision-making processes used at each decision point. A variety of different methods of decision-making currently are used in the Juvenile Justice System including: objective decisions, multi-disciplinary team decisions, recommendations based on subjective information, and decisions based on staff expertise. The process by which a youth is placed or moves through the system is of great interest. It determines the speed a youth travels through the system, where the youth will receive intervention, the availability of space in programs, and how the youth is managed in aftercare.

The Risk Assessment classification instrument is a focal point in the discussion which follows, as it has the potential to provide consistent information to all those involved in making decisions about disposition for the youth. The critical points of the decision-making process were identified to be the following:

- School Suspension or Expulsion
- Children’s Protective Service (CPS) referrals
- Arrests
- Referrals for “alleged” offenses for youth already on probation
- Intake Screening for expelled students
- Detention/Petition/Probable cause detention hearings
- Adjudication/Disposition Hearing
- Custody/Placement
- Release/Aftercare
- Probation and Parole Services
- Revocation of Probation/Parole
- Discharge

IDENTIFIED GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Gaps

- The Comprehensive Strategy focuses on prevention and the least restrictive sanction to protect the community and the child. However, interviews with Juvenile Probation Officers (JPO) and Children's Protective Service (CPS) personnel indicate that there is a gap before implementation of Progressive Sanctions in the assigning of services and accountability for juveniles who indicate potential for involvement in the Juvenile Justice System, which is demonstrated by school problems, parent/child conflict, and the commission of Class "C" offenses.
- Parents continue to report to CPS caseworkers and Juvenile Probation Officers that their children threaten to turn them over to CPS if the parents impose discipline on them. This results in parents becoming frustrated and seeking to turn their children in to CPS or Juvenile Probation. Neither Children's Protective Services nor Harris County Juvenile Probation can assign services because neither the youth nor their circumstances fall within their domain.
- There is a lack of accountability in the enforcement of Class "C" sentences for juveniles. Youths can commit crimes with the knowledge that there is no enforcement of the established consequences for their actions. This leads to a disregard for the rules and laws established to ensure safety in Gulfton. Furthermore, it breeds contempt for the legal system by both the parents and residents of the community because no action has been taken to stop these youths and hold them accountable for their actions.
- The decisions by judges to alter (usually increase) punishments from the established Progressive Sanctions Guidelines is due to lack of concrete objective information provided to them. This can result in first-time misdemeanor offenders being placed in the Intensive Supervision Program and/or secure placement facilities, causing more serious offenders to be released prior to completion of their sentences.

Recommendations

- **Recommendation:** The Juvenile Accountability Program and a Truancy Program would immediately address the gap regarding the lack of accountability at the pre-Progressive Sanctions phase. These grants would assist in prevention by providing programs and services for first time and/or chronic Class "C" offenders and holding them and their parents accountable at the Municipal and Justice of the Peace Court level for noncompliance. This also provides a formal first step into the Graduated Sanctions. The programs and services include:
 - ✓ drug education/treatment
 - ✓ individual/family counseling
 - ✓ community service
 - ✓ educational assistance
 - ✓ gang intervention and treatment
 - ✓ teen pregnancy
 - ✓ parent education

These programs would also fund case managers to provide guidance and truancy officers to discourage truancy.

- **Recommendation:** Ongoing and informative parent education programs that will advise parents of the legal parental rights and provide them with child-rearing techniques to prevent further involvement. A similar approach to apprise parents of children who demonstrate problem behavior in schools would assist in increasing understanding and reducing apathy of parents. Because of the level of parental apathy often demonstrated, these programs would require aggressive and persistent outreach to make an impact. This would serve as a way of maintaining family stability and preventing further involvement in the Juvenile Justice System.

Recommendation: A revision of the Risk Assessment classification instrument would contribute information provided to the Judges, thus equipping them with adequate and accurate information. It will assist judges in determining which youth are in need of placement based on objective criteria that would include:

- ✓ the seriousness of the delinquent act
- ✓ potential risk for re-offending
- ✓ presence of objective risk factors
- ✓ risk to the public safety

This would provide Judges with more objective information and potentially decrease the number of mis-classifications to more restrictive placements. It would also allow for greater efficiency of resources for the youth that commit the most serious offenses and pose the greatest threat to society. This would increase community awareness among youth that if they commit delinquent acts that warrant placement, they will lose their freedom for a significant period of time while being treated. The Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention would play a significant role in providing technical assistance in the creation of a research proven Risk Assessment to serve this purpose.

LEGISLATIVE, POLICY & SYSTEMS ISSUES SUMMARY

The task of the Legislative, Policy & Systems (LPS) Workgroup was to review legislation, policies, and systems impacting Gulfton and recommend actions to address risk factors.

LPS ENVIRONMENT

The Gulfton area is located in a complex and politically fragmented area of the United States. Over 400 political subdivisions exist within the boundaries of Harris County including 25 independent school districts, the City of Houston, and Harris County. While the Gulfton area is geographically small compared to the size of the City of Houston and Harris County, the LPS issues found in the Gulfton area are similar to those in the entire county.

For example, at least five police agencies have jurisdictions in the Gulfton area. Each collects, maintains, and reports data differently. The major park in the Gulfton area is located on land owned by Harris County, but actually operated and maintained by the City of Houston under an inter-local agreement. The county is responsible for the majority of juvenile justice services in the Gulfton area and throughout the county, but the city has the majority of police and crime prevention resources in the Gulfton area. The county justice of the peace court and the city municipal courts that handle juvenile cases in the area have different, incompatible, computer systems. The City of Houston and Harris County have separate, often contradictory and competing, legislative agendas, and they lobby independently for their passage.

LPS OPPORTUNITY

Despite the LPS problems, there is a major opportunity for integration of services, collaboration, and communication. In 1998, the existing Joint City/County Commission on Children (JCOC) was given a higher priority by Harris County Judge Eckels and Houston Mayor Brown. The more prominent role of the JCOC has the support of both Harris County Commissioner's Court and the Houston City Council. A notable success was the JCOC intervention into the Houston area grant application for the 1998 U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Learning Center proposal. With the assistance of the JCOC and the strong and direct political support of both the county judge and the mayor, the resulting coordinated grant proposal obtained \$2.2 million per year for three years for 12 schools representing 6 independent school districts. Efforts to further strengthen the role of the JCOC have widespread support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Legislative

- **Recommendation:** Modify existing funding formulas for services to at risk families and children to obtain increased state funding for the Gulfton area.
- **Recommendation:** Adjust state grant evaluation mechanisms to reward service providers who collaborate with government agencies to eliminate unused, but funded service provider "excess capacity."
- **Recommendation:** Support current state legislation providing the maximum state match for the federal Children's Health Insurance Program.
- **Recommendation:** Support state legislative changes to remove restrictions that prohibit county government from providing selected services or funding for youth, families, and education.

Policy

- **Recommendation:** Support strengthening and expanding the role of the JCOC to serve as a catalyst for multi-agency collaboration and reduce current barriers to integration of services and systems.
- **Recommendation:** Support current efforts to inventory existing policies and data restrictions among city, county, and state agencies.
- **Recommendation:** Educate agency employees concerning policy vs. legislative restrictions and provide a mechanism for review and approval of exceptions.
- **Recommendation:** Develop and support a consistent policy for handling Class C misdemeanors by Justice of the Peace courts, Municipal Courts, law enforcement, and prosecuting attorneys.
- **Recommendation:** Modify policies where necessary to emphasize a continuum of services, after-school programming, and transportation.
- **Recommendation:** Adopt integrated law enforcement, courts, and prosecutor policies on status offender "no-shows" and contempt of court citations.

Systems

- **Recommendation:** Standardize, integrate, and fund computer systems for juvenile justice agencies, courts, and providers. (highest Systems priority)
- **Recommendation:** Remove unnecessary restrictions on collection and/or release or sharing of certain juvenile records or statistics among official government planning and service providers. (highest Systems priority)
- **Recommendation:** Support expansion of current Geographic Information System multi-agency collaboration and add additional government partners to adopt the regional system and share data.
- **Recommendation:** Support creation of a Youth Information Database Management System with access available to all service providers and enlist the support of HOUSTON EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE NETWORK, United Way, and JCOC to implement the system.
- **Recommendation:** Improve collaboration among youth service providers and increase prospects for external funding by using JCOC as a catalyst and facilitator for grant identification, development, and collaboration.
- **Recommendation:** Provide Internet presence for public involvement and information on project area activities. Provide access through existing government facilities for those without personal Internet access.
- **Recommendation:** Provide Intranet or password protected Internet portal for increased communication among government and non-profit service providers.

The Gulfton Plan

For An Effective Continuum of Services from Prevention Through Graduated Sanctions

Historically, government has responded to youth problems by providing services to address symptoms. This often results in an inefficient use of scarce resources. Children labeled as delinquent traditionally enter the correctional system, which has been unable to address underlying family issues and other problems. Youth intervention agencies identify some children as abused or neglected, remove them from their homes, and place them in foster care, but fail or are unable to provide family support or preventive mental health services. Children with acute mental health needs are placed in secure psychiatric settings with little opportunity for treatment in community-based, family-oriented mental health programs.

Fragmentation does not serve anyone effectively—youth, families, communities, or systems. The system is expensive and often fails to solve youths' problems. Comprehensive, integrated and target collaborative efforts can more effectively assess the needs for at-risk youth, implement promising strategies and maximize community resources.

Communities and families must have the primary role in preventing juvenile delinquency. All community members—business leaders, media representatives, teachers, parents, and grandparents, youth, policy makers, faith leaders, elected officials, and law enforcement—are responsible for ensuring the health and well-being of children. When members of the community work together to achieve goals, everyone benefits from the strength of the working partnership.

The Comprehensive Strategy Steering Committee designed the first year plan to address critical service gaps identified by the Resources Assessment Work Group. Because the needs of the Gulfton community are so vast, narrowing the selection of these areas was quite difficult. The Steering Committee made a conscious effort to select areas that will leverage and enhance resources already available to the Gulfton area. Below is a summary of the Comprehensive Strategy's first year focus.

FIRST YEAR FOCUS

COORDINATION

Gulfton's number one priority is the coordination of the Community Youth Development (CYD) Program, Weed and Seed, and the Comprehensive Strategy. In order for any of these initiatives to be successful and sustainable, they must have excellent administration and be well coordinated. A Comprehensive Strategies Program Manager will be hired to coordinate programs developing out of the Comprehensive Strategy Initiatives. Another Program Manager will be employed to coordinate new and expanded program development and implementation in conjunction with the Comprehensive Strategy Initiative. This coordinator will collaborate with other initiatives, including Community Youth Development, Weed and Seed, Youth-Focused Community Policing, and the Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant.

In order to assist in the program administration of the initiatives listed above, six full-time Americorps Volunteers will be assigned to work in Gulfton for one year. The Corp Members will be employed through Serve Houston. The local Americorps Agency and two Corp Members will be assigned to each of the Program Managers. Corp Members will be recruited from the Gulfton area and will receive a college scholarship after completing 1700 hours of service.

Beginning July 1999, the CYD Program Coordinator, Weed and Seed Program Manager, and the Comprehensive Strategy Program Manager will share an office located in Gulfton. This is the first time any of these employees will actually office in the target neighborhood. Local businesses have donated the manpower and materials for the construction of the facility. Also, because the office is located next door to the Gulfton Police Storefront, it will facilitate communication with police officers, which is an integral component to the success of all these initiatives.

In addition to the merging of several program coordination sites, the governing bodies of these programs will be integrated into a single executive committee beginning August of 1999 including: the Gulfton Community Coalition, the Community Youth Development Steering Committee, the Weed and Seed Steering Committee and the Gulfton Comprehensive Strategy Steering Committee.

COMMUNICATION/OUTREACH

The Comprehensive Strategy Steering Committee funded a Community Awareness budget to implement a coordinated and comprehensive outreach initiative to all residents in the Gulfton community. The purpose of this initiative is to communicate resources available to the Gulfton residents and to receive continual feedback on the needs of the community. The Communication and Outreach work groups were responsible for developing this plan which will include:

• Public Service Announcements (PSA's)	• A Bilingual Newsletter "Unity/Unidad"
• Gulfton Web Site	• Promotional Video
• Monthly Apartment-Based Meetings	• Community Meetings And Annual Events
• Neighborhood Clean-Up And Festivals	• The Urban Harvest Community Garden

GULFTON COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER

The Resource Assessment Work Group recommended increasing vocational training opportunities as a strategy to reduce the priority risk factor of extreme economic deprivation. The expansion of vocational training options and the development of collaborations with Houston Community College, local universities, business schools, and corporations to bring training programs in trades and technical skills to Gulfton are essential for reducing the economic deprivation in Gulfton.

Through the Executive Office of Weed and Seed, the SeedTech initiative will provide computer equipment, training, and technical support for the purpose of increasing Gulfton residents' job skill levels. SeedTech is a collaborative between Weed and Seed and Urban Technology, a non-profit agency with the mission of disseminating modern technology to inner city neighborhoods. Through the support of the community based organization, the Gulfton Area Action Council, a location next to the Houston Police Department's Gulfton police storefront has been secured by lease. This space will serve Gulfton residents as a new Computer Training Center, giving residents access to computers and the Internet, as well as free training and skill certification. SeedTech is providing six-networked state-of-the-art computers and access to their training curriculum.

During the first year, the school and individual priority risk factors, Academic Failure in Late Elementary School, Lack of Commitment to School, and Early Initiation of Problem Behavior will be addressed through the Juvenile Accountability Initiative and the Gulfton Truancy Collaborative.

JUVENILE ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRUANCY REDUCTION COLLABORATIVE

There is a lack of systemic accountability in the enforcement of Class "C" offenses against juveniles. Youth under the age of 17 currently commit minor crimes with little consequence, as it is well known on the street that Class C juvenile warrants cannot be executed until the juvenile's 17th birthday. The knowledge that these warrants cannot be executed translates into a lack of consequences for their actions. This leads to a disregard for the rules and laws established to ensure safety in Gulfton, and promotes rather than deters juvenile delinquency. Juvenile accountability for minor offenses must be increased in Gulfton to effect a reduction in individual and peer risk factors.

TRUANCY PROJECT

The federally funded Juvenile Accountability Incentive Block Grant and Truancy Demonstration Program will immediately address the lack of consequences for juveniles who commit minor offenses. These grants will provide court-based intervention for first time and chronic Class "C" offenders, holding both juveniles and their parents/guardians accountable at the Municipal and Justice Court levels. A graduated sanctions model will be utilized by Judges, providing alternative sentencing options ranging from mandatory participation in preventative workshops to intervention and treatment services for substance abusers and gang members.

The Gulfton Truancy Collaborative has been selected as one of eight Truancy Demonstration Project sites nationwide. Through this program, community-policing officers will work in collaboration with school attendance officers, providing early intervention through home visits designed to educate parents and youth on the legal consequences of truancy. A court-based case manager will work to assess truancy cases in conjunction with the local Justice of the Peace, recommending sentencing alternatives and providing intervention and resource referral services for youth and their families.

EVALUATION

Due to the need to document effectiveness and impact of programs provided to youth and their families, accurate and useful evaluation of programs, agencies, and strategies and system-wide responses will be put into place. These evaluations will be utilized in order to allocate resources in the Gulfton area based on need and documented effectiveness. Initially, a survey of current resources and evaluation processes in place will be conducted. Upon completion of the assessment, a locally relevant, ongoing evaluation of programs and strategies will be developed and implemented to coordinate services in Gulfton.

ACTION PLANS

The following action plans are presented to fill identified needs and gaps to help the Gulfton neighborhood with community development and mobilization, which will support them in identifying solutions, as well as strengthening and enhancing existing efforts focused on prevention.

COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS: *Extreme Economic and Social Deprivation*

Children who live in poor, deteriorating neighborhoods where the community perceives little hope for the future are more likely to develop problems with delinquency, teen pregnancy, and school dropout. Also, children who live in these areas and have behavioral or adjustment problems early in life are more likely to have problems with drugs later on.

Goal 1: Increase the amount of hope for the youth of the Gulfton Community by increasing the area's economic stability, employment opportunity and overall neighborhood standards using the following objective measures.

Objective Measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The increase of the medium income for families in Gulfton by 5%. 2. The decrease in the amount of Gulfton families living in subsidized housing by 10%. 3. The reduction of the unemployment rate in Gulfton from 12% (1997) to 10%. 4. The reduction of the need for free or reduced school lunches for Gulfton HISD students from 94% to 90%. 5. The reduction of the amount of Gulfton HISD students labeled as "Limited English Proficient" (LEP) from 70.9% to 65.9%. 6. The reduction of the amount of youth in the Gulfton Area that are Medicaid certified by 5%. (local data needed) 7. The reduction of low weight and infant mortality in Gulfton by 5%. (local data needed) 8. The reduction in the number of Gulfton families that receive food stamps by 5%. (local data needed) 9. The reduction in the number of Gulfton families that receive AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) and TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) by 5%. (local data needed) 	
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linkage with the faith-based and Business Communities • Improved "Outreach" coordination • Development of vocational training classes • Expansion of G.E.D. classes in English and in Spanish • Creation of a job data base • Creation of comprehensive daycare • Expansion of English as a Second Language classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creation of comprehensive computer training curriculum and accessibility • Development of support services for area small businesses • Development of regional marketing plan • Development of special financial assistance program
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutes of Higher Education • Community Leaders • Business Leaders • Community Residents • Public Officials • Apartment Management • Comprehensive Strategy Team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal System • Law Enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith-Based Community • Parents • Family • Volunteers
Target Date	September 2002	

COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS: Extreme Economic and Social Deprivation (Continued)

Objective Measures	200 people will access a job resource bank for the Gulfton community on a yearly basis.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer database • Personnel to maintain database • Personnel to dispense information to community about database
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SeedTech Personnel • Gulfton Community Coalition • Weed & Seed
Target Date	January 2000

Objective Measures	Develop a day-care facility that is accessible to all community members at a reasonable cost serving 200 children yearly.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building for daycare center • Employees to staff center, Toys, Food, Office Supplies, Training-CPR, Childcare, Abuse and Neglect • Coordinate with NCI for subsidized childcare grants
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Strategy Coordinator • GULFTON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT Steering Committee • Gulfton Community members • Weed & Seed-HIT Team • Community Based Organizations, Businesses
Target Date	September 2001

COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS: *Extreme Economic and Social Deprivation (Continued)*

Transportation is a key factor in obtaining a job. Gulfton area residents do not have ready access to affordable transportation. There is not enough affordable transportation available to get youths to available after-school and mentoring programs.

Goal 2: Increase availability of affordable transportation to Gulfton residents for access to jobs and services.

Objective Measures	The increase public transportation in the Gulfton Area as measured by the number of added regular or special metro bus routes.	
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formation of a “transportation needs assessment committee” for route planning and implementation strategies • Improved awareness and outreach coordination 	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metro • Public & Private Schools • Community Leaders • Business Leaders • Public Officials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthcare Professionals • Comprehensive Strategy Team • Faith-Based Community • Parents & Families • Volunteers
Target Date	September 2000	

Objective Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase number of students using the METRO GoCard by 20 %. • Increase adult and youth knowledge of available METRO services by 50 %. • Modify one or more METRO bus routes to accommodate more residents. 	
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Metro’s Community Outreach Program to increase awareness of existing resources and routes • Incorporate promotion of GoCard into Gulfton Project media plan • Conduct user and traffic pattern study for Gulfton area • Identify supplemental funding for alternative forms of site to site transportation 	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Strategies Team • Houston Metropolitan Transit Authority (METRO) • Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments • Texas Department of Transportation 	
Target Date	Promotion: Fall, 1999; Funding and Route Reallocation: Beginning in 2000	

SCHOOL RISK FACTORS: *Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School*

Children who do poorly in school in approximately the fourth through sixth grades have increased risk in engaging in problem behaviors. Children fail in school for a variety of reasons: boredom, lack of ability, mismatch with a poorly skilled teacher. It appears that the experience of failure itself, not necessarily ability, increases the risk of problem behavior.

Goal 1: Increase academic success beginning in late elementary school for at-risk 4th to 6th graders.

Objective Measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improvement in TAAS performance by 8%. 2. Improvement in TAAS Reading Proficiency by 8%. 3. Improvement in TAAS Math Proficiency by 8%. 4. Reduction in the overall percentage of grade retention to 2%. 5. Increase identification of children with learning disabilities or in need of special education by 5%.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive School Mentoring Program designed to assist children with basic building blocks of reading, math and comprehension • Expansion of the Campo Del Sol After-school Program to accommodate at-risk 4th graders from targeted elementary schools • Transportation for kids to attend after school & mentoring programs • Community financial support • Development of a Program similar to "Helpful Intervention" at Partners/5 West in the 5th Ward. This programs focuses on Educational Advocacy • Modify school policies to detect early learning disabilities • Increase parental knowledge of the rights of children with disabilities
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Strategies Team • Gulfton Elementary Schools • After-School Programs (Campo Del Sol) • Parents • Community leaders • Apartment complexes & management.
Target Date	2005

SCHOOL RISK FACTORS: *Lack of Commitment to School*

Goal 2: Increase bonding and interest in school by targeted at-risk 4th - 12th graders.

Objective Measures	Reduction of the number of at-risk students (children who fail) identified in the Gulfton Area from 59.8% to 50 %.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive School Mentoring Program designed to assist children with basic building blocks of reading, writing and math. • Expansion of Campo del Sol after school program to accommodate 4th – 6th graders. • Transportation for kids to attend programs. • Community & financial support.
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public and Private Schools in Gulfton area elementary schools • Campo Del Sol Program Staff • Special Education Staff • Parents, children's advocates • Community leaders • Apartment complexes and management
Target Date	Beginning Fall 1999, ongoing

Objective Measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased average daily attendance. 2. Reduction of discipline referrals of targeted at-risk youth by 20%.
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-school Behavior Modification Programs such as Preventive Intervention Program (PIP) • WINGS Program (Educational Program) <p>Foster positive interactions between children, youth, and adults at school, offering assistance with problem solving, anger control training, and social skills development</p>
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School officials at targeted elementary schools • Special Programs Staff (Wings, PIP, TRIAD, etc.) • Parents of targeted youth • Truancy coordinator • Comprehensive Strategy Team
Target Date	Starting September 1999, ongoing

SCHOOL RISK FACTORS: Lack of Commitment to School

Goal 2: Increase bonding and interest in school by targeted at-risk 4th - 12th graders.

Objective Measures	Reduction of truancy cases filed by Juvenile Probation of Gulfton juvenile residents by at least 100 cases (20%).
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-school Behavior Modification Programs such as Preventive Intervention Program (PIP) • WINGS Program (Educational Program) • Truancy Prevention Program • Foster positive interactions between children or youth and adults at school, offering assistance with problem solving, anger control, training, and social skills development.
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School officials at targeted elementary schools • Special Programs Staff (Wings, PIP, TRIAD, etc.) • Parents of targeted youth • Truancy coordinator • Comprehensive Strategy Team • JP Court Liaison to Judge Mark Fury
Target Date	Starting September 1999 - Ongoing

Objective Measures	100 businesses will enroll and actively participate in youth watch which holds businesses accountable for allowing truant to remain on their property and for selling illegal substances to the community's children.
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Youth Watch program. • Printing for signs • Legislative responsibility for storeowners • People to talk to storeowners • Office supplies
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Watch Steering Committee • GULFTON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT Steering Committee • Weed & Seed • Faith Based Organizations • TABC • HPD
Target Date	January 2000

SCHOOL RISK FACTORS: *Lack of Commitment to School (Continued)*

Goal 3: To deter school dropout by providing undocumented Gulfton youth with the opportunity to attend colleges and universities.

Objective Measures	Work with colleges and Universities to change policies to enable undocumented youth to attend college or employment training.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy changes • Support from the Legislative Policy and Systems Work Group • Community awareness campaign to that focus on parental awareness on the importance of processing citizenship timely to allow youth to obtain scholarships and grants to pursue higher education before graduating from high school • Parent Education and Advocacy • Higher parental educational expectations • Fundraising activities, such as: "I Have a Dream" program, sponsors for youth, mentors and Selection Committee
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gulfton Community Coalition • Weed & Seed • Community Based Organizations • Immigrant Rights advocacy groups from the City of Houston.
Target Date	May 2000, ongoing

Goal 4: To provide scholarships to Gulfton youth that possess the potential and grade point average to attend college or trade school, but lack the financial resources.

Objective Measures	1. To educate parents on immigration issues and how they affect the pursuing of higher education. 2. Raise at least \$100,000 to fund scholarships for Gulfton Youth	
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community awareness • Support from the Legislative Policy and Systems Work Group. • Higher parental educational expectations. • Parent Education and Advocacy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community awareness campaign to that focus on parental awareness and the importance of processing citizenship timely to allow youth to obtain scholarships and grants to pursue higher education before graduating from high school • Fundraising activities, "I have a dream" program sponsors for youth, mentors and Selection Committee
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gulfton Community Coalition • Weed & Seed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Based Organizations • Immigrant Rights Advocacy Groups
Target Date	May 2000, ongoing	

INDIVIDUAL/PEER RISK FACTORS: Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior

The earlier young people drop out of school, begin using drugs, commit crimes, and become sexually active, the greater the likelihood that they will have chronic problems with these behaviors later. For example, the earlier the onset of any drug use, the greater is the probability of the individual's involvement in other drug use, the frequency of use, and involvement in deviant activities such as crimes and selling drugs. Children who begin use before age fifteen are twice as likely to develop problems with drugs as are children who wait until they are older. Waiting until age nineteen to try alcohol and other drugs dramatically decreases the risk of drug problems.

Goal 1: Decrease the age of initiation of the problem behavior.

Objective Measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of the average age of first use of alcohol by .5 years for targeted at-risk in Gulfton as measured by the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS). Reduction of the average age of first use of Marijuana by .5 years for targeted at-risk in Gulfton as measured by the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS).
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drug Education Program, Parent Education Programs Community awareness campaigns
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Law enforcement Public and Private Schools Houston Council on Alcoholism Community based Organizations Faith Community Parents Business Partners Adequate and appropriate funding
Target Date	Beginning September 1999, ongoing

Objective Measures	Reduction of the average age that young people become sexually active by two years.	
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Program that focuses on abstinence, parent education programs, community awareness campaigns Curriculum materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personnel Expand DePelchin's existing programs Parental Involvement component
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public and Private Schools Community based Organizations Faith Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents Business Partners Adequate and appropriate funding
Target Date	Beginning September 1999, ongoing	

INDIVIDUAL/PEER RISK FACTORS: Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior (Continued)

Objective Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase juvenile accountability as measured by increased attendance by 7% at court ordered (Municipal & Justice of the Peace Courts) programs. • Decrease by 10% misclassifications of specific offenders requiring placement services toward more severe sanctions. 	
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile Accountability Program, Drug and Alcohol Counseling, Anger Control Training, Social Skills Training, Parent Training, Teen Parent Training, Community Service. • Computers, office supplies, desk space, case managers, reimbursement for case managers for travel and parking, community transportation for indigent clients. • Alcohol and drug education, parent education, parental rights training, teen pregnancy counseling, gang awareness, individual and family therapy, psychological/psychiatric services. 	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gulfton Municipal Judge • JP Court Liaison to Judge Mark Fury (Class "C" case managers) • Juvenile Court Judges • Harris County Juvenile Probation Department 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Attorney's Office • Harris County District Attorney's Office • Service Providers • School Administration (school truant officer)
Target Date	Beginning September 2001, ongoing	

Objective Measures	Contribute to the judicial decision-making process through the use of a comprehensive Risk Assessment Tool.	
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revise and implement a Risk Assessment to assist in the decision-making process at the disposition level • Determine baseline statistics/number of upward deviations • Collect numbers of misclassification of youth offenders on an ongoing basis • Design and implement data-collection process • Ongoing collaboration with the juvenile judges for their support • Computers, office supplies • Technical assistance from OJJDP • Data collection/research assistant • Access to data indicating deviations from Progressive Sanction Guidelines 	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juvenile District Courts • Juvenile Probation • District Attorneys office • Data/research personnel • TRIAD Prevention Program 	
Target Date	Beginning July 1999, ongoing	

INDIVIDUAL/PEER RISK FACTORS: Early Initiation of Problem Behavior (Continued)

Goal 2: Through the collaboration with all members of the juvenile justice system, especially judges, we should design, implement, and/or revise appropriate risk assessment and data collection. Emphasis should be placed on the ongoing collection of baseline statistics and the accompanying deviations.

Objective Measures	Increase the juvenile accountability, as measured by increased completion of court-ordered programs by 7%	
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computers Office Supplies Reimbursement for case manager parking Bus tokens for clients 	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutes of Higher Education Public & Private Schools Community Leaders Public Officials Law Enforcement Healthcare Professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive Strategy Team Legal System Faith-Based Community, Parents & Families Youth Organizations Volunteers
Target Date	2001 (measured from the start date of July 1999), ongoing	

Objective Measures	Contribute to the judicial decision-making process through the use of a comprehensive risk assessment designed to reduce deviations from Progressive Sanctions guidelines, as measured by data indicators by 5%.	
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Computers Office Supplies Access to deviation data Parking reimbursement for data/research assistants 	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institutes of Higher Education Public & Private Schools Community Leaders Public Officials Law Enforcement Healthcare Professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive Strategy Team Legal System Faith-Based Community, Parents & Families Youth Organizations Volunteers
Target Date	2003 (measured from the start date of July 1999), ongoing	

FAMILY RISK FACTORS: *Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in Problem Behaviors.*

Parental attitudes and behavior towards drugs, crime, and violence influence the attitudes and behavior of children. Children of parents who approve or excuse their children for breaking the law are more likely to develop problems. Children whose parents engage in violent behavior inside or outside the home are at greater risk for exhibiting violent behavior. If family members use illegal drugs around children, if there is heavy recreational drinking in the home, or if adults in the family involve their children in their drinking or other drug use, such as asking a child to go get a beer of light a cigarette, the children have an increased risk of developing problems with alcohol or other drugs as well. Parental approval of children's moderate drinking, even under supervision, increases the risk of their children's use of alcohol and other drugs.

Goal 1: To increase family programs that offer social/recreational/enrichment activities on a consistent basis.

Objective Measures	Involve 50 families in the construction and maintenance of a community garden at Burnett Bayland Park.
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial start-up fee • Gardening tools, Seeds and Plants, Gloves, Plant food • Manpower
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Urban Harvest • Weed & Seed • GULFTON YOUTH DEVELOPMENT • HPARD • Comp. Strategy Coordinator. • Gulfton Families
Target Date	June 2000, ongoing

Objective Measures	At least 300 residents will participate each year in annual neighborhood clean-ups to improve the Gulfton community's sense of ownership of their community.
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food, Paper for fliers, T-shirts and hats as incentives, Cleaning supplies • Manpower to send out fliers, Residents • Media Coverage
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weed & Seed • GAAC • Keep Houston Beautiful • HISD • Juvenile Probation Department • Area Apartments • Comprehensive Strategy Coordinator
Target Date	Yearly

FAMILY RISK FACTORS: *Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in Problem Behaviors (Continued).***GOAL 1:** To increase family programs that offer social/recreational/enrichment activities on a consistent basis.

Objective Measures	The expansion of structured sports and organized activities and programs for the Gulfton Area youth as measured by the increased enrollment in these programs by 100 children.		
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilingual counselors and coaches • Improved awareness and outreach coordination • Funding for additional leagues and programs costs • Transportation to program locations • Assessment of current programs to determine where the need for expansion or development lies 		
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gulfton Youth Development • Parks and Recreation • Metro • Public & Private Schools • Community Leaders • Business Leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Officials • Healthcare Professionals • Comprehensive Strategy Team • Faith-Based Community • Parents & Families • Volunteers 	
Target Date	September 2001, ongoing		

Objective Measures	At least 5,000 residents will attend yearly the annual Gulfton International Festival to increase community involvement and attachment to the neighborhood.		
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donations of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food & Beverage T-shirts Hats Paper Copy Capabilities Postage • Corporate sponsors • Manpower, Entertainment 		
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Strategy Coordinator • Weed & Seed, Gulfton Youth Development • Area Community Based Organizations • GAAC, GCC, Various Consulates • Latino Media 		
Target Date	June 2000, ongoing		

FAMILY RISK FACTORS: Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in Problem Behaviors (Continued)**Goal 2:** Increase availability of family violence intervention programs and shelters.

Objective Measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ascertain current level of services available in family violence intervention in Gulfton area. 2. Increase family violence intervention programs serving families in Gulfton by 20%. 3. Ensure that all victims of domestic violence have access to emergency shelters in Gulfton. 	
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a resource survey; outreach to residents about available services • Secure sufficient bilingual counselors, funding for culturally sensitive programs • Programs for male perpetrators • Child abuse intervention programs • Parenting classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • childcare while parents attend programs and community awareness campaigns • Funding for shelters • Develop a coordinated referral system, training for service providers • Outreach to residents about available services
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houston Area Women's Center, La Rosa. • Gulfton Service Providers • Gulfton Youth Development • Comprehensive Strategy Coordinator. • Community based organizations. • Law enforcement, Court System. • Faith Community. 	
Target Date	Beginning September 1999	

Objective Measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Add family involvement components to all programs serving Gulfton youth. 2. Evaluate current parenting programs available in Gulfton. 3. Increase parenting programs and expand existing programs. 	
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate with existing service providers, require family component to be added by each service provider • Funding for transportation, food, and various activities for parent participation • Ascertain level of participation and focus of existing parenting program (teens, early intervention, etc.) • Develop evaluation tool, training on best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manpower to assess programs • Funding for programs • Identify and tap into existing resources (e.g. Headstart program, parent reconnect, Family Roads, BRIDGE, etc.)
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comp. Strategy Coordinator. • Gulfton Youth Development Coordinator • Community Based Organizations • Existing Parenting programs staff. • School Principals and staff. 	
Target Date	Starting June 2000, ongoing	

OUTREACH, COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND MEDIA

GOAL 1: Increase the amount of hope for the youth of the Gulfton Community by increasing the area's economic stability, employment opportunity and overall neighborhood standards using the following objective measures.

Objective Measures	Over one year period at least 5,000 people will receive a services guide to improve communication of resources available to the Gulfton community.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weed & Seed Resource Directory • Manpower to dispense information to people
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weed & Seed Personnel • Gulfton Police Storefront • All Apartment complexes • Community Based Organizations
Target Date	Starting June 1999, ongoing

Objective Measures	Each year over 20,000 residents will receive a quarterly bilingual newsletter for Gulfton residents that includes a calendar of events, community news, job information etc.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper • Printing supplies • Community submissions • Community Based Organization submissions • People to distribute information
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive Strategy Coordinator • Serve Houston Assistant • Weed & Seed • Community Based Organizations
Target Date	Starting June 23, 1999, ongoing

OUTREACH, COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND MEDIA *(continued)*

Objective Measures	Broadcast five (5) Public Service Announcements on all Latino radio and TV stations discussing violence, gangs, current programs and relevant social issues over the next 5 years.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spanish speaking spokesperson • TV and Radio time • Video Production
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal Channel • Weed & Seed • Mayor's Anti-Gang Office • Community Based Organizations
Target Date	September 2000, ongoing

Objective Measures	Develop a bilingual information/tip line to report crimes, alert police about gang problems, graffiti, upcoming events in the neighborhood and process 200 reports per year.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Telephone bank • Database system for crime tips, graffiti • Phone System to handle recorded info • Operators to take calls
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HPD • Comprehensive Strategy Coordinator • Serve Houston Helper • Mayor's Anti-Gang Office
Target Date	January 2001, ongoing

Objective Measures	Increase implementation of apartment outreach to 12 complexes per year to area residents to receive information about SSI/SSD, gangs, health issues, domestic violence, and immigration.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printing capabilities for fliers • Paper • Translator system <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestion boxes • Lecturers • Incentives to give complexes and residents
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weed & Seed • HPD • Apartment Managers • Mayor's Anti-Gang Office
Target Date	Beginning June 1999, ongoing

OUTREACH, COMMUNITY AWARENESS AND MEDIA (continued)

Objective Measures	An estimate 10,000 residents will attend the Gulfton Community Festival that create a more cohesive atmosphere in the neighborhood, and increase the community's awareness of programs and police services.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corporate Sponsors• Food• Ice• People to clean up• People to send out fliers• Media Coverage• T-shirts, caps and key chains
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• GAAC• Weed & Seed• Area Community Based Organizations• Houston Police Department• Comprehensive Strategy Coordinator• Gulfton Youth Development Coordinator• Parks & Recreation Department
Target Date	Yearly

LEGISLATIVE, POLICY AND SYSTEMS

Funding inequities disproportionately impact Gulfton residents. Major adjustments are necessary to secure adequate funding for needed services.

GOAL 1: Modify existing funding formulas for services to at risk families and children and increase funding in the project area.

Objective Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain 200 % state level match for the federal CHIPS program. • Increase corporate and foundation contributions and matches by 50%. • Adjust grant evaluation mechanisms to provide incentives for service providers to use excess capacity in target area. • Increase total funding in the project area by \$5,000,000.
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain legislative support for CHIPS from the City of Houston, Harris County, and the Joint City/County Commission on Children • Target information campaign to area foundations and corporations • Propose funding incentives to grant evaluation agencies
Community Partners	Joint City/County Commission on Children (JCOC), Governor's Office, area foundation grant directors, Harris County delegation to Texas House and Senate, Gulfton area U.S. Congressional officials, Houston-Galveston Area Council of Governments (HGAC).
Target Date	2001 for local sources; 2003 for federal and foundation sources; 2004 for state sources.

In Texas, county government has only the power specifically granted it by the legislature. City government may do anything not specifically prohibited by the legislature. The changing nature of urban reality requires more flexibility for county government.

Goal 2: Support legislative changes to remove restrictions on county government to provide a wide range of services or funding for youth, family, and education.

1. Objective Measures	Pass enabling legislation
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and submit enabling legislation • Obtain support for passage of the legislation
Community Partners	Governor's Office, Harris County, City of Houston, JCOC, Harris County Legislative Delegation, and other Texas Comprehensive Strategy Communities.
Target Date	June 2003

LEGISLATIVE, POLICY AND SYSTEMS (continued)

Harris County funded a study by KPMG that indicated that a strengthened JCOC could play a major role in securing additional funding for youth and family programs and in creating multi-agency community partnerships. Both Harris County Commissioners Court and Houston City Council are studying the report for possible implementation.

Goal 3: Support strengthening and expanding the role of the JCOC to serve as a catalyst for multi-agency collaboration and to reduce barriers to integration of services and systems.

Objective Measures	Strengthen the JCOC to allow it to provide more support for communities such as Gulfton.	
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit letters of support to the JCOC, Harris County Commissioners Court, and Houston City Council • Nominate a Comprehensive Strategy Project Steering Committee member to be appointed to a "community representative" commissioner's position on the expanded JCOC 	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gulfton Comprehensive Strategy Project Committee • Joint Commission On Children commissioners • Governor's Office • Harris County • City of Houston 	
Target Date	2000, ongoing	

LEGISLATIVE, POLICY AND SYSTEMS (continued)

There is little consistency among the sixteen Justice of the Peace Courts, four County Juvenile Courts, or the many of area municipal courts for intervention or prosecution of area youth. Service providers are inefficient and inconsistent in interacting with these agencies. The inconsistency reduces fair and appropriate allocation of service resources and indirectly increases the risk factors identified in Gulfton.

Goal 4: Support consistent policy and practices for handling of youth and family issues by the courts, law enforcement, prosecutors, and service providers.

Objective Measures	Prepare a model standard for use by the courts, law enforcement, prosecutors and service providers.
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain input from Harris County Youth and Family Services Division • Establish working group in Gulfton with representatives from courts, law enforcement, prosecutors, and service providers • Request resources and technical assistance from the JCOC • Publish and promote the model standards produced by the effort
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipal • County • State Judges • City Of Houston Anti-Gang Office • Harris County Youth And Family Services Division • Harris County District Attorney's Office • Houston And Bellaire Municipal Prosecutors' Offices • Joint Commission On Children • Service Providers.
Target Date	2001, ongoing

DATA MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

Many of the identified risk factors could be better addressed with the application of appropriate technology to assist in problem identification and evaluation, service delivery, and cost-effective program administration.

Goal 1: Use technology to improve efficiency of service delivery.

Objective Measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secure funding for two-way video/two-way audio juvenile court/youth agency/service provider video conferencing. 2. Inventory computer systems of service providers, courts, and agencies impacting Gulfton and identify and prioritize compatibility gaps. 3. Secure demonstration project for Gulfton.
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design demonstration project using Harris County Juvenile Probation Department model • Submit grant application to foundations and to the Telecommunications Infrastructure Board to support a demonstration project • Identify additional partners and solicit political support from the Joint City/County Commission on Children • Standardize, integrate, and fund computer systems for juvenile justice agencies, courts, and providers and remove unnecessary restrictions on collection and/or release or sharing of certain juvenile records or statistics among official government planning and service providers • Expand GIS multi-agency collaboration by participation in the regional GIS system • Support Joint Commission on Children's creation of a Youth Information Database Management System in conjunction with Houston Educational Resource Network and United Way • Provide a Gulfton Project Internet presence to promote support of legislative, policy, and systems initiatives
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harris County Juvenile Probation Department • Harris County Central Technology Center • Houston Area Technology Advisory Council • Joint City/County Commission on Children • Harris County Justice of the Peace Courts • City of Houston Municipal Courts • Houston Education Resource Network • United Way.
Target Date	2001, ongoing

DATA MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY (continued)

Government agencies and service providers do not have compatible data collection practices, policies, or systems. This problem precludes appropriate and cost-effective efforts to impact the target area.

Goal 2: Modify existing youth policies, data restrictions, and remove impediments to efficient sharing of information.

Objective Measures	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Conduct an inventory. 2. Implement identified modifications.
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit request to Joint City/County • Commission on Children to conduct the inventory with priority given to Gulfton as a demonstration area and funding to be provided by the Commission. • Request technical assistance from the Houston Area Technical Advisory Council, the Geographic Data Committee of HGAC, and the Harris County Geographic Information Systems Task Force. • Use Joint Commission on Children as vehicle to secure the necessary political and operational support to change policies and procedures where needed.
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houston Technical Advisory Council • Geographical Data • Joint Commission on Children • Local corporations and foundations • Governor's Office • Harris County • City of Houston
Target Date	Gulfton area: 2000, Integrated county-wide: 2003, ongoing

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION

Early intervention is a critical first step in the prevention and reduction of youth violence and crime. The strongest forms of prevention are programs geared to reduce identified risk factors and enhance protective factors. Effective early interventions are those that target children at risk with the following indicators:

- low birth weight/pre-term births
- mothers are poor, unwed, or teenagers
- history of child abuse, crime or delinquent behavior

Most effective interventions during prenatal through age 6 are those that include the whole family, are comprehensive in nature, and are community based.

Goal 1: To reduce the number of pregnant mothers that deliver pre-term or low birth weight babies in the Gulfton area by providing appropriate prenatal care.

Objective Measures	To increase the number of undocumented or non-Medicaid eligible pregnant mothers receiving prenatal care by 20%.
Required Resources/Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create awareness of the need for prenatal care early in the pregnancy • Establish partnerships with clinics that serve undocumented and find additional resources to support them • Create an awareness of the cost-effectiveness of preventing medical conditions in children • Develop or expand advocacy groups that influence passing CHIP (Children's Health Insurance Program) program in the legislature in Texas • Exhort private clinics to have lower rates and incentives for low-income pregnant mothers • Create partnerships with Faith based organizations to create or expand health programs for the poor or undocumented • Negotiate with Hospital District issuance of Gold Card to long term residents that may not be documented • Expand the Health Promoters Program (managed by GANO and operating in 4 apartment complexes)
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southwest Community Health Clinic and Family Roads Program • Community Based Organizations • Faith based Organizations • Advocacy groups • Civic associations • Healthy Family Initiatives • Memorial Hospital Southwest • City Health Department • March of Dimes
Target Date	Beginning September 1999, ongoing

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION ACTION PLANS (continued)

Goal 2: To increase the number of programs that offer family literacy, parenting, after school programs and family activities for families of children zero to six. Multifaceted parent education and literacy enhances protective factors.

Objective Measures	To increase the number of families with young children (zero to 6 years) attending parenting, family literacy, and after school programs by 20%.	
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect data for the area of number of parents of young children attending programs and services • Develop evaluation tools that measure success for early intervention programs • Create awareness of the cost-effectiveness of early intervention • Create partnerships to expand services in the area • Financial resources to expand existing programs • Demonstrate to business/apartment management the profitability to host and support family programs in their apartment complex as a way to deter turnover and increase occupancy 	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Roads Program • The BRIDGE / El PUENTE • DePelchin (Jefferson House) • Excel (Windham Apartments) • Las Americas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apartment Management/Business • Community based organizations • Gulfton Community Youth Development • Weed & Seed
Target Date	Beginning September 2000, ongoing	

Objective Measures	Strengthen efforts to acquire funds and coordinate services from family support and education programs by holding monthly meetings.	
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings purpose to share information, coordinate activities, share best practices and collaborate • Network with different programs • Advocate for Early Intervention • Lobby for children's issues • Financial resources from business to pay meeting expenses • Share resources and plan strategies for advocacy and awareness campaigns 	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community based organizations • Faith Based Organizations • Business and Civic Groups 	
Target Date	Beginning September 1999, ongoing	

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION ACTION PLANS (continued)

Goal 3: To increase academic success in school by increasing programs that target disadvantaged, at-risk children (zero to 6 years), and their families. Comprehensive programs that serve the whole family and use home based and or center based approaches.

Objective Measures	To increase families participating in programs that target children zero to 3 years by 20%.		
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase identification of families most in need by doing door to door outreach in the apartment complexes • Collect data and evaluation to prove efficacy in preventing later problems • Disseminate evaluation results and best practices • Establish a referral system to best utilize resources (families most in need) 		
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Head Start • Healthy Family Initiatives • Family Roads Program (Southwest Clinic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The BRIDGE / El PUENTE • Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECI) • Jefferson House (DePelchin) 	
Target Date	Beginning August 2000, ongoing		

Objective Measures	To increase the number of families participating in programs that target children 4 to 6 years old by 20%.		
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase identification of families most in need by doing door to door outreach in the complexes • Collect data and evaluation to prove efficacy in preventing later problems • Disseminate evaluation results and best practices • Establish a referral system to best utilize resources (families most in need) • Advocate with Houston Independent School District (HISD) for more pre-kindergarten programs in the southwest • Coordinate with Head Start to expand services to 3 to 5 years olds • Coordinate with HIPPY (Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters) to expand services to 3 to 5 year olds 		
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Start program • HIPPY Program Southwest District HISD • The BRIDGE / El PUENTE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HISD Southwest District (Pre-K program) • Faith Based Organizations • Early Intervention HISD 	
Target Date	Beginning August 1999, ongoing		

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION ACTION PLANS (Continued)

Goal 4: To increase the early detection of developmental delays and disabilities in order to increase the chances for children to succeed in school, to eliminate costly compensatory programs and to decrease the risk of child abuse and later problems.

Objective Measures	To increase the detection of developmental delays and disabilities in children zero to six by 20%.	
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the referral system and utilization of services in the Gulfton area • Monitor number of children disabled or developmentally delayed served by government and state agencies • Assure that agencies serving disabled children have bilingual professionals that can adequately meet the needs of the low English proficient families • Create an awareness of the normal developmental stages of children at the community level • Provide educate about the normal developmental stages of children • Formulate ways to attract and recruit bilingual/ culturally competent professionals in the field of early childhood education • Increase funding for early intervention programs 	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head Start program • HIPPY Program Southwest District HISD • The BRIDGE / EI PUENTE • Early Head Start • Healthy Family Initiatives • Community based Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HISD Southwest District • Faith Based Organizations • Early Intervention HISD • Family Roads Program (Southwest Clinic) • Early Childhood Intervention Program (ECI) • Public and Private clinics and Hospitals
Target Date	Beginning September 2000, ongoing	

Objective Measures	To provide a series of workshops in cultural competency and Spanish to service providers, police, court system personnel, teachers, advocates and all government and City personnel to assure accessibility to services and eliminate barriers to participation and compliance for families low English proficient.	
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial resources • Personnel • Policies defined by agencies and institutions requiring training in cultural competency 	
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City and government agencies • Houston ISD • Community Based Organizations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Houston Community College • Houston Police Department • Principals
Target Date	Beginning January 2000, ongoing	

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION ACTION PLANS (Continued)

Goal 5: Intervene early by referring young siblings and families of delinquent children and youth to comprehensive services. Statistics show that siblings of delinquent youth will follow the same path as their older brothers or sisters.

Objective Measures	To increase the number of children and families referred by the courts, school and the police to early intervention programs by 20%.
Required Resources/ Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Establish a referral system for families of problem youth with siblings zero to six years of age• Provide training to police and court personnel in early identification and programs available in the community for families with young children• Personnel, caseworkers or case managers that can help families in a one to one basis• Coordinate and collaborate with early intervention programs
Community Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Early Intervention Programs• Community Based Organizations• Police department• Court System Personnel and Judges• Detention centers• City and County Juvenile facilities
Target Date	Beginning January 2000, ongoing

CHAPTER TWO

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to provide a snapshot of risk factors and associated indicators within the Gulfton area. The Data Collection and Analysis Workgroup was charged with collecting data on the risk factors and data indicators outlined in *The Guide for Implementing the Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent and Chronic Juvenile Offenders*.

This report is comprised of six major sections to include: introduction, an overview of populations, overview of risk factors, priority risk factors, problem behavior indicators, and recommendations and limitations.

Section II provides an overview of the general population by placing the Gulfton area in the larger context of the City of Houston, Harris County, the state of Texas and the United States.

Section III focuses on the risk factors as they relate to the community, family, school, and individual/peer domains.

Section IV examines priority risk factors for the Gulfton area, which include: extreme economic deprivation, parental attitudes and involvement in the problem behavior, academic failure beginning in late elementary school, and lack of commitment to school.

Section V takes a look at identifying problem behavior indicators and/or those indicators which fall outside the realm of any specific risk factors. These include adolescent pregnancies and births to adolescents, alcohol related indicators, etc.

Section VI provides recommendations and limitations of this report and how it relates to the process of data collection as opposed to the issues facing the Gulfton area.

II. OVERVIEW OF POPULATIONS

This section is intended to serve as a framework for the data contained in the report. It provides an overview of Gulfton by placing it in the larger contexts of the City of Houston, Harris County, the State of Texas and the United States. This section also defines population categories. While the parameters of the United States and of Texas are fairly evident, those of the region, county, city and neighborhood will be outlined. Finally this section provides an overview of the ethnic composition of the populations.

GENERAL POPULATION

- **United States**

Between 1995 and 1997, the national population grew at a rate of 1% (2 million) per year, as table 1 shows. In 1997, about 26% of the population were under 18, 61% were 18-64, and 13% were aged 65 or more.

<i>Table 1. Population of the United States With Age Categories (TXDHS, 1998)</i>				
<i>Year</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>0-17</i>	<i>18-64</i>	<i>65+</i>
1995	262,820,000	68,742,000	160,535,000	33,543,000
1996	265,253,000	69,379,000	162,002,000	33,872,000
1997	267,645,000	69,898,000	163,650,000	34,097,000

- **Texas**

Using 1995 figures, around 7% of the U.S. population lives in Texas (US Census, 1998). In 1990, Texas ranked third in population and second by 1997. Texas' population growth appears to be slightly ahead of the nation's, growing around 10% between 1990 and 1995. Texas has a slightly higher percentage of youth than the U.S., and slightly fewer seniors, as table 2 illustrates. Texans' median household income is around \$32,000 annually (US Census, 1998).

Table 2. Population of Texas (US Census, 1998)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Total Population</i>	<i>Under 18</i>	<i>Over 65</i>
1980	14,225,513		
1990	16,986,335	28.6%	10.1%
1995	18,723,991	28.5%	10.2%
1997	19,439,000		
2000	20,119,000		
2025	27,183,000		

- **Harris County**

Harris County, often referred to as the greater Houston area, is the third largest county in the United States, with a population of almost three million. There are 1.2 million people living in unincorporated parts of Harris County (personal correspondence, Harris County Judge Robert Eckels' Office, 3/8/99). Throughout the 70s, 80s and 90s, the Houston area has consistently been one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the nation (KPMG, 1996).

Harris County school statistics are based on data from 23 independent school districts within the boundaries of the county. The school districts in the county are: Aldine, Alief, Channelview, Clear Creek, Crosby, Cypress-Fairbanks, Deer Park, Galena Park, Goose Creek, Houston, Huffman, Humble, Katy, Klien, La Porte, North Forest, Pasadena, Pearland, Sheldon, Spring, Spring Branch, Tomball and Waller.

- **Houston**

Houston is a 596 square mile area that includes portions of Harris, Ft. Bend and Montgomery Counties. Houston is the fourth largest city in the nation and ranks tenth among metropolitan areas (City of Houston, 1998). Where citywide data was readily available, it was used; however, many of the data were obtained from Houston Independent School District (HISD). HISD is a 312 square mile district, the largest of the city's 12 school districts. The data from HISD doesn't represent all of Houston, but these data do provide a reasonable representation of the city's children. The other 11 independent school districts are Aldine, Alief, Clear Creek, Cypress-Fairbanks, Fort Bend, Huffman, Humble, Katy, North Forrest, Pasadena and Spring Branch.

The total population of Houston in 1990 was 1,630,553, a 2.2% increase from 1980.

In the same year, 434,666 Houstonians were children under 18 (Kids Count, 1998). The percentage of children in Houston, 27%, is consistent with percentages for the state and the nation (Ibid.).

- **Gulfton**

While this community measures only 3.4 square miles, Gulfton is home to somewhere between 37,295 and 60,000 people, or about 2-3.6% of the City of Houston's population. The City of Houston Planning Department (1993) characterizes this neighborhood as having the highest population density of the city. Gulfton is variously defined by ZIP code 77081, police beat 17E10, and by Census Tracts 416.01, 419.05, 419.06, and 425.04. The HISD schools that Gulfton children attend – Benavidez, Braeburn, Cunningham, Gordon, and Sutton Elementary Schools, Jane Long Middle School, and Lee and Bellaire High Schools – were also used in gathering data, although some estimate that as many as 700 elementary school students are bussed outside the neighborhood. The boundaries of Gulfton are roughly Highway 59 on the North, Bissonnet/Bellaire on the South, Hillcroft on the West, and South Rice/City of Bellaire on the East (City of Houston, Planning and Development, 1993). In several instances, only the elementary and middle schools are used for gathering data.

The Gulfton neighborhood was constructed during the booming economy of the 1970's. Hundreds of apartment complexes, designed for young, single professionals, dominate the landscape. But the bust of the 1980's forced Gulfton area apartment owners to lower rents or let complexes remain vacant. The 1980's was also a period of mass immigration of citizens of Mexico and Central American countries, fleeing uncontrolled inflation, poverty, or civil war. Due to the increase of low and moderate housing, Gulfton area apartments quickly filled with immigrants and refugees who were seeking a new life in U.S. society. As a result, several families shared single apartments. In recent years, Gulfton has continued to be the settling ground for newcomers from all areas of the world including Bosnia, Rwanda, and Cambodia.

Approximately, 90% of the residents in the Gulfton area speak a language other than English (NCI, 1997). Tenants occupy 19,076 units in 70 apartment complexes. Apartment complexes range in size from 20 units to 1,844 units, and are usually at 80% occupancy (City of Houston, Planning and Development, 1993). The population of Gulfton is relatively young, with a median age of 22 (US Census, 1998). Some estimate that about 10,200, or 27.3% of Gulfton residents are children and youth under 18 (NCI, 1997), while others estimate that children account for as much as 40% of the areas population (14,918-24,000).

ETHNICITY

The ethnic composition of the state, region, city and neighborhood are outlined to provide an overview of the population. For the most part, indicators are not separated by ethnicity.

• Texas

Table 3 shows the ethnicity of the state of Texas.

Table 3. 1997 Texas Population by Ethnicity (DHS, 1998)	
Ethnicity	Percentage of Population
Anglo	56.4%
Black	11.5%
Hispanic	29.3%
Other	2.8%

Region 6, as defined by the Texas Department of Human Services, includes 23% of the state population and encompasses Houston and the surrounding 13 counties. The ethnicity for the region is very similar to that of the state as table 4 shows.

Table 4. 1997 Region 6 - Houston Population		
Ethnicity	Number	Percentage
Anglo	2,328,979	53%
Black	761,525	17%
Hispanic	1,110,173	25%
Other	205,476	5%
Total	4,406,153	100%

• Houston

Houston, along with other major U.S. cities, has undergone a dramatic ethnic transformation in the last three decades of the century. As table 5 shows, the 2000 census will likely report a dramatic shift in the ethnic composition of Houston.

Table 5. U.S. Census Figures for Houston - actual and projected (U.S. Census, 1998)			
	1980	1990	2000
Anglo	52%	41%	29%
Black	27%	28%	25%
Hispanic	18%	28%	39%
Asian	2%	4%	7%

The ethnicity of Houston's children is vastly different from that of the entire population. Percentages of non-white children are higher than percentages in the entire populous, as table 6 shows.

Table 6. Ethnicity of Houston Children 1990 (Kids Count, 1999)		
Ethnicity	1990	Percentage
White	115,491	26.5%
Black	138,595	31.8%
Hispanic	162,323	37.2%
Asian and Pacific Islander	17,692	4.1%
Native American	565	.1%
Total	434,666	

Table 7 shows the number of students enrolled in Harris County ISD schools, HISD schools and in Gulfton area HISD schools. Gulfton students comprise 6.2% of HISD students.

Table 7. Enrollment (HISD, 1995-98)				
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Harris County	579,064	594,862	609,955	
Houston (HISD)	202,149	206,704	207,375	211,197
Gulfton	11,770	12,704		13,104

Table 8 shows relative stability in the ethnicity of Harris County and HISD schools.

Table 8. Ethnicity (HISD School Profiles)					
	African American	Hispanic	White	Asian	Native American
1994-95 Harris County	24%	34%	37%	5% (other)	
1995-96 Harris County	24%	36%	36%	5% (other)	
1996-97 Harris County	24%	37%	35%	5% (other)	
1994-95 Houston (HISD)	35.6%	50%	11.6%	2.7%	0
1995-96 Houston (HISD)	34.9%	51%	11.3%	2.7%	0
1997-98 Houston (HISD)	34%	53%	11%	3%	<1%

- Gulfton**

According to HISD figures, Between 1980 and 1990 there were dramatic changes in the population of Gulfton. In addition to a 19% total population increase, the numbers of Asians and Hispanics increased over two-fold (GANO, 1998). Its ethnic breakdown, according to the U.S. Census is 52% Hispanic, 17% black, 22% white and 9% other (NCI, 1997). According to HISD, the ethnic breakdown of Gulfton HISD students is very different from that of the general population. Table 9, the ethnicity of Gulfton HISD schools, shows a greater proportion of Hispanic students, and lesser proportions of African Americans, whites and others than U.S. Census figures. The number of Hispanic students increased by 3% between 1994 and 1998, consistent with city and county growth.

Table 9. Gulfton Ethnicity – HISD Schools					
Year	African American	Hispanic	White	Asian	Native American
1994-95	12.9%	69.8%	11.3%	6%	0
1995-96	12.9%	71.1%	10.4%	5.6%	<1%
1997-98	11.4%	72.6%	10.4%	5.6%	<1%

Within Gulfton HISD schools, a great deal of variation in ethnicity exists. Table 10 shows each Gulfton HISD school's ethnic breakdown by year. Like in the city, Gulfton HISD schools have seen increases in the Hispanic population.

Table 10. Ethnicity by School (HISD School Profiles)

<i>School</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>African American</i>	<i>Hispanic</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Asian</i>	<i>Native American</i>
Benavidez Elementary	1994-95	9%	86%	2%	3%	0
	1995-96	8%	88%	1%	3%	0
	1997-98	7%	89%	2%	2%	0
Braeburn Elementary	1994-95	8%	87%	4%	1%	0
	1995-96	8%	89%	3%	1%	0
	1997-98	7%	90%	2%	1%	0
Cunningham Elementary	1994-95	11%	82%	4%	4%	0
	1995-96	12%	82%	3%	3%	0
	1997-98	10%	84%	4%	2%	0
Gordon Elementary	1994-95	28%	66%	1%	5%	0
	1995-96	27%	68%	1%	4%	0
	1997-98	21%	74%	2%	3%	<1%
Sutton Elementary	1994-95	9%	69%	11%	11%	0
	1995-96	9%	72%	10%	9%	<1%
	1997-98	10%	72%	7%	12%	<1%
Long Middle	1994-95	12%	75%	7%	6%	0
	1995-96	11%	77%	6%	6%	<1%
	1997-98	10%	78%	5%	6%	<1%
Bellaire High	1994-95	13%	32%	41%	13%	0
	1995-96	14%	31%	41%	13%	<1%
	1997-98	13%	30%	43%	14%	<1%
Lee High	1994-95	13%	61%	20%	55	0
	1995-96	14%	62%	18%	6%	<1%
	1997-98	13%	64%	18%	5%	0

III. OVERVIEW OF RISK FACTORS

This section provides an overview of the indicators for all risk factors except those chosen as priority risk factors. Priority risk factors are outlined in Section V. The four domains are listed followed by risk factors and indicators. Several risk factors have more than one indicator. For each risk factor, an attempt was made to collect data on at least two indicators. When this was not possible, it is noted in the text.

COMMUNITY DOMAIN

Risk Factor: Availability of Drugs

- Indicator: Sale of Alcohol**

Nationwide, alcohol sales by liquor stores rose between 1993 and 1994 from \$21.5 to \$22 billion and again between 1995 and 1996 from \$22 to \$22.8 billion. Alcohol sales in drinking establishments varied slightly from \$12.2 to \$12.9 billion between 1993 and 1996 (DRP, 1998, 1-1). Gulfton data for the 77081 ZIP code, indicate a 22% increase in alcohol sales from \$36,778.98 in February 1998 to \$44,978.50 in February 1999 (TABC, 1999).

- Indicator: Sale of Tobacco**

Nationally, there were 275,000 tobacco sales establishments in 1987 and 286,000 in 1992 (DRP, 1998, 1-2). No local data related to tobacco sales were obtained.

Risk Factor: Availability of Firearms

- **Indicator: Firearms in the Home**

According to one survey, between 1985 and 1995, 44-46% of American homes had at least one firearm (DRP, 1998, 2-1). No local survey data on firearm prevalence in the home were obtained.

- **Indicator: Firearm Sales**

Firearm sales rose nationally from \$2.7 to \$3.5 billion between 1993 and 1994, and remained relatively stable in 1995 and 1996 at \$2.9 and \$3 billion respectively (DRP, 1998, 2-2). No local firearms sales data were obtained.

Risk Factor: Community Laws and Norms Favorable towards Drug Use and Crime

Although gang-related data are placed under the individual domain, these data are related to “reported gang involvement” by youth. Since the data collection committee was able to obtain data related to gang members of all ages, and since characterizing gangs as solely a “youth” phenomenon, minimizes the impact of gangs, gang data are used as indicators for this risk factor. “According to the Texas penal Code, a Criminal Street Gang consists of three or more persons who have a common identifying sign, symbol or leader, and who regularly or continuously commit criminal acts” (Children at Risk, 1998, 76).

- **Indicator: Gang Members**

The Weed and Seed Year One Report (Mayor’s Anti-Gang Office, 1998) determined that 15% of all Gulfton area crime suspects were identified gang members. Gang members were suspected of committing 53% of all violent crimes in the neighborhood, and were charged with 71% of all illegal possessions of a weapon.

- **Indicator: Crimes Committed By Gangs**

Local gang crime data are shown in table 11. Data indicate that gang crime is down, both citywide and in Gulfton. Data also show that violent gang crime is a greater threat in Gulfton than in the City of Houston. The city’s proportion of violent gang crime to all gang crime is 7-8%, while violent gang crime in Gulfton ranged from around 58% (in 1995) to 22% (in 1997).

<i>Table 11. Gang Crime (Mayor’s Anti-Gang Office, 1998)</i>			
<i>Level</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>
Houston (all)	3,722	3,645	2,752
(violent)	253	254	230
Gulfton (all)	78	101	127
Gulfton as % of Houston	2%	2.8%	4.6%
(violent)	45	26	28
violent as % of total Gulfton	57.7%	25.7%	22%
Gulfton violent as % of total violent	17.8%	10.2%	12.2%

Risk Factor: Transitions and Mobility

- **Indicator: Migration Rates**

Net migration rates decreased nationally between 1993 and 1996. Table 12 shows the net migration rates per 1,000 by year (DRP, 1998, 5-1).

Table 12. National Net Migration Per 1,000

<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>
50.2	44	46.5	41

Local data for the metropolitan statistical area indicate a population growth of 21.2% between 1990 and 1996. The net migration rate for this same period was 36,250 (ACN, 1999). The metropolitan statistical area for Houston is similar to Region 6 and includes Chambers County, Ft. Bend County, Harris County, Liberty County, Montgomery County, and Waller County.

- Indicator: Mobility Rates**

School mobility rates (student movement in and out of school) for Gulfton area elementary and middle schools decreased significantly between 1994 and 1996 from 30.6% to 22.2% (HISD, 1995-98). Table 13 shows Gulfton mobility rates by school.

Table 13. Gulfton HISD School Mobility Rates (HISD, 1994-98)

<i>School</i>	<i>1993-94</i>	<i>1994-95</i>	<i>1996-97</i>
Benavidez Elementary	31%	21%	15.5%
Braeburn Elementary	45%	30%	21.4%
Cunningham Elementary	39%	28%	24.7%
Gordon Elementary	44%	43%	24.5%
Sutton Elementary	29%	19%	23.8%
Long Middle	42%	42%	23.5%
Bellaire High	20%	18%	
Lee High	50%	42%	
Gulfton Total	37.5%	30.4%	22.2%

While gathering these data, a 9-11% discrepancy in mobility rates was found between those reported by TEA (Texas Education Agency) and by HISD (Houston Independent School District). For this report the higher HISD numbers were used.

Risk Factor: Low Neighborhood Attachment

- Indicator: Percentage Of Population Voting**

Nationally, 45% of the eligible population voted in the 1990 and 1994 congressional elections. Sixty-one percent of the eligible population voted in the 1992 presidential election, 54% in 1996 (DRP, 1998, 6-2). Table 14 compares voter turn out nationally, countywide, and in Gulfton. The 1998 congressional election drew 36.1% of the voting population nationally (personal correspondence, Congressional Campaign Committee, Democratic National Party, 3/4/99). Locally, 31.3% of the eligible population of Harris County voted in the 1998 Congressional election, while only 19.7% of the eligible residents of Gulfton voted (personal correspondence, 2/24/99, Harris County Democratic Party, 1999).

Table 14. Voter Participation 1998 Congressional Election

<i>Level</i>	<i>Percent of Eligible Population Voting</i>
United States	36.1%
Harris County	31.3%
Gulfton	19.7%

- Indicator: Prisoners In State And Federal Correctional Facilities**

Nationally the incarcerated population grew 61% between 1988 and 1995. In 1995 there were 411 prisoners in state and correctional facilities for every 100,000 citizens (DRP, 1998, 6-3). "The number of people held in federal and state prisons and local jails will soon likely reach 2 million, almost double the number a decade ago, and triple the number two decades ago (Egan, 1999). "Regardless of how much crime may decrease, in order to keep pace with incarceration rates, the equivalent of 1,000 new prison beds must be added each week for as long as the next decade (Ibid.). Statewide, in 1990 there were 295 persons incarcerated per 100, 000. Texas led the nation in 1995, incarcerating 682 citizens per 100,000 (US

Census, 1998). Current trends in public funding funnel more and more dollars from education and prevention into the construction and maintenance of correctional facilities (Egan, 1999). No local data on the incarcerated population were obtained.

FAMILY DOMAIN

Risk Factor: Family History of High Risk Behavior

- Indicator: adults in drug or alcohol treatment units**

Nationally, the number of adults in drug or alcohol treatment remained between 900,000 and 1 million between 1993 and 1996. Table 15 shows the number of adults in drug and alcohol treatment nationally.

***Table 15. Adults in Drug or Alcohol Treatment Units
(DRP, 1998, 8-1)***

1993	1994	1995	1996
944,208	994,000	1,009,127	940,141

In 1997, there were 26,122 adults in alcohol or drug treatment in the State of Texas, and 2,351 adults in treatment in Harris County (TCADA, 1999).

- Indicator: Educational Attainment (Less Than 12 Years Of School)**

National data indicate that the general population is becoming more and more educated. The percentage of the population (all races) with less than 12 years of education decreased 8% between 1985 and 1995 (DRP, 1998, 8-3).

Risk Factor: Family Management Problems

- Indicator: Reported Child Abuse And Neglect**

“The Study of National Incidence and Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect has projected that 44% of the incidences of child abuse and neglect are reported to Children’s Protective Services (CPS) nationally” (Children at Risk, 1998, 70). Reports of child abuse and neglect rose nationally, statewide and locally between 1993 and 1997. Reports of child abuse and neglect reached a peak both nationally and in Harris County in 1994. Table 16 shows the number of reports of child abuse and neglect. No data for the City of Houston or Gulfton were obtained.

Table 16. Reported Child Abuse and Neglect

<i>Level</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>
National - families (DRP, 1998, 9-22)	966,000	1,012,000	1,001,000		
Texas - children (TXDPRS, 1998)	30,650	33,604	30,290	35,611	16,246
Harris County - families (HCCPS, 1998)	13,607	15,727	13,950	15,061	15,613

- Indicator: Confirmed Child Abuse And Neglect**

Nationally, confirmed cases of child abuse decreased from 903,342 in 1993, to 875,560 in 1994 (DHHS, 1997). In 1994, there were 55,607 confirmed child abuse/neglect cases in Texas, and 6,244 in Harris County. In 1996 and in 1997, data reveal that investigations of child abuse resulted in a slight increase in “reason to believe” or confirmed cases from 33% to 34.5% (HCCPS, 1995-98). Table 17 provides a comparison of the outcome of investigations of alleged abuse and neglect. Note that there was a drop of 3% in cases that were ruled “unable to be determined” between 1996 and 1997. Data for the city and for Gulfton was not obtained.

Table 17. Outcome of Child Abuse/Neglect Investigations – Harris County (HCCPS, 1994-98)

Outcome	1994	1996	1997
ruled out	39%	45%	45.8%
reason to believe	39.7%	33%	34.5%
unable to determine	16.4%	16%	13.2%
unable to locate/moved	4.9%	6%	6.5%

- Indicator: Children In Foster Care And Living Outside The Home**

Three percent of children nationally, lived outside their parents' or guardians' home in 1990. This number rose to 4% in 1995 and 1996 (DRP, 1998, 9-1). Local equivalents were not obtained, but raw data indicate that the number of children living outside the home remained relatively stable between 1993 and 1997. These numbers were 3,801 in 1993, 3,724 in 1995, and 3,807 in 1997 (HCCPS, 1993-1997). No data for the city or the neighborhood were obtained.

- Indicator: Runaway Reports**

Local data indicate a slight rise in area runaways between 1994 and 1995, and a drop in the runaway population in 1996. Runaway reports for Harris County were 3,446 in 1994 (HCCPS, 1994, 5), 3,841 in 1995 (Ibid. 1995, 6), and 3,204 in 1996 (Children at Risk, 1998, 69). No data for the city or the neighborhood were obtained.

Risk Factor: Family Conflict

- Indicator: Single Parent Family Households**

National data indicate a slight increase between 1993 and 1997 in the number of single parent family households from 26% to 28% (FedStats, 1998). In 1996, 24% of Texas families were headed by a single parent, slightly lower than the national average of 26% (Kids Count, 1998). The committee was not able to acquire local data for this indicator.

- Indicator: Children Affected By Annual Divorce Rate**

Data indicate that the number of Harris County children affected by divorce dropped dramatically between 1995 and 1996 from 93,088 to 75,396 (Kids Count, 1999). The committee was not able to acquire local data for this indicator.

- Indicator: Domestic Violence Reports And Arrests**

In the U.S. in 1994, there were 53.4 arrests for domestic violence per 100,000 (DRP, 1998, 10-2). In Gulfton in 1996, nine domestic violence arrests were made between January and September 1996, (one per month) and four arrests were made between January and May 1998 (.8 per month) (Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, 1998). Although these data point to a decrease in neighborhood arrests, the Houston Area Women's Center (HAWC) reports that the Gulfton ZIP code 77081, is consistently in the top three for calls to its domestic violence hotline each month. In 1998, Gulfton was the second highest neighborhood calling the hotline (personal correspondence, 3/2/99, HAWC).

SCHOOL DOMAIN

Risk Factor: Early and Persistent Anti-Social Behavior

- Indicator: School Discipline Problems**

School discipline problems include in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, corporal punishment and police referrals (HISD, 1995-98). Although Gulfton HISD students comprise 6% of the HISD population, they only account for 3-4% of the school discipline problems as table 18 shows.

Table 18. School Discipline Problems (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)

<i>Level</i>	<i>1994-95</i>	<i>1995-96</i>	<i>1997-98</i>
Houston (HISD)	43,571	56,264	52,227
Gulfton	1915	2405	1854
Benavidez Elementary	5	0	not provided
Braeburn Elementary	14	9	5
Cunningham Elementary	10	8	7
Gordon Elementary	202	78	9
Sutton Elementary	89	64	198
Jane Long Middle	838	1,026	1,176
Bellaire High	452	447	286
Lee High	305	773	173

- Indicator: Special Education Students**

“Handicapping conditions include: auditory (deficiency); autism; deafness; blindness; developmentally delayed; emotionally disturbed; learning disabled; mentally handicapped; and orthopedic, speech, visual, or other health impairments” (Children at Risk, 1998, 92). Table 19 shows students in special education in Harris County, Houston and Gulfton area schools. The Gulfton area has a much smaller percentage of special education than either the city or the county.

Table 19. Special Education Students

<i>Level</i>	<i>1994-95</i>	<i>1995-96</i>	<i>1996-97</i>	<i>1997-98</i>
Harris County	9.7%		10%	
(Children at Risk, 1998, 92)	(56,274)		(61,359)	
Houston - HISD	9.9%	9.9%		10.3%
(HISD, 1995-98)	(20,065)	(20,524)		(21,857)
Gulfton - HISD	6.4%	6.4%		5.8%
(HISD, 1995-98)	(730)	(845)		(856)

INDIVIDUAL/PEER DOMAIN

Risk Factor: Alienation and Rebelliousness

- Indicator: Reported Gang Involvement**

In 1995-96, 7% of 6th to 12th graders reported “at least some, often, or a lot” of gang involvement (DRP, 1998, p. 15-1). The 1995 National Youth Gang Survey conducted by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention identified Texas as the second highest state in the number of gangs reported with 3,276 gangs reported. With 57,060 gang members reported, Texas ranked third highest in the number of gang members, although the city of Houston was not among the top ten cities in the number of gang members (TYC, 1998).

According to the 1992 Texas Attorney General’s Gang Report, Texas has what is referred to as an emerging gang problem. According to this survey of 12 Texas cities, delinquent youth gangs accounted for 30 % of total youth gangs, traditional turf-based gangs were 37%, gain-oriented gangs were 31 %, and violent/hate gangs were 3% of total youth gangs (TYC, 1998).

This survey also reported that Houston had a rate of gang prevalence of 4 per 100,000 people (TYC, 1998). According to Children at Risk (1998), the number of people who are believed to be in gangs in Houston decreased from 2,640 in 1995 to 2,152 in 1996 (76).

Information for this indicator is available for the Gulfton community, although the data is not an exact equivalent. Data from “Camp Twist and Shout,” a program of the Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, indicated that 23% of the children surveyed “know someone that is involved with gangs” (Table 20). Table 21 shows the demographic information for the Gulfton students surveyed. Fifty-four students participated in a session conducted September through December 1998, and 207 students participated in a January 1999 session for a total of 261 unduplicated students.

Table 20. Gulfton Camp Twist and Shout Participants

<i>n= 261</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Services provided at:		
Cunningham Elementary	127	49.0%
Benavidez	126	48.0%
Main Office	8	3.0%
Age:		
7 years old	1	.4%
9	85	33.0%
10	118	45.0%
11	46	18.0%
12	10	4.0%
13	1	.4%
Gender:		
Male	134	51.0%
Female	127	49.0%
Ethnicity:		
Asian	2	.8%
Black	17	7.0%
Hispanic	230	88.0%
White	11	4.0%
Other	1	.4%
Is child involved with criminal justice?		
Yes	0	0.0%
No	261	100.0%

Table 21. Camp Twist and Shout Involvement with the Law and with Gangs

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Did not answer</i>	<i>No longer in group/ test not administered</i>
Do you know anyone:				
that is or has been in jail?	128 (49%)	108 (41%)	N/A	25 (10%)
who is always in trouble with the police?	53 (20%)	179 (69%)	4 (1%)	25 (10%)
who is involved with gangs?	60 (23%)	176 (67%)	N/A	25 (10%)

- Indicator: Graffiti Damage**

Table 22 indicates the number of arrests for graffiti in Houston between 1995 and 1998. After peaking in 1996, the number of arrests decreased to a low of 312 in 1998 (Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, 1998). Data on graffiti damage for the Gulfton neighborhood was not obtained.

Table 22. Arrests for Graffiti

	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>	<i>1998</i>
Houston	490	577	364	312

Risk Factor: Friends Who Engage in the Problem Behavior

- Indicator: Adolescents Diagnosed Sexually Transmitted Infections**

Nationally, the rate of gonorrhea cases per 100,000 people reported for youth between the ages of 15 through 19 has continued to decrease since 1993. The rate for Harris County has also decreased. Although the data for Harris County are not complete, Table 23 indicates that the rate of gonorrhea cases reported in adolescents were lower than the national rate (DRP, 1998, 16-1; Children at Risk, 1998). STI data for the Gulfton community were not obtained.

Table 23. Rate of Gonorrhea Cases Reported for Youth 15 – 19 per 100,000				
	1993	1994	1995	1996
National	4,657	4,627	4,229	3,441
Harris County		1,075		819

Similar to the rates of Gonorrhea infection among adolescents, the national rate of syphilis cases reported for adolescents between the ages of 15 through 19 has decreased since 1993. As indicated in Table 24, the rate of infection in Harris County is lower than the national rate (DRP, 1998, p. 16-2; Children at Risk 1998). No data for the rate of adolescent syphilis cases were obtained for Gulfton.

Table 24. The Rate of Syphilis Cases Reported for Youth 15 – 19 per 100,000				
	1993	1994	1995	1996
National	110.7	80.7	64.4	39.7
Harris County		43.6		30

- Indicator: Reported Use By Friends – Alcohol/Marijuana**

In 1997, 61% of 12th graders reported that “most or all” of their friends drink alcoholic beverages (DRP, 1999, p. 16-3). This number has remained near 60% since 1990, with a low of 56% reported in 1995 and 1996. In 1997, 31% of 12th graders (22% of 10th graders and 9% of 8th graders) reported that “most or all” of their friends got drunk at least once a week (DRP, 1998, p. 16-4). For marijuana use, 23% of 12th graders reported that “most or all” of their friends smoke marijuana in 1997. This number has continued to decrease from a high of 37% in 1992.

Table 25. Camp Twist and Shout: Drug and Alcohol Use			
N = 261	Yes	No	No longer in group/ test not administered
Do you know anyone who:			
drinks alcohol?	168 (64%)	68 (26%)	25 (10%)
uses other drugs?	36 (14%)	200 (77%)	25 (10%)

The Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA) reported from their 1996 Texas School Survey, a biennial, statewide survey monitoring substance use among public school students, that the percentage may be higher for Texas secondary students. The report, which surveyed 106,924 secondary students in 72 school districts, reported that approximately 80% of “secondary students in 1996 said that at least a few of their close friends drank alcohol, and 57% said they had close friends who used marijuana” (TCADA, 1997, 9). While it is helpful to have a point of comparison between national and state figures, the data are not exact equivalents and this difference must be noted. The national study reflected answers in response to “most or all” of friends drinking, while the TCADA survey assessed if “few” of the students’ friends drank.

TCADA conducted a similar survey of elementary students: the Texas School Survey of Substance Abuse among Students Grades 4 – 6. The results of this survey are based on the responses of 68,239 elementary students. According to this study, about 35% of elementary students said that some or most of their close friends drank alcohol. Twelve percent of these elementary students said that at least some of their close friends used marijuana, with 10% having been offered marijuana (TCADA, 1996).

Information for this indicator is available for the Gulfton community, although the data are not exact equivalents. Data from the HCADA “Camp Twist and Shout” program, indicated that 64% of the children surveyed “know someone that uses alcohol” (Table 25). This figure is significantly higher than the state figure indicated by the TCADA survey. It must be noted,

however, that the Gulfton data do not specify if the reported use is specifically by friends, family members, or someone else the students know (HCADA, 1999).

• **Indicator: Reported Use By Friends - Cigarettes**

In 1997, 34% of 12th graders, 29% of 10th graders, and 20% of 8th graders reported that “most or all” of their friends smoked cigarettes. This number has increased each year since 1991 when it was 22% (the numbers for 10th and 8th graders increased from 1991 to 1996 and then dropped 4% and 3% respectively). In 1997, only 10% of 12th graders reported that “none” of their friends smoked cigarettes, down from a high of 16% in 1992 (DRP, 1998, 16-6).

National or state data for this indicator for elementary students were not obtained. Gulfton data are available from the Camp Twist and Shout survey. Forty-four of the students surveyed knew someone who smokes tobacco (Table 26). Again, these data do not specify if the reported use is by friends, family members, or someone else the students know (HCADA, 1999).

<i>Table 26. Camp Twist and Shout: Tobacco Use</i>			
<i>n = 261</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No longer in group/ test not administered</i>
Do you know anyone who: Smokes tobacco?	114 (44%)	122 (47%)	25 (10%)

Risk Factor: Favorable Attitudes toward the Problem Behavior

• **Indicator: Perceived Harmfulness Of Drug Use - Alcohol And Marijuana**

According to the 1996 Texas School Survey of Substance Abuse among Students Grades 7 – 12, students who believed substances were quite dangerous were less likely to actually use those substances. In 1996, for example, only 22% of students who thought alcohol was very dangerous had used it during the past month, compared to 61% of those who thought it was not very dangerous to use. Only 4% of those who believed marijuana was very dangerous had used it in the past month, compared to 44% who thought it was not very dangerous and 66% who thought it was not dangerous at all. About 80% of elementary students thought that marijuana was very dangerous (TCADA, 1997, 1996). No data for this indicator for the Gulfton community were available.

IV. PRIORITY RISK FACTORS

This section details priority risk factors selected by the data collection committee. The priority risk factors were chosen because they were the risk factors for which the most data were collected. One risk factor was chosen for each of the domains of community and family. Two risk factors were selected for the school domain. No risk factor was chosen for the individual domain because the data collection committee felt the most important indicators for the individual are in Section V. Problem Behavior Indicators.

COMMUNITY DOMAIN

Priority Risk Factor: Extreme Economic Deprivation

Data pertaining to ten indicators suggest that extreme economic deprivation is a crucial risk factor within the community domain that must be addressed by all people and organizations dedicated to serving Gulfton residents. Although data related to each indicator were not necessarily indicative of a Gulfton area problem, the sum total of these indicators point towards economic deprivation of the community.

• **Indicator: People In Poverty**

The federal poverty level for a family of four was \$15,600 in 1996 and \$16,450 in 1998 (children at Risk, 1998, 24). Just fewer than 15 % of the population of the United States lived in poverty between 1993 and 1995 (DRP, 1998, 7-7). National data indicate that 12% of all families lived below the poverty level in 1993 and 1994 (DRP, 1998, 7-7). In 1995, 13% of American families lived below the poverty level (TXDHS, 1998). Table 32 compares the 1995 national poverty rate to the overall population. As table 32 shows, the percentage of children living in poverty is far greater than any other population subgroup, or the entire population.

Table 32. Population and Poverty Rate – United States (TXDHS, 1998)				
Year	Total	0-17	18-64	65+
1995: Total Population	262,820,000	68,742,000	160,535,000	33,543,000
Poverty Population:	36,121,000	14,298,000	18,301,000	3,522,000
Poverty Rate:	13.7%	20.8%	11.4%	10.5%

Table 33 outlines the poverty rate for Texas for 1990 and 1995. The statewide poverty rate continues to grow. In 1997 19% of Texans lived below the poverty level (TXDHS, 1998).

Table 33. Population and Poverty Rate – Texas (US Census, 1998)	
Year	Total
1990: Total Population	16,986,335
Poverty Population:	2,700,827
Poverty Rate:	15.9%
1995: Total Population	18,723,000
Poverty Population:	3,257,802
Poverty Rate:	17.4%

Table 34 outlines children living below the poverty level. These data indicate that Houston's child poverty rate was down in 1997, but local trends also vary widely from year to year. This could indicate flaws in the way that the statistic is measured citywide.

Table 34. Children Living Below the Poverty Level					
	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
National (DRP, 1998, 7-2)	22%	21%	20%		
Texas (Kids Count, 1998)			25%		28.5%
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 24)	21%				28.5%
Houston (Children at Risk, 1998, 24)	30.8%	21%		30.8%	22%

According to Neighborhood Centers Inc. (1997), the poverty rate for Gulfton is over 50%, more than twice the poverty rate for the City of Houston (1997). Others estimate around 67% of the population of Gulfton lives at 150% of the federal poverty level (Ibid.). The median family income of Gulfton using census data was \$18,733 in 1989, almost 30% below the city's median income of \$26,621 (City of Houston Planning and Development, 1993).

• **Indicator: AFDC (Aid To Families With Dependant Children) And TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) Recipients**

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is the major cash assistance program for children in poor families. TANF was created by the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Children at Risk, 1998, 26). Table 35 shows the number of AFDC/TANF recipients nationally and locally. Most of the data show AFDC recipients, as TANF did not take effect until January 1997. Since these poverty relief programs are aimed at families with children, it is no surprise that children make up over half of the population receiving these types of assistance. Nationally, children made up 67% of the AFDC population in 1993 and 68% in 1994. In Harris County, children comprised just over half of the AFDC recipients. In the first year of TANF, the average amount of cash grant per child was \$56.87 a month, down \$1.55 from 1996 (Children at Risk, 1998, 27).

Table 35. TANF/AFDC Recipients

<i>Level</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>*1997</i>
National – all ages (DRP, 1998, 7-1)	14,200,000	13,900,000		
National – children (DRP, 1998, 7-1)	9,500,000	9,400,000		
Harris County – all ages (TX DHS, 1998)		298,749		
Harris County – children (Children at Risk, 1998, 26)		150,035	85,558	65,269

- Indicator: Subsidized Housing Units**

Between 1994 and 1996, the number of subsidized housing units in Harris County grew by 9% from 21,892 to 23,787. There are only 2,860 public housing units available in Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 21). According to the Houston Housing Authority (personal correspondence, 2/17/99), there are 15,800 subsidized housing (public and section 8) units in the City of Houston. The Gulfton area has 185 units of Section 8 Housing (Ibid.)

- Indicator: Medicaid Recipients**

The number of youth (under 21) who were Medicaid certified dropped by almost 20% between 1996 and 1997, the year of welfare reform. In 1996, 211,054 youth under 21 were Medicaid certified, while only 171,033 youth were certified in 1997 (Children at Risk, 1998, 36).

- Indicator: Food Stamp Recipients**

“The federal food stamp program, the largest nutrition program for children, helps people with low income meet basic food needs” (Children at Risk, 1998, 18). The average amount of food stamp grant is about \$.80 per person per meal. Food stamp eligibility is based on household income, assets, and work program registration (Ibid.). Table 36 shows food stamp recipients both nationally and locally. Houston children comprised 53% of all Harris County food stamp recipients in 1994.

Table 36. Food Stamp Recipients

<i>Level</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>
National – all ages (DRP, 1998, 7-5)	27,500,000	26,600,000	25,500,000
Harris County – all ages (TX DHS, 1998)	458,503	433,739	
Houston – children (Children at Risk, 1998, 18)	245,299		183,967

- Indicator: Unemployment Rate**

The unemployment rates for the nation, state and region are outlined in table 37. Unemployment declined nationally between 1993 and 1996. The rates for the state and region do not differ dramatically from those of the nation.

Table 37. Unemployment Rate

<i>Level</i>	<i>1993</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1996</i>	<i>1997</i>
National (DRP, 1998, 7-8)	7%	6%	5.6%	5.4%	5.5%
Texas (TX DHS, 1998)			6%	5.6%	6.1%
Region 6 (TX DHS, 1998)				5.6%	

Although local data sources were not provided, a 1997 grant proposal from an area agency states the “unemployment area in this (the Gulfton-area) ZIP code is three times higher than the state population” (NCI, 1997). This would make the 1997 unemployment rate just over 12%. Since many of the area’s residents are new immigrants, the importance of unemployment cannot be overstated.

• **Indicators: Low Birth Weight And Infant Mortality**

“Risk factors for low birth weight include maternal age, poor pregnancy history, and substance use and abuse” (Children at Risk, 1998, 35). “Infant mortality is calculated by dividing the number of infant deaths per year by the number of live births” (Ibid.). Low birth rate, outlined in table 38, and infant mortality, outlined in table 39, remained relatively stable nation-, state- and countywide from 1993-96. No Gulfton data were obtained.

Table 38. Percentage of Low Birth Weight Babies				
Level	1993	1994	1995	1996
National (Kids Count, 1998)	7.1%	7%	7.3%	
Texas (Kids Count, 1998)			7.1%	
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 34).		7.3%		7.3%

Table 39. Infant Mortality (deaths of infants under 1 year old per 100,000)			
Level	1994	1995	1996
National (Kids Count, 1998)		7.6	
Texas (Kids Count, 1998)		6.5	
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 36)	8.1		6.5

• **Indicator: Students Receiving Free And Reduced Lunch**

Eligibility for free and reduced school lunch is granted to students with family incomes at or below 130% and 185% of the federal poverty level (Children at Risk, 1998, 20). The percentage of students receiving free or reduced lunch in Gulfton is consistent with that district-wide. However, Gulfton’s elementary schools historically have had higher percentages of students receiving free or reduced lunches than all of HISD. Table 40 shows students receiving free or reduced lunches.

Table 40. Students Receiving Free or Reduced Lunch			1994-95	1995-96	1997-98
National	all		25.3 mil	25.7 mil.	
Houston – HISD	all		58%	65%	73%
(HISD, 1995-98)	elementary		73%	82%	82%
	middle		55%	60%	78%
	high		28%	30%	51%
Gulfton - HISD	all		57%	66%	75%
(HISD, 1995-98)	elementary		84%	95%	94%
	middle		60%	80%	94%
	high		21%	22%	36%

- **Indicator: Economically Disadvantaged Students**

Economically disadvantaged students are defined by the Texas Education Agency as those students who receive free or reduced meals and/or public assistance. The numbers of economically disadvantaged students in Texas, Harris County and in Gulfton are outlined in table 41. Gulfton has almost double the percentage of students classified as economically disadvantaged compared to the county and the state, and has a significantly greater portion of economically disadvantaged students than the city.

Table 41. Economically Disadvantaged Students					
Level	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Texas (AEIS/TEA, 1999)	45.1%	46.3%	46.9%	48.1%	48.5%
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998)	39.4%	43%	46.4%	49.2%	
Houston - HISD (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	57.7%	58.3%	65.1%	65%	
Gulfton K-8 HISD (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	81.3%	79.8%	92.3%	89.4%	94.7%

- **Indicator: Limited English Proficiency (LEP)**

Students are classified as “Limited English Proficient (LEP) if their parents indicate a home language other than English, they make less than Level IV on the English version of the Language Assessment Scales, or they score below the 40th percentile on the reading portion of an English assessment test” (Children at Risk, 1998, 91). Students identified as LEP are assessed and placed in English language development classes. Limited English Proficiency can be linked to economic indicators in the United States. Gulfton has had 30%-40% more students with LEP than the rest of the city’s students since 1993. Table 42 outlines LEP in Texas, Houston and Gulfton schools, while each LEP percentage for Gulfton HISD schools is outlined in table 43.

Table 42. Limited English Proficiency			
Level	1993-94	1995-96	1997-98
Texas (AIES/TEA, 1998)			13.4%
Houston - HISD (HISD School Profiles 1995-98)	26.2%	27.2%	27.6%
Gulfton (HISD School Profiles 1995-98)	57.9%	67.2%	70.9%

Table 43. Limited English Proficiency – Gulfton HISD Schools			
School	1993-94	1995-96	1997-98
Benavidez	76.4%	82.1%	82.4%
Braeburn	56.7%	77.2%	80.1%
Cunningham	66.9%	68.5%	70.4%
Gordon	40%	62.4%	71.7%
Sutton	61.4%		72.8%
Long	45.9%	46%	47.8%

FAMILY DOMAIN

Priority Risk Factor: Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior

- **Indicator: Adult Alcohol Related Arrests**

Arrests for Driving under the Influence of alcohol have been declining since 1993 (DRP, 1998, 19-6). In 1996, there were 2,739,666 alcohol-related arrests in the U.S. (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1997, 362). Texas accounted for

about 11% of the nationwide total. Driving Under the Influence constituted 38% of national arrests, and Drunkenness accounted for 19% of total arrests. In Texas, the majority of arrests were for Drunkenness as table 44 shows.

Table 44. Texas. Arrests for Alcohol-Related Offenses 1996
(Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1997, 362)

Offense	Number	Percent of Total
Driving Under the Influence	75,497	24.3%
Liquor Law Violations	24,286	7.8%
Drunkenness	168,801	54.5%
Disorderly Conduct	40,460	13.1%
Vagrancy	837	.3%
Total	309,881	100%

In Gulfton, alcohol related offenses - DWI, drunkenness and disorderly conduct seem to be increasing when monthly averages are examined, as table 46 under the adult arrests indicator shows.

• **Indicator: Adult Violent Crime Arrests**

Violent crime offenses are murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault. Although this neighborhood constitutes only 2-3.6% of the city's total population, Gulfton was the locale for almost 9% of the murders, 6% of the rapes and robberies, and 5% of the aggravated assaults in 1997 in the City of Houston. In 1998, almost 8% of all Houston rape, and 7% of all Houston robberies occurred in Gulfton. While violent crimes decreased slightly, they still indicate adult involvement in problem behavior for this community as table 45 shows.

Table 45. Violent Crime

All Violent Crime	Violent Crime		Murder		Rape		Robbery		Aggravated Assault	
Year	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998	1997	1998
Texas (FBI, 1998)	34,137		1,006		2,284		7,058		23,789	
Percentage of total violent			2.9%		6.7%		20.7%		69.7%	
Houston (FBI, 1998)	10,595	9,800	136	114	413	321	4,016	3,593	6,030	5,772
Percentage of total violent			1.3%	1.2%	3.9%	3.3%	37.9%	36.7%	56.9%	58.9%
Percentage of statewide total	31%		13.5%		18%		56.9%		25.3%	
Gulfton (Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, 1998)	609	545*	12	2*	26	24*	252	264*	320	348*
(*estimates based on mean)										
Percentage of total violent			2%	.4%	4.3%	4.4%	41.4%	48.4%	52.5%	63.9%
Percentage of city-wide total	5.7%	5.6%	8.8%	1.8%	6.3%	7.5%	6.3%	7.3%	5.3%	6%

• **Indicator: Adult Arrests**

Table 46 shows crimes for 1996-1998, by offense for Gulfton (beat 17E10). Since the data obtained for 1996 and 1998 were incomplete for the year, monthly means are given. The crimes of robbery, other assaults, drug offenses, DWI, drunkenness, and disorderly conduct are on the rise in Gulfton.

Table 46. Gulfton Area Crime (HPD, 1998)

Offense *indicates increase	Jan.-Sept. 1996	1996 monthly mean	1997	1997 monthly mean	Jan.-May 1998	1998 monthly mean
Murder	8	.8	12	1	1	.2
Rape	17	1.8	26	2.2	10	2
Robbery *	178	19.7	252	21	110	22
Aggravated Assault	266	29.5	320	26.6	145	29
Violent Sub-Total	494	54.8	609	50.75	227	45.4
Burglary	375	41.6	568	47.3	198	39.6
Theft	1161	129	1362	113.5	518	103.6

Auto Theft	619	51.6	780	65	245	49
Arson	6	.6	10	.8	3	.6
Non-Violent Subtotal	2016	224	2720	226	862	172.4
Other Assaults*	822	91.3			464	92.8
Vandalism	400	44.4			213	42.6
Weapons	48	5.3			26	5.2
Prostitution	15	1.6			1	.2
Sex Offenses	47	5.2			2515	5
Narc Drug Laws*	186	20.6			169	33.8
Offense Against the Family	9	1			4	.8
Driving While Intoxicated*	125	13.8			72	14.4
Drunkenness*	52	5.7			36	7.2
Disorderly Conduct*	132	14.6			114	22.8

SCHOOL DOMAIN

Two priority risk factors were chosen for the School Domain – Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School and Lack of Commitment to School. Data related to the school domain were easily obtained. The data collection committee took the liberty of adding several important indicators to these risk factors.

Priority Risk Factor: Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School

- Indicator: Students Passing TAAS (All Tests, 4th Grade, 8th Grade)**

Although TAAS scores were not identified as a national indicator, their importance in Texas can't be ignored. "The Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) is the statewide testing program which measures academic learning and focuses on students' higher order thinking and problem solving skills. Test content reflects material that should have been mastered in the previous grade" (Children at Risk, 1998, 92). Overall, Gulfton keeps pace with HISD TAAS pass rates. However, in 1994 and 1995, less than half of the students in Gulfton HISD schools passed the TAAS. In 1997, Gulfton's overall TAAS pass rate was almost 10% below HISD and 22% below the county's passing rate. Table 47 shows that TAAS scores in Gulfton, HISD, Harris County and Texas have been improving since 1994.

Table 47. TAAS: Students Passing All Tests

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Texas (AIES/TEA, 1998)		60.7%	67.1%	73.2%	77.7%
Harris County (Children at Risk, 98, 92)	59%	64%		76%	
Houston - HISD (AIES/TEA)	43.7%	46.9%	57.3%	63.8%	
Gulfton - HISD Schools (AIES/TEA)	45%	48.1%	57.7%	54.7%	67%

Tables 48 and 49, 4th and 8th grade passing rates, show these grades passing the TAAS at greater percentages than do students district-wide. Table 48 shows 4th grade students in Gulfton passing TAAS at higher rates than all other categories of their peers.

Table 48. TAAS: Percent passing all 4th grade tests

Level	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Texas (AIES/TEA, 1998)		64.1%	67.2 %	72%	78.6%
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 94)	53.4%	60.2%	67.9%	75.2%	
Houston-HISD (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	48%	55%			
Gulfton (HISD School Profiles, 1998)	59.7%	68.8%	70.1%	76.1%	

The percentage of students passing TAAS in 8th grade is as much as 20% below 4th grade passing rates as table 49 shows.

Table 49. TAAS: Percent passing all 8th grade tests					
Level	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Texas (AIES/TEA, 1998)		46.8%	53.7%	57.3%	61.8%
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 96)	42.9%	55.9%	49.5%	60.5%	
Houston-HISD (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	33%	28%			
Gulfton (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	47.3%	49%	49.6%	62.8%	

- Indicator: Math Proficiency (TAAS math scores – 4th grade and 8th grade)**

Fourth grade students at Gulfton HISD elementary schools pass the 4th grade math TAAS at a lower rate than all 4th graders county- and statewide as table 50 shows.

Table 50. TAAS: Percent passing 4th grade math					
Level	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Texas (AIES/TEA, 1998)		71.1%	78.5%	82.6%	86.3%
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 94)	66.2%	61.4%	74.7%	85.1%	
Houston-HISD (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	53%	62%			
Gulfton (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	41.2%	60%	66%	77.4%	

Academic failure continues to be a problem throughout the elementary and middle school years. Less than half of Gulfton's and Houston's 8th graders pass the TAAS math portion as table 51 shows.

Table 51. TAAS: Percent passing 8th grade math					
Level	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Texas (AIES/TEA, 1998)		57.3%	69%	76.3%	83.8%
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 96)	48.6%	62%	58.7%	78.7%	
Houston-HISD (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	41%	36%			
Gulfton (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	43%	38%	48%	59%	

- Indicator: Reading Proficiency (TAAS reading scores – 4th grade and 8th grade)**

As table 52 shows, Gulfton 4th graders pass the reading portion of the TAAS at a lower rate than students city-, county- and statewide.

Table 52. TAAS: Students Passing 4th Grade Reading					
Level	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Texas (AIES/TEA, 1998)		80.1%	78.3%	82.5%	89.7%
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 94)	61.4%	80.8%	83.5%	85.5%	
Houston-HISD (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	71%	74%			
Gulfton (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	57.8%	65%	71.9%	75.4%	

As in math, TAAS scores decline as students move through school. The gap between Gulfton area 8th grade students and their peers at the county and state levels widened to almost 20% in 1997 as Table 53 shows.

Table 53. TAAS: Percent passing 8th grade reading					
Level	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Texas (AIES/TEA, 1998)		75.5%	78.3%	83.9%	85.3%
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 96)	65.4%	80.1%	77.6%	86.6%	
Houston-HISD (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	61%	62%			
Gulfton (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	52%	59%	57%	67%	

- Indicator: SAT Scores**

Although the mean SAT score for Gulfton is higher than the HISD mean, Lee High School may provide a more accurate examination of the population. In 1994 and 1995, Lee students were over 100 points behind the HISD mean. Change occurred in 1996 and 1997, Lee students were 3 points above all HISD high school students, and 7% below the national mean. Table 54 shows SAT scores for the years 1994-98

Table 54. SAT Mean Scores					
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
National (DRP, 1998, 13-5)	1003	1003	1010	1013	
Texas (AIES/TEA)	885	891	995	992	993
Harris County (*Children at Risk, 1998, 102)	868	880	991		
Houston (HISD School Profiles, 16)	942	945	933	938	
Gulfton: Lee HS	821	841	934	941	941
Gulfton: Bellaire HS	1053	1058	1127	1138	1139
Gulfton: mean (HISD School Profiles)	937	950	1031	1040	1040

- Indicator: Grade Retention**

Statewide grade retention rates for grades K-8 were 1.95% for the 1997-98 school year (AEIS/TEA, 1999). Gulfton retention rates were much higher. In 1993-94 academic year, 5.3% of Gulfton HISD students were retained in grade, 4.2% in the 1995-96 academic year, and 5% in 1997-98 (AEIS/TEA, 1999). Although the abolition of social promotion is a current political trend, the high-grade retention rates of Gulfton are indicators of unacceptable rates of early school failure. Table 55 shows the retention rates for Gulfton area HISD elementary and middle schools.

Table 55. Retention Rates for Gulfton area HISD Schools			
	1993-94	1995-96	1997-98
Benavidez Elementary	6.5%	4.9%	7.4%
Braeburn Elementary	4.6%	3.2%	4.3%
Cunningham Elementary	6.2%	2.6%	2.1%
Gordon Elementary	5.2%	5.5%	5.7%
Sutton Elementary	4.7%		4.9%
Jane Long Middle	7.8%	4.6%	5.3%

- Indicator: At-Risk Students**

The Texas Education Agency defines at-risk students as those who have experienced one or more of the following - course failure, TAAS failure, or falling below grade level on tests. The percentage of at risk students is outlined in table 56. Almost 60% of the students in Gulfton have been at-risk since 1994. Gulfton has a significantly greater portion of at risk students

than the city or the county.

Table 56. At-Risk Students				
Level	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 99)	42%		38.9%	
Houston – HISD (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	51%	45.3%		45.8%
Gulfton (HISD School Profiles, 1995-98)	62.6%	59.5%		59.8%

Priority Risk Factor: Lack of Commitment to School

- Indicator: Head Start Enrollment And Eligibility**

“The goal of the Head Start program is to bring about a greater degree of competence and experience for economically disadvantaged three-, four- and five-year-olds” (Children at Risk, 1998, 89). While as many as 50,000 children in Harris County may be eligible for Head Start, historically less than 20% are enrolled in the federal program. Head Start eligibility is determined by the number of 3-5 year olds that live in families with incomes at or below the poverty level. As of 6/2/97, 5,512 children were enrolled in Head Start in Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 89).

- Indicator: School Drop Out Rates**

Annual dropout rates are based on prior and current year enrollment for grades 7-12. National, state and local dropout rates are presented in table 57. Although Gulfton’s dropout rate was high in the 1993-94 academic year, it has decreased substantially in the past four years to an all-time low of 1.7% in the 1997-98 school year. Significantly, the dropout rate decreased from 4.9% to 1.7% in the past year, a 65% difference.

Table 57. Annual Dropout Rates					
Level	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
National (DRP, 1998, 19-20)		5.4%			
Texas (AEIS/TEA, 1998)		2.6%	1.8%	1.8%	1.6%
Harris County (Children at Risk, 1998, 100)		3.1%		1.5%	
Houston - HISD (AEIS/TEA, 1998)	5.9%	6.7%	3.7%	4.2%	2.8%
Gulfton - HISD (AEIS/TEA, 1998)	6.5%	5.8%	4.4%	4.9%	1.7%

- **Indicator: Average Daily Attendance**

Average daily attendance for Gulfton has been slightly lower than that of the state and very close to the attendance rates for HISD as a whole as shown in table 58.

Table 58. Attendance Rate (average daily attendance)					
Level	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98
Texas (AEIS/TEA, 1998)	95.1%	95.1%	95.1%	95.2%	
Houston - HISD (AEIS/TEA, 1998)	93.7%	94%	93.7%	93.8%	
Gulfton - HISD (AEIS/TEA, 1998)	94.1%	94.1%	93.8%	93.4%	93.4%

- **Indicator: Truancy**

During the 1997-98 school year, HISD reported a total of 19,416-truancy referrals district wide. In Gulfton area K-8 schools, there were 641 truancy referrals, 3.3% of the referrals district-wide. During this year, there were 2,119 truancy cases filed in Juvenile Probation courts and 503 on Gulfton juvenile residents (HISD 2, 1998).

INDIVIDUAL/PEER DOMAIN

Priority Risk Factor: Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior

- **Indicator: Grade At First Use - Alcohol**

The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) developed by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) includes national, state, and local surveys of secondary students. In 1995, YRBSS indicated that approximately 35% of high school students reported using alcohol before age 13 (Centers for Disease Control, 1996).

TCADA reported the following from their 1996 Texas School Survey: The average age of first use for alcohol ranged from 8.2 for 4th graders to 9.9 for 6th graders as table 27 shows. The average age of first use of alcohol was lower than for any other substance (TCADA, 1996).

Table 27. Average Age of First Use of Alcohol in Years, by Grade: 1996			
	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Alcohol	8.2	8.9	9.9

- **Indicator: Grade At First Use - Cigarettes**

Nationally, 5.5% of 7th and 8th graders reported daily use of cigarettes. Table 28 shows the percentage of students by grade that first began daily use of cigarettes (DRP, 1998, 18 – 3).

Table 28. Grade of First Use: Cigarettes, Daily Use, Reported by 12th Graders				
	1994	1995	1996	1997
6 th Grade or Below	1.9%	1.4%	1.5%	1.7%
7 – 8 th Grade	5.6%	4.9%	5.0%	5.5%
9 th Grade	4.8%	5.4%	5.9%	6.3%
10 th Grade	4.4%	4.9%	5.3%	6.4%

YRBSS reported the following national statistic taken from school-based surveys for 1995: Approximately 23 % of students surveyed had smoked a whole cigarette before the age of 13. This number is significantly higher than the rates in Table 28. The difference in the indicator, age at daily use vs. age at first cigarette, may account for this discrepancy.

Equivalent data were not available for the state of Texas, but the TCADA survey of secondary students reported that 13.6 was the average age of first use of cigarettes (TCADA, 1997). The TCADA report did not identify what percentage of the students had tried cigarettes at that age, but did identify that the average age at first use for cigarettes was lower than for any other substance other than alcohol. In their survey of elementary school students, TCADA identified that the average age for first use ranged from 8.4 for 4th graders to 9.9 for 6th graders. Table 29 shows the average age of first use of tobacco for these students (TCADA, 1996).

Table 29. X: Average Age of First Use of Tobacco In Years, by Grade: 1996

Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
8.4	9.2	9.9

- Indicator: Grade At First Use: Marijuana**

YRBSS reported in 1995 that 9.8% of the high school students surveyed had tried marijuana before the age of 13 (CDC, 1996). This figure is consistent with national data indicating that in 1997, 8.9% of 7-8th graders had tried marijuana. Table 30 shows the percentage of students by grade that first tried marijuana (DRP, 1998, 18 – 5).

Table 30. Grade of First Use: Marijuana, Reported by 12th Graders

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
6 th Grade or Below	2.3%	1.8%	1.3%	1.6%	1.3%
7-8 th Grade	6.8%	6.4%	4.8%	6.3%	8.9%
9 th Grade	6.9%	6.4%	8.0%	10.4%	12.8%
10 th Grade	6.5%	8.3%	9.4%	11.6%	12.5%

The TCADA study of elementary students indicated that marijuana usage may begin younger in Texas than in other states. In 1996, 4% of the elementary students surveyed had tried marijuana, as compared to only 1.6% of students below grade six nationally reporting marijuana use in that same year. Table 31 shows the average age of first use of marijuana in Texas elementary schools (TCADA, 1996). The average age of first use of marijuana was slightly higher in all grades than for both cigarettes and alcohol.

Table 31. Average Age of First Use of Marijuana in Years, by Grade: 1996

	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6
Marijuana	8.7%	9.8%	10.6%

V. PROBLEM BEHAVIOR INDICATORS

This section outlines problem behavior indicators that fall outside risk factor categories, or that can be interpreted as indicators for multiple risk factors. The data collection committee considers these indicators as important as the priority risk factors. Some indicators in this section have been included in other sections of the report.

- Indicator: Adolescent Pregnancies And Births To Adolescents**

Harris County has a lower teen pregnancy rate than does the United States. Nationally, there were 60 pregnant adolescents (13-17) per 1,000 in 1993 and 59 pregnant adolescents per 1,000 in 1994 (DRP, 1998, 19-1). The adolescent pregnancy rate in Harris County was much lower, at 46 per 1,000 in 1994 and 31 in 1996 (Children at Risk, 1998, 48). Texas is ahead of the nation in terms of the adolescent (15-17) birth rate. For every 1,000 births in the U.S. in 1993, teens (10-19) gave birth to 131 individuals in 1993 and 130.5 in 1994 (DRP, 1998, 19-8). In 1995, nationally 36 of every 1,000 births was to an adolescent 15-17, and statewide 51 of every 1,000 births was to an adolescent 15-17 (Kids Count, 1998).

- Indicator: Drug And Alcohol-Related Offenses**

Arrests for driving under the influence of alcohol have been declining since 1993 (DRP, 1998, 19-6). In 1996, there were 2,739,666 alcohol-related arrests in the U.S. (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1997, 362). Texas accounted for about 11% of the nationwide total. Driving Under the Influence constituted 38% of national arrests, and Drunkenness accounted for 19% of total arrests. In Texas, the majority of arrests were for Drunkenness as table 59 shows.

Table 59. Texas. Arrests for Alcohol-Related Offenses 1996
(Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics, 1997, 362)

<i>Offense</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent of Total</i>
Driving Under the Influence	75,497	24.3%
Liquor Law Violations	24,286	7.8%
Drunkenness	168,801	54.5%
Disorderly Conduct	40,460	13.1%
Vagrancy	837	.3%
Total	309,881	100%

Harris County accounted for 12.4% of statewide DWI arrests, 13.9% of statewide Liquor Law Violations, and 20.5% of statewide public intoxication arrests. Between 1996 and 1997, there were increases in public intoxication, drug possession and all drug offenses in Harris County as table 60 shows.

Table 60. Harris County Drug and Alcohol-Related Offenses (TCADA, 1998)

<i>Offense</i>	<i>Arrests</i>		<i>Percentage of All Arrests</i>		<i>Change</i>
	1996	1997	1996	1997	
DWI	9325	6713	2.1%	1.6%	- 2612 (28%)
Liquor Law Violations	3382	3152	.8%	.8%	- 230 (6.8%)
Public Intoxication	34,655	32,583	7.8%	8%	+ 2072 (6%)
Drug Trafficking	197	183			- 14 (7%)
Drug Possession	14,320	15,433	3.2%	3.8%	+ 1113 (7.8%)
All Drug Offenses	14,517	15,616	3.3%	3.8%	+1099 (7.6%)

Nationwide, arrests by the Drug Enforcement Administration increased 32% between 1992 and 1997 from 24,858 to 32,762. Arrests for dangerous drugs (stimulants – methamphetamine, depressants – barbiturates, and hallucinogens – LSD and PCP) increased 132% between 1992 and 1997. Arrests for unknown drugs increased almost thirteen-fold in this five-year period. This period also saw an increase in heroin, cocaine and cannabis arrests by 24%, 15% and 14% respectively (Sourcebook of Criminal Justice statistics, 1997, 370).

- **Indicators: Alcohol And Drug-Related Traffic Accidents, Injuries And Fatalities**

Nationally the proportion of fatal alcohol-related traffic injuries decreased from 44% in 1993 to 41% in 1994 and 1995 (DRP, 1998, 19-3). In 1995, there were 2,578 alcohol-related and 101 drug-related non-fatal accidents, and 104 fatal alcohol-related accidents in Harris County. Also in 1995, there were 4,859 non-fatal alcohol related traffic injuries, and 109 fatal alcohol-related traffic injuries in Harris County. That same year in Harris County, there were 213 non-fatal drug-related traffic injuries and 25 fatal drug-related traffic accidents (TCADA, 1996). The number of AOD-related deaths increased by almost 4% between 1993 and 1994 from 32,832 to 34,086 (DRP, 1998, 19-4).

- **Indicator: Drug Use By Students - Alcohol**

The CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) reported the following national statistics taken from school-based surveys for 1995: Over 79% of high school students reported drinking alcohol at least once in their lifetime, while 30.7% reported episodic heavy drinking. About fifty percent (50.3%) of students were engaged in current alcohol use (CDC, 1996).

The Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA) reports the following from their 1996 Texas School Survey (n=68,239), a biennial, statewide survey monitoring substance use among public school students: Elementary students were about one-half as likely as secondary students to report ever having used alcohol (TCADA, 1996).

Alcohol is the most widely used substance among Texas elementary students. In 1996, about one-third of students in grades 4-6 had ever drunk alcohol. About 15% of 4th graders, 19% of 5th graders, and 28% of 6th graders had consumed alcohol during the past school year. All of these figures are down from the last survey in 1994. Sixteen percent of elementary students had drunk two or more beers in a row at least once during the 1996 school year. About 35% of elementary students said that some or most of their close friends drank alcohol, and 33% of them had been offered alcohol (TCADA, 1996).

Alcohol is also the most widely used substance among Texas secondary students. About 64% of secondary students in 1996 reported using alcohol during the past school year (including the past month), while 73% of students reported lifetime alcohol use. However, both lifetime and current use decreased between 1994 and 1996. Binge drinking also decreased during that same period, but has increased since 1988. More than 9% of all secondary students went to class while drunk during the past school year. Of these, about 50% did so more than once, and 20% did so four or more times (TCADA, 1997). About 57% of secondary students reported that alcohol was used at some parties they attended during the past school year. About 75% said that alcohol was very or somewhat easy to obtain. Students who had missed class or had conduct problems in school were more likely than others to have used alcohol. Of those with no conduct problems, only 25% drank alcohol, compared to 62% of those students with conduct problems. The percentage of secondary students who had gotten into trouble with the police because of drinking has remained at 5- 6% during the past several years (TCADA, 1997).

Alcohol usage by secondary students in HISD in 1990 and in 1996 (Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University, 1996) has decreased from 78.6% in 1990 to 73.2% in 1996.\

- **Indicator: Drug Use By Students - Cigarettes**

The CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) reports the following national statistics taken from school-based surveys for 1995: About 71% of high school students reported using cigarettes at least once in their lifetime, about 31% reported current cigarette use, and about 11% reported frequent use of cigarettes. About 7% reported use of smokeless tobacco.

TCADA reported in 1996 that both lifetime and past-year use of tobacco among elementary students decreased from 1994 to 1996. For secondary students, lifetime and current prevalence rates for tobacco were higher than for any other substance except alcohol. Fifty-five percent reported having used some type of tobacco product during their lifetime (54% used cigarettes; 17% used smokeless tobacco). Lifetime tobacco use ranged from 41% for 7th graders to 63% for 12th graders.

Tobacco usage by secondary students in HISD in 1990 and in 1996 (Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University, 1996) has increased to 50.8% in 1996 from 47.1% in 1990.

- **Indicator: Drug Use By Students - Marijuana**

The CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) reports the following national statistics taken from school-based surveys for 1995: About 46% of high school students reported using marijuana at least once in their lifetime, and 27% reported current use.

The Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA) report the following from their 1996 Texas School Survey: Four percent of elementary students reported ever using marijuana, compared to 31% of secondary students. Lifetime use of marijuana among elementary students decreased from 6% in 1994 to 4% in 1996, but past-year use increased in 1996 to 3%. Sixth graders in particular showed a large increase in past-year use, from 2% in 1992 to 5% in 1996

For secondary students, in 1996, marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug and the third most prevalent substance (after alcohol and tobacco). Lifetime marijuana use was 31%. As many as 8% of students reported using marijuana on a daily or weekly basis (up 3% from 1992). Fifty-three percent said that marijuana was very or somewhat easy to obtain. Only 17% of past-month marijuana users regularly participated in three or more extracurricular activities, compared to 28% of non-users. Marijuana has become more popular since 1992; its current use among 8th graders has tripled over five years. Texas 8th graders were more likely than their peers nationwide to use marijuana, but 10th and 12th graders were less likely.

According to the Uniform Crime Report, the proportion of juvenile marijuana arrests to total drug offenses in Texas was 75% in 1996, an increase of 13% since 1994. Marijuana use by secondary students in HISD in 1990 and in 1996 (Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University 1996) has remained significantly lower than alcohol use, while the increase in marijuana use from 1990 to 1996 was larger, from 18.3 to 28.6, respectively.

• **Indicator: Drug Use By Students - Cocaine**

The CDC's Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) reports the following national statistics taken from school-based surveys for 1995: About 6% of high school students reported using cocaine at least once in their lifetime, and 4% reported crack or freebase use. About 4% of students were engaged in current cocaine use.

The Texas Commission on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (TCADA) report the following from their 1996 Texas School Survey (N=68,239), a biennial, statewide survey monitoring substance use among public school students: Texas 8th, 10th, and 12th graders were more likely than their peers nationwide to use cocaine. Texas 12th graders were about twice as likely than national seniors to have used cocaine in the past month.

About 7% of all secondary students reported lifetime use of cocaine, and 2% reported current use. For crack, 3% reported lifetime use and .6% reported current use. Lifetime cocaine/crack use decreased from 1988 to 1992, but rose again in 1996 to the 1988 levels. Cocaine/crack use tended to be 2 to 3 times higher among students who made poor grades. About 28% of all secondary students said that cocaine was very or somewhat easy to obtain. Twenty-five percent said the same of crack.

Cocaine/crack use by secondary students in HISD in 1990 and in 1996 (Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University 1996) was similar to marijuana use. The number of students having ever used cocaine/crack also increased, although not as significantly.

• **Indicator: Juvenile Crime**

Table 61 indicates the trends in juvenile crime over the period of 1996 through 1998, in Harris County, Houston, and the Gulfton community (Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, 1998).

Table 61. Juvenile Crime, 1996-1998

	1996			1997			1998		
	Gulfton	Houston	Harris County	Gulfton	Houston	Harris County	Gulfton	Houston	Harris County
Felony Arrests	47	786	1514	53	564	1147	76	553	1094
Misdemeanor Arrests	181	1930	4047	183	1873	3675	160	1474	3349
Violent Crimes	93	1247	2480	119	1167	2293	122	1909	3085
Homicide	0	9	19	1	6	14	0	7	13
Rape/Sexual Assault	5	41	93	5	38	66	12	18	44
Assault	86	1068	2165	99	1016	2025	104	793	1900
Robbery	2	129	201	14	107	188	6	91	128
Property Crime	135	1469	3081	117	1270	2529	114	1118	2358
Burglary	21	320	674	19	220	538	33	241	530
Theft	98	989	2125	91	944	1825	67	779	1649
Vehicle Theft	5	63	88	1	26	37	2	14	30
Drug Sales	3	53	101	11	53	83	1	46	77
Drug Possession	19	483	936	26	431	838	33	451	955
Other Crimes	187	1994	3614	162	1732	3057	167	1173	2447
Total Arrests	882	10581	21140	901	9447	18415	897	8667	17659

The number of total juvenile crime arrests in Harris County and Houston has steadily decreased since 1994, as indicated in Tables 62 and 63 (Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, 1998).

Table 62. Juvenile Crime in Houston, 1994-1998					
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Felony Arrests	1350	1246	786	564	553
Misdemeanor Arrests	3074	2507	1930	1873	1474
Violent Crimes	2346	1734	1247	1167	1909
Homicide	13	15	9	6	7
Rape/Sexual Assault	49	50	41	38	18
Assault	2046	1485	1068	1016	793
Robbery	238	184	129	107	91
Property Crime	2078	2019	1469	1270	1118
Burglary	462	460	320	220	241
Theft	1295	1238	989	944	779
Vehicle Theft	120	84	63	26	14
Drug Sales	21	29	53	53	46
Drug Possession	344	435	483	431	451
Other Crimes	3003	2822	1994	1732	1173
Total Arrests	18433	16303	12577	11444	10665

Between 1994 and 1998, the number of total juvenile crime arrests in Houston has decreased from 16,439 to 8,667, a reduction of more than 50% (Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, 1998).

Table 63. Juvenile Crime in Harris County, 1994-1998					
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Felony Arrests	2652	2449	1514	1147	1094
Misdemeanor Arrests	5462	5044	4047	3675	3349
Violent Crimes	3936	3432	2480	2293	3085
Homicide	35	29	19	14	13
Rape/Sexual Assault	114	112	93	66	44
Assault	3393	2948	2165	2025	1900
Robbery	394	343	201	188	128
Property Crime	4178	4061	3081	2529	2358
Burglary	1030	987	674	538	530
Theft	2561	2526	2125	1825	1649
Vehicle Theft	216	152	88	37	30
Drug Sales	53	85	101	83	77
Drug Possession	616	889	936	838	955
Other Crimes	5193	4859	3614	3057	2447
Total Arrests	29833	27916	21140	18415	17659

The number for Gulfton has not decreased significantly, from 994 arrests in 1994 to 897 arrests in 1998. Table 64 shows the number of juvenile arrests in Gulfton from 1994 to 1998 (Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, 1998).

Table 64. Juvenile Crime in Gulfton 1995- 1998					
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Felony Arrests	85	79	47	53	76
Misdemeanor Arrests	182	170	181	183	160
Violent Crimes	98	92	93	119	122
Homicide	2	2	0	1	0
Rape/Sexual Assault	4	3	5	5	12
Assault	81	78	86	99	104
Robbery	11	9	2	14	6
Property Crime	169	157	135	117	114
Burglary	23	34	21	19	33
Theft	114	101	98	91	67
Vehicle Theft	7	4	5	1	2

Drug Sales	0	1	3	11	1
Drug Possession	13	20	19	26	33
Other Crimes	205	259	187	162	167
Total Arrests	2988	3004	2878	2898	2895

Therefore, the amount of juvenile crime in Gulfton has continued to represent a larger percentage of the total in Houston. The percentage of Houston's total juvenile crime arrests occurring in Gulfton has steadily increased since 1994. While Gulfton comprises only 2% of the population of Houston, 6.0% of the city's juvenile crime arrests in 1994 were in Gulfton. By 1998, the percentage increased to 10.3% (Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, 1998; Planning and Development Department Research and Analysis Division, 1993). Table 65 indicates the percentage of Houston's total juvenile arrests that occurred in Gulfton between 1994 and 1998.

Table 65. Percentage of City of Houston Total Juvenile Crime Arrests in Gulfton					
Juvenile Crime	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Violent Crimes	4.2%	5.3%	7.5%	10.2%	6.1%
Homicide	15.4%	13.3%	0%	16.7%	0%
Rape/Sexual Assault	8.2%	6.0%	12.2%	13.2%	66.7%
Assault	4.0%	5.3%	8.1%	9.7%	13.1%
Robbery	4.6%	4.9%	1.6%	13.1%	6.6%
Violent Crimes Total	4.2%	5.4%	7.5%	10.2%	8.7%
Felony Arrests	6.3%	6.3%	6.0%	9.4%	13.7%
Misdemeanor Arrests	5.9%	6.8%	9.4%	9.8%	10.9%
Property Crime	8.1%	7.8%	9.2%	9.2%	10.2%
Burglary	5.0%	7.4%	6.6%	8.6%	13.7%
Theft	8.8%	8.2%	9.9%	9.6%	8.6%
Vehicle Theft	5.8%	4.8%	7.9%	3.8%	14.3%
Drug Sales	0%	3.4%	5.7%	20.8%	2.2%
Drug Possession	3.8%	4.6%	3.9%	6.0%	7.3%
Other Crimes	6.8%	9.2%	9.4%	9.4%	14.2%
Total Non-Violent Crimes	6.8%	7.6%	8.8%	9.3%	11.2%
Total Juvenile Crime Arrests	6.0%	7.1%	8.3%	9.5%	10.3%

The percentage of violent crimes committed in Gulfton has also risen, with a high of 10.2% in 1997. The number of robberies committed by juveniles in Houston has decreased approximately 60% since 1994, from a high of 238 in 1994 to only 91 in 1998. The number in Gulfton has not mirrored this trend. After a low of 2 robberies committed by juveniles in Gulfton in 1995 (1.6% of the total for that year), the number increased to 14 the following year. While the number decreased again to 6 juvenile arrests for robbery in Gulfton in 1998, that number still represents 6.6% of the juvenile arrests for robbery in Houston for that year (Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, 1998).

Also within the category of violent crimes, both assault and rape/sexual assault have increased. There were 81 juvenile assault arrests in 1994, 4.0% of the arrests for this crime in Houston that year. Since 1994, the number of juvenile assault arrests has continued to increase, with a high of 104 in 1998, which is 13.1% of the total in Houston (Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, 1998).

While the percentages for homicide and rape/sexual assault appear quite high for Gulfton, the actual numbers of these types of juvenile crime arrests are low. While there were actually more homicides committed by juveniles in 1994 and 1995, two each year, the overall number of homicides committed by juveniles in Houston has declined since reaching a high of 15 in 1995. Therefore, the one homicide committed by a juvenile in Gulfton in 1997 appears to be a drastic increase in the percentage of overall homicides. The number of rape/sexual assaults committed by juveniles in Gulfton increased over 100% in 1998. From 1994 through 1997, the number fluctuated between three and five, then increased to 12 in 1998. Since the overall number of rape/sexual assaults committed by juveniles in Houston has continue to decrease to a low of only 18 in 1998, it is significant to note that 12 of those crimes occurred in Gulfton (Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, 1998).

The percentage of non-violent crimes committed by juveniles in Gulfton has also increased steadily since 1994 and now represents 11.2% of the total in Houston. The percentage of thefts committed by juveniles in Gulfton has remained relatively stable, although the number of these crimes has decreased. The number of thefts committed by juveniles has decreased overall in Houston, from a high of 1,295 in 1994 to a low of 779 in 1998. In Gulfton, this number has also decreased from a

high of 114 in 1994 to a low of 67 in 1998. Therefore, this number has continued to represent between 8.2% and 9.9% of the total number of thefts committed by juveniles in Houston from 1994 to 1998 (Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, 1998).

The trend is similar with juvenile property crime arrests. The percentage overall has remained relatively constant, since the total number in Houston and the number in Gulfton for juvenile property arrests have both steadily declined since 1994. The number of burglaries in Houston committed by juveniles has also declined since 1994 from 462 in 1994 to 241 in 1998. The number in Gulfton has fluctuated between 23 in 1994 and 33 in 1998, with a low of 19 in 1997. Given the relative stability of this number, combined with the decrease in juvenile burglary overall in Houston, the percentage has increased during this time from 5% in 1994 to almost 14% in 1998 (Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, 1998).

Juvenile arrests for both drug sales and drug possession have risen steadily for Houston. In general, these numbers have also risen for the Gulfton neighborhood. Arrests for drug sales in Gulfton have remained relatively low with the exception of 1997, in which 11 out of the 53 juvenile drug sales arrests in Houston occurred in Gulfton. Drug possession arrests for juveniles in Gulfton have increased from a low in 1994 of 13 (3.8% of the total) to a high in 1998 of 33 (7.3% of the total) (Harris County Juvenile Probation Department, 1998).

- **Indicator: Murders**

According to the Houston/Harris County Child Fatality Review Team, the number of juvenile victims of homicide fell from a high of 54 in 1995, to 37 in 1996 and 46 in 1997 (Barge, 1999).

VI. LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LIMITATIONS

Several barriers limited data collection. These barriers can be separated into two general categories.

Systemic Issues

Data for most of the data indicators are not collected specifically for the Gulfton community. Information for a geographical area of one ZIP code is not readily available. Data that included Gulfton were often part of a larger data set for the City of Houston or Harris County and could not always be extracted, either by the committee or the agency contacted. Several agencies contacted for data by the committee were unable to provide information. Some of these agencies could not release the data due to issues of confidentiality. Other agencies collect a wide assortment of data; however the data are not readily available.

Data Collection

Survey data for many of the indicators are not standardized. Comparisons of information from national, state, and local sources were therefore less accurate. Data are not collected using equivalent parameters from agency to agency. Missing data: Overall, much of the data identified for the risk factors were not available. Discrepancies in data: Data regarding the same indicator from different sources had discrepancies that were beyond the scope of this report to address. These discrepancies are so noted in the text.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has sought to provide a baseline of information about the Gulfton community as it relates to Houston, Texas, and the United States. The information in this report is intended as a tool for the development of a comprehensive Strategy for Gulfton. The following recommendations are suggestions to enhance the efficacy of the Data Collection and Analysis committee in preparing future reports about Gulfton.

- **Recommendation:** Communication between agencies should be improved for a more efficient data collection process.

Better communication between agencies would improve access to critical information, reduce duplication of effort in the data collection process. In addition, key community members with experience should be identified to serve on the committee, or in advisory roles. Inclusion of a wide range of people in the process will maximize the ability of the committee to obtain information about Gulfton.

- **Recommendation:** Data should be consistently available from agencies.

Although this recommendation implies large-scale systemic change, being able to aggregate data by one geographical area/zone (i.e., zip code, census tract, police beat) will make equivalent statistical comparisons more accurate. In addition, data should be free and readily accessible. Raw numbers as well as statistics should be available.

- **Recommendation:** Set a standard process for data collection.

The data collection process should be an ongoing effort with a standardized procedure determined by the Data Collection and Analysis committee. These procedures should be aimed at streamlining the process and may include updating data collection forms and re-examining survey instruments in the effort to standardize the information obtained to provide more accurate comparative information.

- **Recommendation:** Better utilize resources in the committee.

This expansion of the data collection process could involve: including a profession demographer on the Data Collection and Analysis committee; collaborating with local universities to conduct surveys in Gulfton; and assessing community-based organizations in the Gulfton neighborhood to better determine if these agencies have collected information pertinent to the data collection process.

- **Recommendation:** Consider effective ways of overcoming the barrier of obtaining data about the undocumented population in Gulfton.

Anecdotal reports suggest a large undocumented population in Gulfton. Information about this population is critical to the accuracy and usefulness of future Data Collection and Analysis reports. Community-based organizations in Gulfton may be able to provide suggestions for obtaining information about this population.

CHAPTER THREE

RESOURCE ASSESSMENT REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Resource Assessment Team was responsible for collecting information about existing prevention and graduated sanction programs in Gulfton. The Team used this information to identify key issues and gaps related to the programs and to make recommendations.

The Resource Assessment Team identified all known programs that are either located in Gulfton or that provide services to children, youth, and families who reside in Gulfton. In all, the team listed eighty-eight programs. Demographic information was compiled for each program, including services, hours of operation, ages served as well as other restrictions, time frames for service delivery, location of program or agency, and funding source. The Teams purpose was to assess the available programs and resources, not to create a resource directory. Many resource directories for children and youth services in Houston/Harris County already exist, including one designed specifically for the Gulfton community.

Next, the Team divided the programs into the categories of Prevention, Intervention, Supervision and Aftercare. The State of Texas Progressive Sanctions Guidelines were consulted for this task. The Progressive Sanctions Guidelines were implemented January 1, 1996. The Guidelines are a set of disposition guidelines contained in Chapter 59 of the Texas Family Code. Their use is discretionary and not mandated by law. The purposes of the Progressive Guidelines are to:

- Ensure that juvenile offenders face uniform and consistent consequences and punishments that correspond to the seriousness of each offender's current offense, prior delinquent history, special treatment or training needs, and effectiveness of prior interventions;
- Balance public protection and rehabilitation while holding juvenile offenders accountable;
- Permit flexibility in the decisions made in relation to the juvenile offender to the extent allowed by law;
- Consider the juvenile offender's circumstances; and
- Improve juvenile justice planning and resource allocation by ensuring uniform and consistent reporting of disposition decisions at all levels.

PROGRAMS

The various programs were reviewed, evaluated and divided into four categories as described in the State of Texas Progressive Sanctions Guidelines.

PREVENTION

Youth that are at risk of delinquency and their families. These youth are not currently involved on the Progressive Sanctions Guidelines. Participation in prevention programs is voluntary.

INTERVENTION (AT-RISK YOUTH)

Sanctions Level One and Two offenders. These youth are commonly referred to as CHINS (Conduct Indicating a Need for Supervision). Sanctions Level One youth are identified due to status offenses and/or other class C misdemeanors. These youth are referred to City Municipal or County Justice of the Peace Courts. Sanctions Level Two youth commit Class A and B misdemeanors other than the misdemeanor involving use of a firearm. Sanctions Level Two youth are served in a three or six-month deferred prosecution program administered by the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department.

SUPERVISION (IMMEDIATE SANCTIONS)

Youth that have been adjudicated in a Juvenile Court. These youth are assigned to Sanctions Levels Three to Five where they are on court ordered probation at home in the community or placed in a county correctional facility. The institution may be secure or non-secure. Sanctions Level Six refers to youth committed to the Texas Youth Commission, while Level Seven requires certification to criminal court or determinate sentencing.

AFTERCARE (PAROLE)

The Texas Youth Commission serves Sanctions Level Six offenders in state correctional facilities. Texas Youth Commission's Aftercare, also known as parole, is designed to ensure that progress made while in a Texas Youth Commission Program will be maintained once a youth has been released to his/her home. Parole Officers focus on facilitating a youth's successful transition from a residential program back into the community. Texas Youth Commission youth in the 77081 zip code are assigned a specific parole officer. Parole officers provide required and identified services to youth assigned to their caseloads. These services are necessary to provide care, custody, and control of youth in the community.

There are numerous ways that the programs serving children, youth and families can be classified. The Resource Assessment Workgroup, based on their understanding of the goals and objectives of the Comprehensive Strategy Process, selected the classification format for this report. As with all classification methods, there are several limitations that need to be qualified.

In a community with the demographics of Gulfton, the argument can be made that all prevention programs are intervention and thus fall in the Intervention Programs category.

Whereas Supervision Programs serve only adjudicated youth, a majority of the other programs surveyed serve youth and families in both the Prevention and Intervention Programs categories.

There will be youth that have been adjudicated and have participated in Intervention Programs and satisfied the terms of their probation (court ordered supervision and/or placement). Despite their history, Prevention Programs would currently serve these youth.

After the Data Collection Workgroup identified the Priority Risk Factors for the Gulfton Community, the Resource Assessment Workgroup reviewed the programs surveyed and placed them in a category as described above for those which met one or more of the Priority Risk Factors chosen. Further information was gathered about these programs for this report. Finally, the selected programs were examined and current gaps were identified for each Priority Risk Factor.

COMMUNITY DOMAIN

Priority Risk Factor: Extreme Economic Deprivation

Children who live in poor, deteriorating neighborhoods where the community perceives little hope for the future are more likely to develop problems with delinquency, teen pregnancy, and dropout of school. Also, children who live in these areas and have behavioral or adjustment problems early in life are more likely to have problems with drugs later on.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS

The **Houston Police Department's PANDA Program** assists families with children up to sixteen years old obtain basic needs. The PANDA Program provides this service seven days a week, with twenty-four hour availability. **Casa Maria** and the **Christian Community Service Center** provide concrete needs including food and clothing at specified days and times, Monday through Friday. The **Christian Community Service Center** located by the Compaq Center serves seventeen zip codes in addition to Gulfton.

In regard to Government Programs, the **Texas Department of Human Services** administers **TANF, Food Stamps and Medicaid**. Gulfton residents travel to the office on Harwin in the 77036 zip code to obtain these services. This office serves six zip codes besides Gulfton. The **WIC Program** is available in Gulfton and the **Summer Lunch Program** operates at several area sites, Monday through Friday. In addition to WIC, a monthly nutrition parent education class is held at Cunningham Elementary School.

The **Klein Day Care Center** is subsidized by Neighborhood Centers, Inc. to accept children from low-income families. The **Bridge El Puente** has a daycare center for children up to six years old for residents in the Napoleon Square Apartment Complex.

Health care resources available in Gulfton include the **Jane Long Clinic** operated by **Memorial/Hermann**. The clinic provides basic physical and mental health care services for youth up to eighteen years old at Jane Long Middle and Sutton Elementary Schools. **CHRIST US HEALTH** offers well childcare, immunizations and prenatal care. A **Planned Parenthood** clinic is located in Gulfton. Additionally, **DePelchin's Teen Pregnancy, Prevention and Education Program** offers counseling to students eleven to eighteen years old at Jane Long Middle School. **Casa Maria** has a physician on site two times per week for undocumented immigrants. **GANO CARECEN** is creating a group of promoters to work with families to prevent and solve health problems.

G.E.D. classes are available at the Las Americas Apartment Complex and Cunningham and Sutton Elementary Schools. **Adult E.S.L. classes** are offered at all elementary schools serving Gulfton, Jane Long Middle School and Casa Maria. **Computer classes** for adults are held at Jane Long Middle School on Saturday mornings and the Bridge El Puente for residents of Napoleon Square.

GANO CARECEN provides legal aid and other assistance for immigrants and refugees, including the Day Labor Site and a detention watch program. **Citizenship** classes are offered at Cunningham Elementary School.

Finally, the **CYD Hope Intervention Team** offers intensive home-based case management for youth age six to twenty-one and their families. The Team can work with up to twenty-five families at a time. The Hope Intervention Team responds to family crisis twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

Sanctions Level One youth and their families served by the **TRIAD Prevention Program** and Sanctions Level Two youth served through the **Harris County Juvenile Probation Department Deferred Prosecution Program** qualify for financial support through the **Criss Cole Children's Fund**. The purpose of the Criss Cole Children's Fund is to help with special needs that cannot be met through family resources, public funds or social service agencies. The TRIAD Prevention Program youth service specialist or a deferred prosecution officer initiates the application on behalf of the family. Sanctions Level Two youth are also eligible for free eye exams and glasses, if necessary. **The University of Houston School of Optometry** provides this service for the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department.

SUPERVISION PROGRAMS

Adjudicated youth on probation also qualify for application to the **Criss Cole Children's Fund** and vision screening. Additionally, youth can be mandated to participate in the **Juvenile Probation Department's Youth Education/Employment Services (Y.E.E.S.) Program**. The Y.E.E.S. Program provides supplemental tutorial, remedial and pre-employment training.

IDENTIFIED GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation:** Develop a plan for coordinating and enhancing outreach efforts to all residents in Gulfton.

Many programs are located in the schools, at Napoleon Square, Las Americas and Jefferson House Apartment Complexes. How do we communicate service and program information to families who are not well connected to the schools or do not reside in one of these selected complexes? The high number of illegal immigrants in Gulfton makes this an even more difficult challenge. With limited transportation, it is essential that programs and services be located in Gulfton and available to all regardless of residence or the school the children attend.

- **Recommendation:** Develop and enhance linkages with the faith-based and business communities.
- **Recommendation:** Expand vocational training options beyond computer skills and G.E.D. preparation.

Develop collaborations with Houston Community College or other local universities as well as businesses, schools and corporations to bring training programs in trades and technical skills to Gulfton.

- **Recommendation:** Address the lack of shelters and other supports for homeless families in or accessible to Gulfton.

FAMILY DOMAIN

Priority Risk Factor: Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behaviors

Parental attitudes and behavior toward drugs, crime and violence influence the attitudes and behavior of children. Children of parents who approve or excuse their children for breaking the law are more likely to develop problems. Children whose parents engage in violent behavior inside or outside the home are at greater risk for exhibiting violent behavior. If family members use illegal drugs around children, if there is heavy recreational drinking in the home, or if adults in the family involve their children in their drinking or other drug use, such as asking a child to get a beer or light a cigarette, the children have an increased risk of developing problems with alcohol or other drugs as well. Parental approval of children's moderate drinking, even under parental supervision, increases the risk of their children's use of alcohol and other drugs.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Some home-based programs for families with young children are available to Gulfton residents. **Healthy Families Initiatives** assist parents to improve their relationship with their newborn infants and to access community services. They also provide voluntary home visitation to teach childcare, to identify problems early, and to respond to learning and emotional problems. Services are initiated prenatal or at birth for a period of up to five years. **The Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Cradles Program** offers home-based case management and support to mothers who used chemicals prenatal and/or gave birth to a drug-exposed infant. **Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority's Early Childhood Intervention Program** utilizes case management, family education, advocacy and support for families with children up to three years old who meet their priority population. **The Southwest Houston Family Outreach Center** trains volunteer case managers to provide home-based counseling and support for troubled families. The Program assists the Texas Department of Protective and Regulatory Services-Children's Protective Services Program with "at-risk" cases that would otherwise not receive help. **CHRIST-US HEALTH-Family Roads** offers a "baby buddies" program.

Besides the English as a Second Language (ESL) classes held at all schools, Sutton Elementary holds **literacy classes in Spanish** and has monthly speakers on topics like domestic violence, anger management, etc. An annual Family Reading Night is held at Cunningham Elementary School. Additionally, the school's monthly **"Books and Breakfast" Program** teaches parents how to help their children with schoolwork. **A Parent Involvement Program** is available at Benavidez Elementary School.

The Bridge El Puente in Napoleon Square Apartment Complex and DePelchin Children's Center at Jefferson House strengthen families by enhancing parenting skills and building the self-esteem of the family. These goals are accomplished by providing a Family Resource Center, bilingual parenting classes, support groups, personal development workshops, and family support services and enrichment events. **Bilingual parenting classes** are also offered at the Las Americas Apartment

Complex. **Parents Anonymous** holds weekly support meetings in the Bellaire area.

For families with late elementary, middle and high school age youth, **the Harris County Children's Protective Services-Community Youth Services (CYS) Program** provides crisis intervention counseling and case management services that offer practical assistance to families of youth who are experiencing problems. In counseling families, CYS also searches among the many agencies throughout greater Houston to locate and to help families obtain other needed social services to resolve family problems. Services can be provided in the home, on the school campus or in the community. The CYS five session's **Parent-Teen Survival course**, addresses issues of anger management, conflict resolution and mediation. The Course, held at the Chimney Rock Center is offered in English and Spanish. **The Trinity Life Center's-Services to at-risk Youth Program (STAR)** provides short term, home-based counseling, parent skills training and mentoring for youth ages seven to seventeen and their families. **In the TRIAD/MHMRA Family Preservation Unit**, therapeutic services and skills training are provided in-home by a senior caseworker that meets weekly with the family and biweekly with the child in school. Services include case management, crisis intervention, education regarding the child's mental illness and skills-based training.

The Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse offers culturally appropriate parenting programs at area schools and other locations throughout the community. **The DePelchin Children's Center** offers crisis intervention, individual, group and family therapy, a violence prevention curriculum and parent skills training at Jane Long Middle School.

Finally, **GANO CARECEN-HACER** is promoting multi-cultural sentiment, understanding and appreciation of families in the community.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

County Justice of the Peace and Municipal Courts utilize the leverage of the court to mandate the participation of Sanctions Level One youth and their families to selected prevention programs described above. Judge Mark Fury (Precinct 5, Place 1) commonly refers Gulfton youth and their families to the **Trinity Life Center-STAR Program, the CYS Program, the CYS Parent-Teen Survival Course and the MHMRA/TRIAD Family Preservation Unit**. Community Service hours, in lieu of fines, are awarded for successful participation and completion of the prevention program ordered.

Families of youth received at the TRIAD Prevention Program are also referred to the above prevention programs. The TRIAD Prevention Program for Sanctions Level One and the deferred prosecution program for Sanctions Level Two youth, qualify for family therapy at the Chimney Rock Center. **Barbara Thomas and Associates** provide therapy through a contract with the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department. The programs also refer to the **Escape Center's Families Forward Program**. Families Forward Program is a specialized parenting class for parents of youth entering the Juvenile Justice System. The class meets on Saturday mornings at the Children's Protective Services office on the Southwest Freeway.

SUPERVISION PROGRAMS

Youth on probation are mandated to participate in services. Some of these services require parental and/or family involvement. The services are coordinated by the probation officer who works at a **Field Services Office located in Gulfton (CUPS V)**. Mandated services can include short-term contract family therapy in order to assist in the resolution of family problems. Attendance at **Families Forward and/or Parent Effectiveness Training** as well as monthly parent/child workshops are held at the Field Services Office. **Parent's Anonymous** and **the Phoenix Project** are also available for families with youth on probation.

IDENTIFIED GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The available family programs focus on skill-based training and/or intervention. There are few programs that offer social/recreational/enrichment activities on a consistent basis. This gap needs to be addressed because there is neither a public library nor a YMCA in Gulfton.

Recommendation: Considerations for an urban harvest project (currently in place in the fifth ward) and family outings and sports programs can be examined. A new or existing facility can be developed as a community-gathering place for these activities.

- Family violence intervention programs and shelters were not identified in Gulfton or accessible to Gulfton residents.

SCHOOL DOMAIN

Priority Risk Factor: Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School

Children who do poorly in school in approximately the fourth through sixth grades have an increased risk in engaging in problem behaviors. Children fail in school for a variety of reasons—boredom, lack of ability, a mismatch with a poorly skilled teacher—but it appears that the experience of failure itself, not necessarily ability, increases the risk of problem behaviors.

Priority Risk Factor: Lack of Commitment to School

Children who are not bonded to school for whatever reasons are more likely to engage in alcohol and other drug use, delinquency, teen pregnancy, and school dropout. Factors such as how students like school, time spent on homework and perception of the relevance of courses are also related to their involvement in problem behaviors.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS

Neighborhood Centers Inc. Head Start Program provides each child with services that include education, nutrition, and health. Specialized services are provided for disabled students. In addition, comprehensive social services as well as educational activities are provided for the families. The program operates Monday-Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. The **Houston Independent School District** operates a pre-kindergarten at the Las Americas Apartment Complex.

At the annual **Prime Time Reading Program** at Cunningham Elementary School, third and fourth grade children meet at the school from 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. The students go from room to room doing different reading related activities. **Texas Starbase (Students Thinking and Acting Responsibly)** provides an educational outreach program for fourth and fifth grade students to experience hands-on high technology and explore career fields of aviation and aerospace. The Starbase program curriculum focuses on teamwork skills, enhancement of self-esteem, personal empowerment, the relevancy of school and learning of the actual workplace, drug prevention, goal setting, and the excitement of science/technology learning. Students are selected through the Gulfton Elementary Schools. Starbase works with students of **Campo del Sol** at Burnett Bayland Park. **After school tutorials** are available at Braeburn, Gordon, Cunningham, and Benavidez Elementary schools as part of the extended day programs. **The Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse's Camp Twist and Shout** is an after school program for fourth and fifth graders. Bilingual counselors lead the students in fun, creative learning activities designed to help them reach their full potential.

Through community based partnerships, Jane Long Middle School offers several innovative programs. **Phillips Petroleum sponsored GCAME** involves field trips and compensations to increase students' success in math and science. **The 600-Minute Club, sponsored by AOL and Six Flags**, provides incentives for students who log 600 minutes of parent-supervised reading. **Precinct Three Commissioner Steve Radack sponsored STARS incentive Program** is designed to recognize and reward students who demonstrate the quality of good citizens or have shown a special effort to improve grades, attendance or behavior at school. This award is for students who might not ordinarily receive recognition, but who deserve it. In addition, the **school library** provides extended hours to address students' difficulties in accessing public library services. TAAS tutorials are provided to one hundred students twice weekly and for two hundred students on Saturday mornings.

The Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse's - Reconnecting Youth is a school-based program targeting young people in grades nine through twelve at Lee and Bellaire High Schools. Students are identified due to poor academic performance/attendance, substance use, suicidal ideation and anger/depression. The program teaches personal growth by incorporating social support and life skills training to enhance self-esteem, decision-making, personal control and interpersonal communication. Reconnecting Youth is a semester long one hour credited course graded on a traditional system of A through F or satisfactory/unsatisfactory. **Youth Advocates, Inc.** accepts self-referrals from youth between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one, who have problematic histories in school, home and in the community. Program services include educational support and tutoring.

Charter schools in, or accessible to, Gulfton include **Kaleidoscope** at Cunningham Elementary School. Kaleidoscope is open to sixth and seventh grade students. Kaleidoscope emphasizes parent involvement and has a photography program with resources provided by Kodak, Fuji and Fotofest. The students combine photography and creative writing. **Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP)** is an academic charter school program for 275 students in the fifth to ninth grades. The emphasis is

on college preparatory work.

Jump start, the Bridge School, Barbara Jordan Strive Program and Kay On-Going Education Center are all alternative programs that serve Gulfton youth. However, these schools are all located a good distance from Gulfton. Jump-start is an accelerated program for sixty overage eighth graders who have been retained at least one time. The Bridge School is an alternative charter school for up to 300 students at-risk of dropping out of school. This is an accelerated program in which students can obtain up to eight high schools credits per academic year. The Barbara Jordan STRIVE Program emphasizes job training skills, a specialized remedial curriculum and counseling to encourage high school graduation and post-secondary education. Few Gulfton students take advantage of this magnet program because of the travel inconvenience. Kay On-Going is a Secondary alternative school for pregnant HISD Students.

Community Education Partners (CEP) is a school for at-risk students in grade six to twelve. The CEP campus hosts an H.I.S.D. charter school and the **Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP)**. Acceptance to the charter school is by referral from the home school and is based on review of the student's academic and behavioral at-risk status as outlined in Chapter 29.081 of the Texas Education Code. The goal of CEP is to address learning deficits and advance a student's skill level in mathematics and reading by two grade levels through accelerated instruction. The JJAEP is for students who have been expelled from their home school district. Many of the students at the CEP are involved in the Juvenile Justice System and have an assigned sanctions level.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

No programs were identified for Sanctions Level One and Two youth that specifically address this risk factor in Gulfton. The CYS, TRIAD/MHMRA and Trinity Life Center STAR program address school and education related issues as part of their family intervention.

SUPERVISION PROGRAMS

The Harris County Juvenile Probation Department can mandate youth on court supervision to participate in the **WINGS program** and/or the **Youth Education/Employment Services (YESS)** program described earlier in this report. In the WINGS Program, youth in need of services related to their educational problems are referred to a full time educational specialist located at each field unit. The objectives of the WINGS program are to decrease the drop out rate of youth on probation and to be a resource of educational opportunities for the probation officer and youth.

IDENTIFIED GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Programs outlined here are only effective for youth that are attending school. No programs exist for youth not attending school.

- **Recommendation:** Create an ASAP Program currently in place in Precincts Six and Seven to address the problems of truancy, which is especially prevalent in Gulfton.
- **Recommendation:** Implementation of the planned Weed and Seed "Youth Watch" Program.

Address the recognition of, and intervention with, students displaying learning and other developmental disabilities prior to entering middle school.

- **Recommendation:** Implementation of Partners/5 West Helpful Intervention Program.

Address the lack of programs and educational opportunities focusing on vocational and job training skills for high school age students in Gulfton.

There are no programs available that specifically address educational issues for Sanctions Level One and Two youth.

- **Recommendation:** The WINGS and YEES Programs need to expand to include these populations.

INDIVIDUAL/PEER DOMAIN

Priority Risk Factor: Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior

The earlier young people drop out of school, begin using drugs, commit crimes and become sexually active, the greater the likelihood that they will have chronic problems with these behaviors later. For example, the earlier the onset of any drug use, the greater the probability of the individual's involvement in other drug use, the frequency of use, and their involvement in deviant activities such as crime and selling drugs. Children who begin to use before age fifteen are twice as likely to develop problems with drugs as are children who wait until they are older. Waiting till age nineteen to try alcohol and other drugs dramatically decreases the risk of drug problems.

PREVENTION PROGRAMS

After-school programs at several of the elementary schools address issues of self-confidence, peer relationships, anger management, communication, drug prevention and multiculturalism, in addition to the tutorials and study skills. **Serve Houston** administers the programs at Benavidez and Gordon. **The Houston Police Department DARE program** reaches all fourth and fifth graders at the elementary schools in Gulfton. Students at Braeburn Elementary can participate in **Ballet Folklorico** provided by **GANO/CARECEN- HACER Program**, while first graders at Gordon Elementary participate in daily dance lessons. **Cub Scout** dens for boys are held at Cunningham and Gordon Elementary Schools. **The CYD Campo Del Sol** summer programs provides educational/recreational activities and field trips Monday-Friday during the summer months for up to 300 youth between ages of six and seventeen. **Big Brothers/Big Sisters** has an office location in Gulfton. However, the waiting list is lengthy.

The City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department operates a comprehensive youth sports program at Burnett Bayland Park. Activities including T-Ball (4-6 yr.), soccer (4-18 yr.), basketball (6-18 yr.), baseball (7 – 18 yr.), and softball (7-18 yr.) are offered to Gulfton youth. **The Houston Police Department-Police Athletics League (PAL)** recently placed a staff person at Burnett Bayland Park. The PAL Program will work with youth between the ages of eight and eighteen. **The Houston Police Department** also has a **“Bikes Program”** for youth between the ages of seven and eleven.

The CYD Campo Del Sol after school program for Jane Long Middle School students includes education assistance, anti-drug/anti-violence presentations, cultural arts projects, dance, music, ecology, and field trips. Additionally, **The DePelchin Children's Center** staffs a sixth grade girls group known as the **“WNBA,”** and assists violence prevention and peer mediation programs at the middle school. **DePelchin** has a part-time social worker at Jane Long Middle School to provide **pregnancy prevention**, individual counseling and group counseling.

The Houston Police Department Explorers Post serves older youth aged fourteen to twenty. **The Youth Advocates Program**, previously mentioned, serves hundreds of gang and crime involved youth throughout Harris County, including Gulfton. Individual and group counseling, alternative activities, substance abuse education, life skills training and job search assistance are provided to youth between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one; The youth must self-refer. **The Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse- Youth Empowerment Program (YEP)**, is directed for young adults between the ages of thirteen and seventeen. The Program meets weekdays from 3:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Campo Del Sol.

In addition to the **TRIAD Family Preservation Unit**, **MHMRA** provides mental health services for children and adolescents in Gulfton at the Southwest Core Site located on Gessner in the 77063 zip code. Services include psychological and psychiatric evaluation and treatment, as well as, case management and hospitalization at the **Harris County Psychiatric Center**, when necessary. The **MHMRA -CAPES Team** is a mobile crisis intervention unit that provides immediate intervention and stabilization for children and adolescents experiencing psychiatric problems. A limited amount of funds are available for children and adolescents in need of short-term therapeutic residential placement through the Harris County TRIAD. The **Harris County Resource Coordination Group (CRCG)** staffs cases for TRIAD on a monthly basis.

The **Chimney Rock Center emergency shelter** houses runaways and youth experiencing family conflict. The shelter located in Gulfton house up to twelve males and twelve females. The shelter accepts thirty-day voluntary placements of youth, ages thirteen to seventeen, referred from the CYS and TRIAD Prevention Programs.

INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

As mentioned previously, **County Justice of the Peace and Municipal Courts** utilize the leverage of the court to mandate the participation of Sanctions Level One youth to selected prevention programs described above. Staff from the **TRIAD Prevention Program** has been assisting Judge Fury with his juvenile dockets on an informal basis. The staff person in court assists the Judge in screening and assessing youth that appear before the Court and resource them to appropriate prevention programs in the community. The Judge places these programs in the court order.

A **licensed chemical dependency counselor** from the Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse is available at the TRIAD Prevention Program Intake Area three nights a week. The counselor conducts individual pre-screenings and educational groups. The TRIAD Prevention Program Youth Service Specialist can refer youth to the **Youth Educational Shoplifting (YES) Program** administered by the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department.

Sanctions Level Two youth can qualify for the **YES Program** and the **Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Drug Free Youth Program**. Referrals are also made to the **Legal Awareness Workshop (LAW)**. The LAW Program offers parents and youth detailed information about the various aspects and goals of the Texas Juvenile Justice System. A panel consisting of juvenile judges, law enforcement officers, defense and prosecution attorneys and juvenile probation officers leads this monthly workshop held at the Juvenile Probation Department in the 77019 zip code.

SUPERVISION PROGRAMS

The Harris County Juvenile Probation Department offers a wide selection of programs and services restricted to youth on probation. **CROSSROADS** matches youth with volunteer mentors. The mentors serve as positive role models that offer guidance and support. The mentors are twenty-one years of age and older and have made a commitment to volunteer with their assigned youth for a minimum of one hour per week for one year. The **Texas Department of Criminal Justice Institutional Division-Operation Outreach** is held on Saturdays at the Sugar Land and Dayton Units. Inmates share their personal experiences and discuss what led them to prison life. The Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse places a full time **licensed chemical dependency counselor** at each **Field Services Office**. The counselor meets with youth suspected or known to be involved in substance abuse and takes whatever measures are deemed appropriate. Other services include contract individual and group therapy, the **Mothers against Drunken Driving (MADD) Victim Impact Panel**, **sex offender treatment**, monthly educational workshops, including some specializing in peer pressure and weapons, and community service/restitution projects.

AFTERCARE PROGRAMS

The **Texas Youth Commission** serves Sanction Level Six offenders in state correctional facilities. Texas Youth Commission's Aftercare, also known as parole, is designed to ensure that progress made while in a Texas Youth Commission Program will be maintained once a youth has been released to his/her home. Parole Officers focus on facilitating a youth's successful transition from a residential program back into the community. Texas Youth Commission youth in the 77081 zip code are assigned a specific parole officer. Parole officers provide required and identified services to youth assigned to their caseloads. These services are necessary to provide care, custody, and control of youth in the community.

IDENTIFIED GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Youth sports are traditionally oriented toward boys. While cub scouts is being held at two elementary schools, no mention was made of girl scouts.

- **Recommendation:** Expand after school programs to include all elementary schools in Gulfton. Develop more after school options for girls.
- **Recommendation:** Consult San Jacinto council about ways to attract Hispanic youth to scouting.

There is a lack of programs available for youth fourteen years of age and older. This is especially true for females. Solutions for how to involve in Hispanic girls, especially in adolescence, are sought.

- **Recommendation:** Youth Leadership Programs (YMCA),
- **Recommendation:** Youth Entrepreneurial Programs (El Centro de Corazon),
- **Recommendation:** Outings, camping trips, and intramural sports programs at the middle and high school level.

The only short-term mental health facility located in Gulfton is restricted to youth placed by CPS or the Juvenile Court. In addition, apart from the limited home-based and school-based mental health services, other mental health treatment providers are located outside of the 77081 zip code.

- **Recommendation:** Address the need for Mental Health Services for children and adolescents located in Gulfton.
- **Recommendation:** Address the need for short term, therapeutic residential placement.

The only known indigent substance facilities for adolescents are Houston Recovery Campus located in the Fifth Ward and Riverside located in Southeast Houston.

- **Recommendation:** Address the need for substance abuse facilities for indigent adolescents in the Gulfton area.

The Chimney Rock Center is usually at or near capacity, except in the summer months.

- **Recommendation:** Address the need for increased emergency shelter facilities for indigent adolescents.

Expand resources at the Justice of the Peace and Municipal Courts serving Gulfton by placing case managers in each court.

- **Recommendation:** Develop the level of programs and services available to the juvenile judges for youth on probation.

NEXT STEPS

The above analysis regards current availability of services and resources that are either located in Gulfton or serve children, youth or families who reside in Gulfton. The Resource Assessment Workgroup did not ascertain the numbers of children, youth and families receiving and benefiting from these services. It is our belief that many programs have not reached their full potential in this respect. Increased outreach and evaluation of local program effectiveness will contribute to the success of future services. The barriers and gaps that are significant concerns in Gulfton were identified. Continued efforts will be required to assess and address the presence of gaps in the service continuum for children, youth and families.

EXISTING PROGRAMS IN GULFTON

COMMUNITY RISK FACTORS

Extreme Economic Deprivation

Prevention	Intervention	Supervision
Houston Police Department- PANDA Program	Criss Cole Fund	Criss Cole Fund
CASA Maria	University of Houston School of Optometry- Annual vision screening and glasses.	University of Houston School of Optometry- Annual vision screening and glasses.
Christian Community Service Center		Youth Education/Employment Services (Y.E.E.S.)
Texas Department of Human Services		
WIC Program		
Summer Lunch Program		
Cunningham Elementary-Nutrition Parent Education		
Klein Day Care		
Bridge El Puente Day Care		
Jane Long Clinic		
CHRIST US Health		
Planned Parenthood		
DePelchin – Teen Pregnancy Prevention and Education (Jane Long M.S.)		
GANOCARECEN		
G.E.D. Classes (Las Americas, Cunningham and Sutton Elementary Schools)		
Adult ESL Classes (All Gulfton schools and CASA Maria)		
Computer Classes (Jane Long M.S. and Bridge El Puente)		
Citizenship Classes (Cunningham Elementary)		
CYD-Hope Intervention Team		

FAMILY RISK FACTORS

Favorable Parental Attitudes and Involvement in the Problem Behavior

Prevention	Intervention	Supervision
Healthy Families Initiatives	Justice of the Peace (Precinct 5, Place 1)	Harris County Juvenile Probation Department- Field Services Office (CUPS V)
Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Cradles Program	Barbara Thomas & Associates-Contract Family Therapy	Contracted Short-term Family Therapy
Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority- Early Childhood Intervention Program	Escape Family Resource Center-Families Forward Program	Escape Family Resource Center-Families Forward Program
Southwest Houston Family Outreach Center		Parent Effectiveness Training
CHRIST US Health-Family Roads Program		Monthly Parent-Child Workshops
Literacy Classes (Sutton Elementary School)		Parents Anonymous
Monthly Speakers (Sutton Elementary School)		Phoenix Project
Annual Family Reading Night (Cunningham Elementary School)		
Books and Breakfast Program (Cunningham Elementary School)		
PIP Program (Benavidez Elementary School)		
Bridge El Puente		
DePelchin Children's Center-Jefferson House		
Las Americas-BI-lingual Parenting Classes		
Parents Anonymous		
Harris County CPS-Community Youth Services (CYS)		
CYS-Parent-Teen Survival Course		
Trinity Life Center-Services To At-Risk Youth (STAR)		
Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority- TRIAD Family Preservation Unit		
Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-School based Parenting Programs		
DePelchin Children's Center at Jane Long M.S.		
GANOCARECEN-HACER Program		

SCHOOL RISK FACTORS

Academic Failure Beginning in Late Elementary School
Lack of Commitment to School

INDIVIDUAL/PEER RISK FACTORS

Early Initiation of the Problem Behavior

Prevention	Intervention	Supervision	Prevention	Intervention	Supervision	After-Care
Neighborhood Centers Inc.-Head Start Program		WINGS Program	Serve Houston After School Programs (Benavidez and Gordon Elementary Schools)	Justice of the Peace (Precinct 5, Place 1)	Harris County Juvenile Probation Department-Field Services Office (CUPS V)	Texas Youth Commission
H.I.S.D. Pre-Kindergarten (Las Americas Apt. Complex)		Youth Education/Employment Services (Y.E.S.S.)	Houston Police Department-DARE Program	Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-LCDC at TRIAD Prevention Program	CROSSROADS (Mentoring Program)	
Annual Prime Time Reading Program (Cunningham Elementary School)			GANO CARECEN-HACER Ballet Folklorico Program (Braeburn Elem. School)	Youth Educational Shoplifting Program (YES)	Texas Department of Criminal Justice-Operation Outreach	
CYD-Texas Starbase Program			Daily Dance Lessons (Gordon Elementary School)	Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Drug Free Youth Program	Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Drug Free Youth Program	
After School Tutorials (Braeburn, Gordon, Cunningham, and Benavidez Elem. Sch)			Cub Scouts (Cunningham and Gordon Elementary Schools)	LAW Program	Contracted Individual and Group Therapy	
Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Camp Twist and Shout			CYD-Campo Del Sol Summer Program		Mothers Against Drunk Driving-Victim Impact Panel	
Jane Long M.S.-GCAME Program			Big Brothers/Big Sisters		Sex Offender Treatment Program	
Jane Long M.S.-600 Minute Club			City of Houston Parks and Recreation Dept-Youth Sports Programs		Monthly Educational Workshops	
Jane Long M.S.-STARS Incentive Program			Houston Police Department-Police Athletics League (PAL)		Community Service/Restitution Projects	
Jane Long M.S.-TAAS Tutorials			Houston Police Dept-Bikes Program		LAW Program	
Jane Long M.S.-Extended Library Hours						
Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse-Reconnecting Youth Program			CYD-Campo Del Sol After School Program (Jane Long M.S.)			
Youth Advocates Inc.			DePelchin Children's Ctr at Jane Long M.S.			
Kaleidoscope Charter Program (Cunningham Elementary School)			Houston Police Department-Explorers Post			
Knowledge is Power Program (KIPP Academy)			Youth Advocates Inc.			
Jump Start Charter Program			Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse- Youth Empowerment Program			
The Bridge School			Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority-Child and Adolescent Clinic			
Barbara Jordan STRIVE Program			Mental Health/Mental Retardation Authority-CAPES Team			
Kay On-going Education Center			TRIAD Residential Placement Funds			
Community Education Partners (CEP)			Harris County Community Resource Coordination Group (CRCG)			
Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (JJAEP)			Chimney Rock Center Emergency Shelter			

CHAPTER FOUR

OUTREACH, COMMUNICATION & MEDIA

INTRODUCTION

The Gulfton Media Workgroup is comprised of representatives from the Mayor's Anti-Gang Office, the Houston Independent School District, Jane Long Middle School, Lee High School, the Gulfton Neighborhood Organization, DePelchin Children's Center and the Houston Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse. With the participants of this group having one common goal in mind, the improvement of the Gulfton community, it is our hope to work together to increase communication of ideas, information and well-being to the residents of this community.

Many of the Gulfton residents are unaware of the free services available to them in the community. The Weed & Seed program has developed a bilingual resource guide that will be distributed to Gulfton residents in order to increase the awareness of services provided in the Gulfton area. The guide also lists important numbers for all residents to access, such as telephone, electric, cable, area hospitals, clinics, foreign consulates, ID information, etc. These resource guides will be distributed to residents during an ongoing apartment outreach effort that occurs monthly at Gulfton area apartments.

Because Gulfton is a large cultural melting pot, it faces many challenges that most other communities would never face. Many of the residents of Gulfton do not have legal documentation to work; therefore, they are often forced to work for minimum wage or less. Developing a job resource bank for the Gulfton community will allow people to search for a job that will pay a fair wage. We also hope to design a resource bank that will allow this community to form a pool of workers that employers city-wide can access. Although many residents of the Gulfton community are undocumented, they still are a labor resource for many employers throughout the city.

A bilingual, quarterly newsletter is being developed for distribution in Gulfton. By designing a format that is easy to read, and by including submissions from the community, we hope to create a stronger sense of community. This newsletter will include information about existing programs in the community as well as information pertinent to this community, such as the requirements to obtain a gold card or updated information on obtaining a Texas ID. Currently, many of the agencies do their own newsletters or calendars of events. We believe that creating one comprehensive newsletter will show the community that all of the agencies are working together for their benefit. It will also serve as a means for small family-owned businesses to advertise without being charged.

Many issues like gang violence, HIV, teen pregnancy, truancy, illiteracy, domestic violence and alcohol abuse plague Gulfton. Very few public service announcements are targeted toward the Latino community. With a collaborative effort of the Municipal Channel, Gulfton community-based organizations and actual Gulfton residents, the Comprehensive Strategy Media Workgroup would like to develop at least five Public Service Announcements (PSA) that will air on Latino radio stations and TV stations addressing the various issues stated.

In light of the current gun slayings in Colorado and the gang problem that exists in Gulfton, it has become increasingly clear that a bilingual information/tip line for reporting crimes, potential gang violence, graffiti and other crime-related information would allow the community an anonymous forum to better their community. Currently, there is a similar system used in Conroe, Texas. By working with the Conroe system and tailoring it to the needs of the Gulfton community, it is our hope that it will assist in the reduction of crime in Gulfton.

The Weed and Seed program currently conducts an apartment outreach initiative at Gulfton area apartment complexes. By collaborating with the Houston Police Department and local social service agencies, the community receives important information and becomes familiar with local police. Many people living in Gulfton come from countries where the police represent torture, oppression, cruelty, rape and immigration authorities. It stands to reason that they are fearful of the police and often unwilling to report crimes for fear that they will be hurt or deported. By continuing this already successful venture, we anticipate that the community will become more involved in reporting crime, increasing their knowledge of resources and bonding with their community.

Many of the parents in Gulfton work two or three jobs in order to make ends meet. Currently, there is no affordable daycare

available to people in this community. By developing a daycare facility that had little or no cost, we believe that many more parents would be able to pursue some source of employment and would not need to keep their older children home to take care of younger children. Gulfton Youth Development, Weed and Seed, and the City of Houston Parks and Recreation Department collaborate to provide a summer day camp for 6-17 year olds. Many of the parents find it a valuable resource for them to be able to have their children participate in a well-supervised, educational center. By expanding this idea and creating a daycare facility for the Gulfton community many parents would be able to pursue employment and educational opportunities.

Gulfton community leaders will continue to hold neighborhood festivals like the Gulfton International Festival, Gulfton Neighborhood Cleanup and the Gulfton Community Festival. Each year these festivals draw larger crowds than the year before. We believe that by involving more residents each year, residents will continue to build a sense of ownership of this neighborhood and access information that is distributed by local Community Based Organizations (COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION) as well as being able to sell their crafts for a source of income.

With a coordinated effort between existing agencies, many of the goals stated in the Community Assessment Report can be addressed in such a way that they will effectively combat problems facing the Gulfton community.

CHAPTER FIVE

OBJECTIVE DECISION-MAKING REPORT

Risk Assessment and Classification Report

INTRODUCTION

The Risk Assessment and Classification workgroup will map the current Juvenile Justice System to identify the critical decision-making points and document the current decision-making processes (objective, multi-disciplinary teams, subjective recommendations, staff expertise, etc.) used at each decision point. The following is a review of the processes by which youth are placed or moved through the juvenile justice system. The Municipal, Justice of the Peace, Judges and Masters of the Juvenile District Courts, the District Attorney's office, and the Juvenile Justice Code make decisions involving the Juvenile Justice System in Harris County, Texas (this includes the Gulfton area).

This narrative begins with school removal because the lack of commitment to school is a significant risk factor. Most of our youth in the Juvenile Justice System have experienced difficulties in school. We then continue through the court process and the aftercare and programs/services with emphasis on modifying the Risk Assessment classification instrument toward increasing its involvement in decision-making and accuracy in the area of graduated sanctions. We conclude with a summary of recommendations.

SCHOOL SUSPENSION OR EXPULSION

The public schools in the Gulfton area (Benevidez, Braeburn, Cunningham, Gordon, and Sutton Elementary Schools, Jane Long Middle School, and Robert E. Lee and Bellaire High Schools) are a part of the Houston Independent School District (HISD) and regulated by the Texas Education Code, the Texas Education Agency, and the HISD Code of Student Conduct. Decision-making in the schools is based on five levels of offenses. Levels One through Three are handled at the school. However, Levels Four and Five involve the Juvenile Justice System. Level Four deals with delinquent/criminal behavior that may include any felony offense, whether school related or not, unless it is one for which expulsion is required. Level Four misconduct requires placement in an Alternative Education Program. Finally, Level Five deals with offenses for which a student may or shall be expelled under state law.

The decision to administer discipline requires the district personnel to adhere to the general guidelines. Once a student is placed in an alternative education program or expelled for a Level Four or Five offense, the School Administration will forward a copy of said order to the officer of the juvenile court. The juvenile court officer will determine whether a petition should be filed alleging the student is in need of supervision or has engaged in delinquent behavior or that should be referred to an appropriate state agency.

On balance, all expelled students are referred to the Harris County Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program unless a decision is made to educate the student in one of the district's alternative education programs. The Risk Assessment is not used as a tool in this process.

Interviews with school personnel indicate that parents demonstrate a lack of understanding regarding the school disciplinary process or have general apathy when their child is involved. This leads to the child having a lack of support and increases the probability of involvement in the Juvenile Justice System.

- **Recommendation:** Favorable parental attitudes beginning in late elementary school is a priority in the Gulfton area. Therefore, a community liaison to communicate between parents and school on an ongoing basis would decrease the lack of understanding and parental apathy when dealing with problem behavior in the schools.

CHILDREN'S PROTECTIVE SERVICES

An interview of Children's Protective Services personnel in the mid-management and training division was conducted to determine the process by which youth are handled and to gather recommendations regarding the system.

Children under ten years of age, who are alleged to have engaged in delinquent behavior, are considered not to be sufficiently mature to be held responsible for their own delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision proceedings. Consequently, in accordance with Title 5 of the Texas Family Code, for the state to intervene, it should do so by proceeding against the parents of the child by seeking to terminate parental rights or obtaining managing conservatorship of the child. A child who is alleged to have engaged in delinquent conduct before becoming 10 years of age might appropriately be referred to the Department of Protective and Regulatory Services for inclusion in its at-risk program. Additionally, it was reported that the problem with children threatening their parents by reporting them to CPS for disciplining them has lead to parents becoming more passive in rearing their children. Consequently, children lack consistent and firm guidance, and the probability for them to become delinquent increases. This has lead to parents giving up on their children and wanting to turn them over to Children's Protective Services and Juvenile Probation. Unfortunately, many of these cases do not meet the definition of abuse or neglect, nor have the children engaged in delinquent conduct. Consequently, the services of CPS or Juvenile Probation would not be available.

- **Recommendation:** Have an ongoing resource and community outreach program to inform parents of their legal parental rights and responsibilities.
- **Recommendation:** Increase community awareness of neighborhood counseling services and hotlines on an ongoing basis.
- **Recommendation:** Implement the use of a Risk Assessment at the Municipal and Justice of the Peace Court level to direct the parents and children to appropriate resources in the community towards preventing delinquent behavior.

ARREST

Before a juvenile can be arrested for a violation of state or city laws, a police officer must determine that there is probable cause to believe that the juvenile has committed an offense. Upon determining that the child is of appropriate age, the officer then contacts the District Attorney's office to have the charges accepted by an assistant district attorney. Once charges have been accepted, the juvenile will be transported to the juvenile division of the arresting law enforcement agency where he/she will be processed. In the Gulfton area the total juvenile arrests from 1996, 1997, and 1998 have fluctuated with a decline from 1997 to 1998. (See statistical Tables #s 61, 62, 63, and 64 of the Data Analysis Work Group report).

The demographics in the Gulfton area continue to change; therefore, officers patrolling the Gulfton community need ongoing, cross-cultural training to maintain effective relationships with the community.

- **Recommendation:** With the steady transient immigrant population in the Gulfton area, police officers could benefit from on going, cross-cultural and community awareness training to enhance their relationship with the Gulfton community.

REFERRALS

A "referral" is any alleged offense: felony, misdemeanor, conduct indicating a need for supervision, or behavior reported to the Juvenile Probation Department by police, schools, parents, or others. A referral occurs when any alleged felony or misdemeanor offense by a juvenile or behavior is reported to the Juvenile Probation Department by police, school, parents, or others.

Prior to youth becoming involved in the Progressive Sanction process, a lack of accountability and lack of available services leads to continued involvement in delinquent behavior. This generated a concern regarding referrals to the municipal and Justice of the Peace Court and has lead to a gap regarding the lack of juvenile accountability and services at this level.

Juveniles often referred for class “C” offenses (truancy, liquor violations, curfew, etc.) sometimes fail to complete their sentences (such as paying fines, performing community service, etc.). Consequently, warrants are issued for these juveniles. However, because a juvenile cannot be arrested on an outstanding warrant until he/she becomes seventeen years old, the juvenile is able to evade the consequences for not completing his/her class “C” sentence. Some of these youth are referred to the Juvenile District Court (approximately seventy-five youth per month) and placed on Deferred Prosecution should the District attorney’s Office file a petition against the child. However, more resources are needed for judges, prosecutors, and probation officers to address this issue. Otherwise, this lack of consequences leads to contempt towards the Juvenile Justice System by juveniles. In some cases the courts fine their parents. In effect, the juvenile will need to commit a more serious offense to be held to a higher level of accountability and become eligible to receive more services.

- **Recommendation:** Create more accountability at the Municipal and Justice of the Peace Court level that will provide services for parents and juveniles to prevent further involvement in the Juvenile Justice System. Also, provide more resources for the courts, prosecutors, and probation to provide accountability and services for those youth that fail to comply with sanctions at the previous level.

INTAKE SCREENING

The Intake Screening Division of the Harris County Juvenile Probation Department receives referrals from the local school districts for expelled students and those referred by the law enforcement’s juvenile crimes division, Harris County Juvenile Probation Department (HCJPD). An intake officer is assigned the responsibility of gathering the child’s information and speaking to the child about the arrest and the alleged offense. The child is required to have a probable cause hearing regarding the alleged offense within twenty-four hours of arrest. The Associate Judge makes the probable cause decision after he/she reviews the offense report. The decision to detain a juvenile pending their adjudication hearing is made by the Associate Judge after reviewing the social history report prepared by the intake juvenile probation officer. The Risk Assessment is completed after the intake officer gathers the juvenile’s social history. It is used to gather historical information about the juvenile and his or her family. Therefore, it does not make any contribution to the decision-making process at this level.

- **Recommendation:** The Risk Assessment is used to gather historical data, but would be more beneficial if restructured to provide more decision-making input at this level.
- **Recommendation:** A Needs Assessment focused on identifying and addressing needs that lead to the instant referral and any risk factors (i.e., educational assistance, counseling, parent education classes, legal awareness, etc.) that will lead to further involvement in the Juvenile Justice System. The Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) would provide technical assistance in the revising of the current Risk Assessment to allow it to contribute to the decision-making process.

DETENTION

Children referred to the Juvenile Probation Department for offenses and not released pending court are held in the Juvenile Detention Center. While in detention pending their court hearing, youth are afforded necessities, school, recreation, counseling, etc.

According to the 1997 Harris County Juvenile Probation Department annual report (page 17), 7,490 juveniles were held in detention in 1997.

PETITION

The petition is the legal document containing the allegation upon which the court's jurisdiction can be based. The petition is a formal application for judicial action, made in writing to the court by the district attorney. It alleges that the child engaged in delinquent conduct or conduct indicating a need for supervision.

PROBABLE CAUSE FOR DETENTION HEARING

The Associate Judge makes the decision for probable cause for detention pending court in most cases. The exception is when a juvenile was previously on probation and the District Judge issued a writ. The decision to detain or release the youth is based on the five reasons for detention after careful review of the social history of the juvenile prepared by the intake officer. The Risk Assessment, although completed does not have a significant contribution to the decision-making process.

- **Recommendation:** Restructure the Risk Assessment tool to be used to assist Judges in decision-making by determining the probability of re-offending and to determine if the juvenile is appropriate (i.e., chronic offender, violent offender, etc.) to for placement outside his/her home.

ADJUDICATION

Adjudication is the process of rendering a judicial decision as to whether the facts alleged in a petition or other pleadings are true. An adjudicatory hearing is the court proceeding in which it is determined whether the allegations of the petition are supported by legally admissible evidence, also called a "Jurisdiction" or an "Evidentiary" hearing. The child has a right to appear before the judge within ten working days of being detained. The child is afforded his or her right to counsel as the District Judge or jury examines the merits of the alleged offense. The child is either adjudged to have engaged in delinquent conduct or adjudged not to have engaged in delinquent conduct (after which the case is non-suited and the juvenile is free to leave).

DISPOSITION HEARING

Disposition is a decision by the judge as to which consequence the juvenile will receive once he/she has been adjudicated. Disposition can range from deferred prosecution, to probation, to probation with placement, and to commitment to the Texas Youth Commission (TYC).

The disposition hearing is based on information from interviews with the juvenile and his/her parent or guardian for the purpose gathering of information (school records, psychological/psychiatric reports, family criminal histories, etc.). This information will be prepared in a report and presented to the District Judge of the juvenile court. In addition, the probation officer will make a recommendation to the court based on the Progressive Sanctions guidelines. The District Judge will make the final determination, based in the information provided to them, as to whether the adjudicated juvenile will remain at home on probation or in placement on probation. If the District Judge makes a decision different from the Progressive Sanctions Guideline level it will be considered a deviation. Deviation sometimes leads to first time offenders for misdemeanor offenses being placed in the Intensive Supervision Program or placement outside the home before using the least restrictive alternative with respect to graduated sanctions. This leads to the Intensive Supervision and placement institutions being filled with first time, misdemeanor, and non-violent juveniles. Consequently, when these programs are inundated in this manner, their effectiveness on their original target population (felony, chronic, and violent offenders) is diminished due to the exhaustion of resources and limited personnel. The Risk Assessment is completed by the juvenile probation officer assigned to prepare the case for the adjudication hearing. However, again, it has no bearing in the decision-making process.

- **Recommendation:** Revise the Risk Assessment to classify juveniles as they enter Graduated Sanctions with emphasis on 1) the seriousness of the delinquent act; 2) the potential for re-offending based on the presence of risk factors; 3) the risk to the public safety. This will provide judges with more objective data to make decisions and potentially reduce deviations from Progressive Sanctions.
- **Note:** The use of a Needs Assessment would identify special circumstances to be addressed. However, the implementation of the Strategies for Juvenile Supervision (SJS) appears adequate at this task.

CUSTODY/PLACEMENT

When a juvenile is removed from the home, the Placement Staffing Committee or the Burnett Bayland Reception Center will consider all available placement alternatives based on the psychological and/or psychiatric evaluations, offense, home environment, etc. Juveniles are placed in the Burnett-Bayland Home, Harris County Youth Village, and Delta-3 Boot Camp. All females and some males are referred for private placement. Sometimes prior to court, placement options are recommended in a court report for the judge's consideration. Progressive Sanctions are considered, but the Judges have the legal authority to deviate based on the information provided to them. This may result in first time or misdemeanor offenders being placed in more restrictive facilities causing the release of felony and chronic offenders. (1997 HCJPD annual report statistics show 301 juveniles were placed in private placements.) Juveniles in placement receive services such as individual and family counseling, educational assistance, recreational therapy, community service and also participate in many programs toward preparing them for successful reintegration into the community.

- **Recommendation:** Use the Risk Assessment to provide judges with more objective data to determine if placement is actually needed based on the risk of re-offending.
- **Recommendation:** Use the Needs Assessment along with Strategies for Juvenile Supervision (SJS) to determine the type and length of placement.

RELEASE/AFTERCARE

With the judge's approval, via change of custody order, juveniles are released from placement based on progress made toward their individual treatment plan (individual/family counseling, educational progress, special programs, etc.) and the cooperation of their parents or guardians. Based on interviews with personnel in the Juvenile Probation Department and placement employees, a massive influx of juveniles can expedite early release due to limited space. This results from misclassification and deviation from the Progressive Sanctions Guidelines.

- **Recommendation:** Use of the revised Risk Assessment in conjunction with the psychological, psychiatric testing, social history, etc. in deciding how youth are placed would allow for the efficient use of placement space and resources and minimize early release of chronic, felony, and violent offenders.

PROBATION SUPERVISION

Probation is a legal status in which a child, following adjudication of an alleged offense or other misconduct, is permitted to remain in the community subject to the supervision of the court through the Juvenile Probation Department or any agency designated by the court

Juveniles placed on probation for community supervision are either on regular probation supervision or intensive supervision (Serious Offender Supervision Program). Once received by the supervising probation officers in these programs, a Risk Assessment is completed to determine the juvenile's level of supervision. The Strategies for Juvenile Supervision (SJS) is an assessment tool used to assess the type of offender and identify his/her needs toward assisting the juvenile probation officer in developing a case plan for supervision.

The Risk Assessment is completed, but does not play a role in deciding what programs or services the juvenile will receive. The Risk Assessment only determines the level of contact with the JPO in the regular probation units. On the other hand, in the Intensive Probation units the program guidelines establish the level of contact between the youth and the probation officer. In this case the Risk Assessment serves only to provide historical information that will follow the youth throughout his or her term on probation.

According to the 1997 Harris County Juvenile Probation annual report. Approximately 3,663 youths were under supervision each month in 1997 (page 21).

PAROLE SUPERVISION

The Texas Youth Commission makes the decision to release a youth from their state schools under parole supervision based on the type of offender and the youth's progress toward his/her Individualized Case Plan (ICP). The Texas Youth Commission (TYC) classifies offenders based on the most serious offense documented in the youth's records.

REVOCATION

The decision to revoke a juvenile's probation is made by the District Judge after hearing the merits of a new offense or violation of probation alleged against the juvenile.

The decision to revoke a juvenile's parole is determined by a Hearing Examiner, who is a licensed attorney, after reviewing the allegations presented by the parole officer and the juvenile's attorney. Subsequently, the Hearing Examiner will decide the case based on the preponderance of the evidence.

DISCHARGE

Discharge of a juvenile from probation is based on the length of the probationary term. In some cases juveniles are granted early termination of probation based on circumstances approved by the judge, such as completion of all special rules of probation, employment, college enrollment, etc. The ultimate decision to grant early termination is made by the District Judge.

LENGTH OF STAY

The length of stay in treatment facilities is determined by the youth's progress toward his/her level system and treatment plan, the Risk Assessment score, and availability of space due to massive influx of new clients. Length of stay is sometimes limited based on the space available space.

- **Recommendation:** Reducing placement of first time, nonviolent, and misdemeanor offenders via deviation from Progressive Sanctions would improve the length of stay for chronic, violent, and felony offenders. This would satisfy addressing the needs of these offenders and protecting the public from those youth who demonstrate the greatest threat to public safety.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Harris County Juvenile probation Department offers programs and services that include: Drug Free Youth Program (DFY also provide parent education classes), educational workshops, Mentor Program, Peer Pressure workshops, Prohibited Weapons Workshop, Community Service Restitution Program, Parent Training Workshops, Vision Care, Youth Education and Employment Services (Y.E.E.S.), Families Forward Program, Victims Voices, Mother's Against Drunk Drivers, Texas Department of Department Outreach and Operation Kick-It Programs, Wings/Comet Educational Programs, Therapeutic Counseling, etc.

IDENTIFIED GAPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Comprehensive Strategy focuses on prevention and the least restrictive sanction to protect the community and the child. However, interviews with Juvenile Probation Officers and Children's Protective Services personnel indicate that there is a gap before Progressive Sanctions in the assigning of services and accountability for juveniles who indicate potential for involvement in the Juvenile Justice System demonstrated by school problems, parent/child conflict, and the commission of Class "C" offenses.
- Parents continue to report to CPS caseworkers and JPOs that their children threaten to turn them over to CPS if the parents impose discipline on them. This results in parents becoming frustrated and seeking to turn their children in to CPS or Juvenile Probation. Neither Children's Protective Services or Harris County Juvenile Probation is unable to assign services because neither the youth nor their circumstances fall within their domain.
- There is a lack of accountability in the enforcement of Class "C" sentences for juveniles. Kids can commit crimes, with the knowledge that there is no enforcement of the established consequences for their actions. This leads to a disregard for the rules and laws established to ensure safety in Gulfton. Furthermore, it breeds contempt for the legal system by both the parents and residents of the community because no action has been taken to stop these youths and hold them accountable for their actions.
- The decisions by judges to alter (usually increase) punishments from the established Progressive Sanctions Guidelines is due to lack of concrete objective information provided to them. This can result in first time misdemeanor offenders being placed in the Intensive Supervision Program and/or secure placement facilities, causing more serious offenders to be released prior to completion of their sentences.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation:** The Juvenile Accountability Program and a Truancy Program would immediately address the gap regarding the lack of accountability at the pre-Progressive Sanctions phase. These grants would assist in prevention by providing programs and services for first time and/or chronic Class "C" offenders and holding them and their parents accountable at the Municipal and Justice of the Peace Court level for noncompliance. This also provides a formal first step into the Graduated Sanctions. The programs and services include:

- drug education/treatment,
 - individual/family counseling,
 - community service,
 - educational assistance,
 - gang intervention and treatment,
 - teen pregnancy,
 - parent education, etc.

These programs also provide for case managers to provide guidance and truancy officers to discourage truancy.

- **Recommendation:** Ongoing and informative parent education programs that will advise parents of the legal parental

rights and provide them with child-rearing techniques to prevent further involvement. A similar approach to apprise parents of children who demonstrate problem behavior in schools would assist in increasing understanding and reducing apathy of parents. Because the level of parental apathy often demonstrated, these programs would require aggressive and persistent outreach to make an impact. This would serve as a way of maintaining family stability and preventing further involvement in the Juvenile Justice System.

- **Recommendation:** A revision of the Risk Assessment would contribute information provided to the Judges thus equipping them with adequate and accurate information. It will assist judges in determining which youth are in need of placement based on an objective criteria based on:
 - the seriousness of the delinquent act
 - potential risk for re-offending
 - presence of objective risk factors
 - risk to the public safety
- **Recommendation:** A revision of the Risk Assessment would provide Judges with more objective information and potentially decrease the number of mis-classifications to more restrictive placements and allow for greater efficiency of resources for the youth that commit the most serious offenses and pose the greatest threat to society. This would also increase community awareness among youth that if they commit delinquent acts that warrant placement, then they will lose their freedom for a significant period of time while being treated. The Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention would play a significant role in providing technical assistance in the creation of a research proven Risk Assessment to serve this purpose.

CHAPTER SIX

LEGISLATIVE, POLICY & SYSTEMS ISSUES REPORT

The task of the Legislative, Policy & Systems (LPS) Workgroup was to review legislation, policies, and systems impacting Gulfton and to recommend actions to address risk factors.

LPS ENVIRONMENT

The Gulfton area is located in a complex and politically fragmented areas of the United States. Over 400 political subdivisions exist within the boundaries of Harris County including 25 independent school districts, the City of Houston, and Harris County. While the Gulfton area is geographically small compared to the size of the City of Houston and Harris County, the LPS issues found in the Gulfton area are similar to those in the entire county.

For example, at least five police agencies have jurisdictions in the Gulfton area. Each collects, maintains, and reports data differently. The major park in the Gulfton area is located on land owned by Harris County but is actually operated and maintained by the City of Houston under an inter-local agreement. The county is responsible for the majority of juvenile justice services in the Gulfton area and throughout the county but the city has the majority of police and crime prevention resources in the Gulfton area. The county justice of the peace court and the city municipal courts that handle juvenile cases in the area have different, incompatible, computer systems. The City of Houston and Harris County have separate, often contradictory and competing, legislative agendas and they lobby independently for their passage.

LPS OPPORTUNITY

Despite the LPS problems, there is a major opportunity for integration of services, collaboration, and communication. In 1998, the existing Joint City/County Commission on Children (JCOC) was given a higher priority by Harris County Judge Eckels and Houston Mayor Brown. The more prominent role of the JCOC has the support of both Harris County Commissioner's Court and the Houston City Council. A notable success was the JCOC intervention into the Houston area grant application for the 1998 U.S. Department of Education's 21st Century Learning Center proposal. With the assistance of the JCOC and the strong and direct political support of both the county judge and the mayor, the resulting coordinated grant proposal obtained \$2.2 million per year for three years for 12 schools representing 6 independent school districts. Efforts to further strengthen the role of the JCOC have widespread support.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Legislative

- **Recommendation:** Modify existing funding formulas for services to at risk families and children to obtain increased state funding for the Gulfton area.
- **Recommendation:** Adjust state grant evaluation mechanisms to reward service providers who collaborate with government agencies to eliminate unused but funded service provider "excess capacity."
- **Recommendation:** Support current state legislation providing the maximum state match for the federal Children's Health Insurance Program.
- **Recommendation:** Support state legislative changes to remove restrictions that prohibit county government from providing selected services or funding for youth, families, and education.

Policy

- **Recommendation:** Support strengthening and expanding the role of the JCOC to serve as a catalyst for multi-agency collaboration and reduce current barriers to integration of services and systems.
- **Recommendation:** Support current efforts to inventory existing policies and data restrictions among city, county, and

state agencies.

- **Recommendation:** Educate agency employees concerning policy vs. legislative restrictions and provide mechanism for review and approval of exceptions.
- **Recommendation:** Develop and support consistent policy for handling of Class C misdemeanors by Justice of the Peace courts, Municipal Courts, law enforcement, and prosecuting attorneys.
- **Recommendation:** Modify policies where necessary to emphasize continuum of services, after-school programming, and transportation.
- **Recommendation:** Adopt integrated law enforcement, courts, and prosecutor policies on status offender "no-shows" and contempt of court citations.

Systems

- **Recommendation:** Standardize, integrate, and fund computer systems for juvenile justice agencies, courts, and providers. (highest Systems priority)
- **Recommendation:** Remove unnecessary restrictions on collection and/or release or sharing of certain juvenile records or statistics among official government planning and service providers. (highest Systems priority)
- **Recommendation:** Support expansion of current Geographic Information System multi-agency collaboration and add additional government partners to adopt the regional system and to share data.
- **Recommendation:** Support creation of a Youth Information Database Management System with access available to all service providers and enlist the support of HOUSTON EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE NETWORK, United Way, and JCOC to implement the system.
- **Recommendation:** Improve collaboration among youth service providers and increase prospects for external funding by using JCOC as a catalyst and facilitator for grant identification, development, and collaboration.
- **Recommendation:** Provide Internet presence for public involvement and information on project area activities. Provide access through existing government facilities for those without personal Internet access.
- **Recommendation:** Provide Intranet or password protected Internet portal for increased communication among government and non-profit service providers.