At-Risk and Delinquent Girls Programs in the SafeFutures Demonstration

Program Models, Implementation Challenges, and Recommendations for Research, Policy, and Practice

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ABOUT THE SAFEFUTURES PROGRAM

The SafeFutures Program to Reduce Juvenile Delinquency and Youth Violence was a five-year demonstration supported by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), U.S. Department of Justice. SafeFutures sought to prevent and control juvenile crime and victimization through the creation of a continuum of prevention, intervention, and treatment services designed to meet the needs of at-risk and delinquent youth. SafeFutures strategies incorporated comprehensive community assessments, strategic planning, and interagency collaboration to reduce crime and victimization, as well as to achieve other stated objectives, such as the expansion of mental health services and graduated sanctioning responses for juvenile offenders. Beginning in the late spring/summer of 1996, six grantees—Boston, Massachusetts; Contra Costa County, California; Fort Belknap, Montana; Imperial County, California; Seattle, Washington; and St. Louis, Missouri—were selected to implement community-based programs. The grantees included urban, rural, and Native American communities with prior experience in interagency collaboration and a continuing commitment to SafeFutures goals and strategies. Each community was eligible for approximately $1.4 million per program year for five years.

In response to OJJDP's interest in determining the success of site-specific efforts, each grantee commissioned a local evaluation, and the Urban Institute (UI) was funded by OJJDP to conduct the cross-site evaluation (95-JN-FX-K012) of the SafeFutures Program. The evaluation covered each of the six local SafeFutures programs. Research activities included multiple site visits to each SafeFutures community; in-person, telephone, and small-group interviews with key stakeholders, program staff, and clients; and semiannual collection of core performance indicators. The study extended one year beyond the demonstration period to enable researchers to collect information on the sustainability of SafeFutures efforts beyond the federally funded period. The project was directed by Shelli B. Rossman and staffed by researchers affiliated with UI’s Justice Policy Center and Metropolitan Housing and Communities Policy Center.

For further information about the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, see http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org. For additional information about the Urban Institute, see http://www.urban.org.
ABOUT THE SAFEFUTURES STUDY

This report draws on information obtained through multiple visits to each SafeFutures community during the five-year program period and the year following completion of the SafeFutures grants; follow-up discussions with selected informants to clarify specific aspects of program implementation; and analysis of secondary documents, including client indicator data provided by the local grantees. The views expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Urban Institute, its board of trustees, or its sponsors.

This report is part of a series generated at the conclusion of the national evaluation of the SafeFutures Program conducted by the Urban Institute in Washington, DC. The series is comprised of six topical and six site-specific reports, as well as a final cross-site report, The SafeFutures Initiative: Key Findings From the Cross-Site Evaluation.

The six topical reports include

- School-Based Services in the SafeFutures Initiative
  Elaine Morley, Shelli B. Rossman, and Jennifer L. Castro

- At-Risk and Delinquent Girls Programs in the SafeFutures Demonstration: Program Models, Implementation Challenges, and Recommendations for Research, Policy, and Practice
  Caterina Gouvis Roman, Rebecca Naser, Shelli B. Rossman, Jennifer L. Castro, and Jennifer M. Lynn-Whaley

- Strategic Responses to Juvenile Offenders: SafeFutures Gang, Mental Health, and Reentry Interventions
  Shelli B. Rossman, Daniel P. Mears, and Jennifer L. Castro

- Family Strengthening Programs to Promote Pro-Social Youth Behavior: Critical Challenges and Issues Raised by the SafeFutures Initiative
  Shelli B. Rossman and Daniel P. Mears

- Cultural Competency in Programs for At-Risk and Delinquent Youth: Lessons From the SafeFutures Initiative
  Shelli B. Rossman and Caterina Gouvis Roman

- Evaluating Comprehensive Community Efforts: Lessons from the SafeFutures Initiative
  Janeen M. Buck and Shelli B. Rossman

The site-specific reports include

- SafeFutures: The Boston, Massachusetts, Experience
  Elaine Morley, Mary Kopczynski, Shelli B. Rossman, and Jennifer L. Castro

- SafeFutures: The Contra Costa, California, Experience
  Caterina Gouvis Roman, Shelli B. Rossman, and Jennifer L. Castro

- SafeFutures: The Fort Belknap, Montana, Experience
  Elaine Morley, Shelli B. Rossman, and Jennifer L. Castro

- SafeFutures: The Imperial County, California, Experience
  Janeen M. Buck, Shelli B. Rossman, and Jennifer L. Castro

- SafeFutures: The St. Louis, Missouri, Experience
  Elaine Morley, Shelli B. Rossman, and Jennifer L. Castro

- SafeFutures: The Seattle, Washington, Experience
  Shelli B. Rossman and Jennifer L. Castro
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Although we appreciate and acknowledge the contributions of those noted above, and any others inadvertently omitted, the authors acknowledge their responsibility for any errors herein.
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The SafeFutures initiative was the result of federal interest in linking research findings about youth risk and protective factors with state-of-the-art knowledge about promising approaches to juvenile delinquency prevention and control. The initiative embraced many of the key principles emphasized by practitioners and researchers (see, for example, Connell et al. 1995). A core SafeFutures feature was its emphasis on using comprehensive community strategies to combat the segmentation and fragmentation of social, health, educational, and criminal justice services that often result in missed opportunities to help at-risk youth and families before their problems escalated to monumental proportions (Burt et al. 1992; Morrill and Gerry 1990). Comprehensive community initiatives oriented to systems reform provide public and private entities with both opportunities and challenges to implement more effective policies and practices (e.g., pooling resources, sharing information). Under SafeFutures, community collaboratives were encouraged to tailor prevention, intervention, treatment, and graduated sanction strategies to meet local needs, priorities, and capacities.

Goals of the SafeFutures Program to Reduce Crime and Victimization

At the outset, OJJDP articulated the goals of the local SafeFutures demonstrations (OJJDP 1995; 1997) as follows:

- Prevent and control of juvenile violence and delinquency through
  1) reducing risk factors and increasing protective factors for delinquency.
  2) providing a continuum of services for youth at risk of delinquency, as well as for juvenile offenders.
  3) developing a full range of graduated sanctions designed to hold delinquent youth accountable to victims and the community, ensure community safety, and provide appropriate treatment and rehabilitation services.

- Implement enhanced service delivery system for at-risk youth and their families that is multidisciplinary and offers comprehensive, developmentally appropriate, coordinated child and family services oriented to promoting healthy youth development and reducing delinquency and victimization.

- Institutionalize each community's capacity to sustain its continuum of care, by engaging the support of key leaders in government and community-based organizations, implementing strategic planning, and expanding and diversifying funding sources.

- Incorporate accountability mechanisms that determine the success of SafeFutures’ implementation and the outcomes achieved, including whether a comprehensive strategy involving community-based efforts and program resources concentrated on providing a continuum of care succeeded in preventing and reducing juvenile violence and delinquency.
The Theoretical Foundation

To a large extent, the SafeFutures initiative was a manifestation of OJJDP’s Comprehensive Strategy for Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders that merged research findings about the etiology and developmental aspects of delinquency with principles articulated by the Hawkins and Catalano conception of risk and protective factors (1992). The Comprehensive Strategy focuses on two distinct populations of juveniles: (1) youth who are at high risk of future delinquent behavior and (2) youthful offenders who have already exhibited delinquent behavior and are at risk of, or already are, engaging in serious, violent, or chronic law breaking. The vision is twofold:

- Prevention efforts can substantially undercut delinquency and victimization.
- Most juvenile offenders can be rehabilitated using community-based programs and services, rather than the more intensive and restrictive institutional facilities.

The Comprehensive Strategy suggests an integrated model for community action, combining (1) a range of prevention/intervention activities with (2) enhanced juvenile justice system responses in the form of graduated sanctions and a continuum of treatment alternatives incorporating restitution, community service, and aftercare (Howell 1995). The approach implicitly recognizes that

- Family life profoundly affects criminality (McCord 1991a, b).
- There are varying paths to delinquency (Huizinga et al. 1991).
- There are reciprocal, not unidirectional, relationships between delinquency, school, and family/community bonds (Thornberry et al. 1991).

Key Principles of the Comprehensive Strategy

- **Strengthen families.** Families need to be strengthened as the first providers of youth care and training. Strong families enhance prosocial bonding, instill moral values, provide guidance, and act as advocates for youth in the community.

- **Support core social institutions to help youth develop their maximum potential.** Core social institutions—schools, religious groups, and community organizations—should be supported to alleviate risk factors (i.e., precursors to delinquency) and enhance protective factors that build youth resiliency.

- **Promote delinquency prevention strategies.** Delinquency prevention strategies (such as risk reduction or asset building programs) should be promoted and targeted to youth at greatest risk of delinquency.

- **Intervene immediately at the onset of delinquency.** Cognizant system actors should intervene immediately when delinquent behavior first occurs. Immediate and effective intervention at the onset of delinquency is needed to prevent youthful offenders from increasing the frequency and severity of their lawbreaking.

- **Establish a system of graduated sanctions and appropriate services for juvenile offenders.** Juvenile offenders should be held accountable for their lawbreaking—this requires that (1) a broad spectrum of graduated sanctioning options should be put in place within the juvenile/criminal justice system to handle the range of offenders from first-time, nonviolent youth through serious, violent, and chronic delinquents, and (2) that a continuum of treatment and rehabilitation services also should be implemented.

- **Identify, control, and treat the most serious, violent, and chronic youth offenders.** Serious, violent, and chronic youth offenders should be identified and controlled, as should those who have failed to reform in less-secure settings. The treatment needs of this small group of youthful offenders, who contribute disproportionately to juvenile crime, should be addressed at the same time these youth are incapacitated.

All sectors of the community should take part in determining local needs, and in planning and implementing programs to address these needs.
The initiation, continuance, and desistence of delinquency have different patterns, causes, and correlates (Elliot 1994; Smith and Brame 1994).

**Risk-Focused Prevention**

Research has repeatedly identified risk factors associated with adolescent problem behaviors, such as failure to complete high school, teen pregnancy and parenting, and lawbreaking (Dryfoos 1990; Hawkins et al. 1992; Reiss and Roth 1993; Tolan and Guerra 1994). The approach popularized by Hawkins and Catalano (Developmental Research and Programs, Inc. 1993) identifies a number of critical risk and protective factors in various domains. Youth with multiple risk factors are more likely to develop delinquent behavior, and have a greater likelihood that lawbreaking behavior will become serious.

Delinquency can be delayed or prevented, however, by reducing risk factors and enhancing such protective factors as positive social orientation, prosocial bonding, and clear and positive standards of behavior (Howell 1995). This suggests that communities can improve chances for youth to lead healthy, productive, crime-free lives by reducing economic and social privation and mitigating individual risk factors (e.g., academic failure, substance abuse), while promoting youth’s abilities to (1) bond with peers, family members, and mentors; (2) be productive in school, sports, and work; and (3) successfully navigate the various rules and socially accepted routines required in a variety of settings (Connell et al. 1995; Hawkins and Catalano 1992). This perspective implicitly recognizes that prevention programming must address risk factors as early as possible and at the appropriate developmental stages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communities That Care Model: Risk and Protective Factors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Factors:</strong> (1) Availability of drugs; (2) Availability of firearms; (3) Community laws/norms favorable to drug use, firearms, and crime; (4) Media portrayals of violence; (5) Transitions and mobility; (6) Low neighborhood attachment; (7) Community disorganization; (8) Extreme economic deprivation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protective Factors:</strong> (9) Clear and consistent standards for prosocial behavior widely and frequently communicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Factors:</strong> (10) Family history of problem behavior; (11) Family management problems; (12) Family conflict; (13) Favorable parental attitudes and involvement in the problem behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protective Factors:</strong> (14) Healthy beliefs; (15) Clear and consistent standards for prosocial behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>School</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Factors:</strong> (16) Early and persistent antisocial behavior; (17) Academic failure beginning in elementary school; (18) Lack of commitment to school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Risk Factors:</strong> (19) Alienation and rebelliousness; (20) Friends who engage in a problem behavior; (21) Favorable attitudes toward the problem behavior; (22) Early initiation of the problem behavior; (23) Constitutional factors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Protective Factors:</strong> (24) Prosocial bonding with family, adults outside the family, and low-risk peers; (25) Opportunities for meaningful involvement; (26) Skills-building activities; and (27) Rewards for contributions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Communities That Care model (Developmental Research and Programs, Inc., 1993) offers a “blueprint for action” that is consistent with risk-focused prevention. The model suggests that communities engage in comprehensive strategic planning to make better use of existing resources and programs, and to develop coordinated responses tailored to local needs and priorities. During the planning phase, communities should assess their community’s resources, design activities to mobilize the community, use strategic planning to identify local priorities for strengthening existing resources/services, and develop evaluation mechanisms to monitor the success of community-based efforts. Initial efforts also need to include formation of a community prevention board, comprised of key leaders, as a permanent institution to facilitate long-term continuity. The subsequent implementation phase should incorporate ongoing risk and resource assessments, as well as program evaluations, to tailor the risk prevention and protective components of community-based programs to the changing needs of the local environment (Howell 1995).

Graduated Sanctions for Youthful Offenders

A community-wide system of graduated sanctions is intended to achieve balanced and restorative justice——accountability, public safety, and competency development——based on the view that well-designed systems of treatment and punishment options can offer more than “bad choices between sending kids to jail or sending them to the beach” (Bazemore and Day 1996). Graduated sanctions are seen as permitting the justice system to respond more effectively to a juvenile’s criminal activities through increased monitoring, identification, and evaluation of this behavior and by improving the juvenile justice system’s responsiveness, effectiveness, accountability, and responsibility.

Wilson and Howell (1993, in Howell 1995) describe the potential to combine “fair, humane, and appropriate sanctions with treatment and rehabilitation” in a continuum of care comprised of diverse programs that include

- Immediate sanctions for first-time, nonviolent offenders.
- Intermediate sanctions in the community for more serious offenses.
- Secure care (residential) programs reserved for the relatively small fraction of juvenile offenders who commit serious or violent crimes.

According to their model, graduated sanctions should be structured as a continuum through which lawbreaking youth move based on a risk-focused classification structure that guides juvenile placement decisions. For each level of offense (roughly classified as minor, serious, or violent), a set of programs should be designated as the appropriate options to meet the needs of the offender and the community. Thus, for example, mentoring, restitution with an employability skills and job placement component, or teen
court might be options for immediate sanctions in a particular community setting, while some form of residential confinement might be designated as an option for secure care. Placement decisions should weigh the severity of each juvenile’s history of offenses and the presence of risk factors that indicate potential threat to the community. The assessment process also should entail the development of customized treatment plans tailored to meet the individual needs of each juvenile offender. This might result in assigning a juvenile with a high risk level who committed a less serious offense to the same intermediate sanctioning program as a violent offender with a low risk level (Howell 1995). The approach is consistent with research on juvenile offenders, which has demonstrated that community-based sanctions can reduce recidivism at lower cost to the community and with greater effect (Howell 1995; Krisberg et al. 1995).

**THE SAFEFUTURES MODEL**

SafeFutures sought to assist participating communities in expanding collaborative efforts oriented to the reduction of juvenile delinquency and violence. A major assumption underlying the program was that communities could accomplish these objectives by improving their delivery systems for youth and family services. The model anticipated the expansion of a continuum of care that was multidisciplinary and capable of timely, effective, and appropriate responses to individual or family needs for prevention, intervention, treatment, or corrections services. Key elements envisioned by program planners included

- An integrated case management system that linked across institutions and service providers at the systems level, not just the provision of case management within a given institution or provider organization.

- A range of services appropriate to diverse client needs, from pre-natal stages through adulthood.

- Collaborations across institutional domains such as human services, juvenile justice, and educational systems.

- Public-private partnerships that mobilized the community and leveraged needed resources to ensure institutionalization of the continuum of care.

OJJDP anticipated that local SafeFutures initiatives would dynamically evolve based on continual planning processes that examined the communities’ needs, how program components were meeting those needs, and emergent evidence of program performance.
Nine Components of the SafeFutures Model

The SafeFutures demonstration operationalized the Comprehensive Strategy by augmenting local efforts with federal monies drawn from nine categorical funding streams. The nine components that comprised SafeFutures are (1) after-school programs, (2) JUMP mentoring, (3) family strengthening, (4) mental health services, (5) delinquency prevention, (6) gang-free schools/communities, (7) Bethesda day treatment, (8) at-risk and delinquent girls, and (9) serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders (with an emphasis on enhancing graduated sanctions). Exhibit A summarizes key

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>After-School Programs (Pathways to Success)</th>
<th>Juvenile Mentoring (JUMP)</th>
<th>Family Strengthening</th>
<th>Mental Health Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual SafeFutures funding</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key elements</td>
<td>Provide after-school, weekend, and summer programs: • vocational/entrepreneurial • recreational • art education Target at-risk youth (ages 6–18) and their families Cannot conduct activities as part of the school day Encourage activities with lasting community impact (e.g., beautification projects)</td>
<td>Conduct one-on-one mentoring program involve local education agency and get access to school records Target youth at risk of educational failure, dropping out of school, or delinquency Recruit mentors aged 21+ Activities should • improve school performance • reduce delinquency and gang participation • promote personal and social responsibility • encourage service and community activities</td>
<td>Implement planning or programming to promote healthy child development and positive family interaction, and to support families in crisis Activities may include • resource guide • gap-filling family service programs in priority areas • intensive family case management system and services integration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Note that Part C programs——At-Risk and Delinquent Girls; Family Strengthening; Mental Health; and Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders (SVCJO)——permit some flexibility. Communities with sufficiently strong programs in place in any of these component areas could receive permission to use Part C funds (designated for a particular component) to supplement other SafeFutures components. All six sites initiated activities in most Part C components, however. Further, community-based day treatment modeled after Pennsylvania’s Bethesda Day Treatment Center was an optional component that none of the sites adopted, although some of the SafeFutures communities introduced other types of day treatment.
Exhibit A. Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual SafeFutures funding</th>
<th>Delinquency Prevention</th>
<th>Gang-Free Schools and Communities</th>
<th>Bethesda Day Treatment</th>
<th>At-Risk and Delinquent Girls</th>
<th>Serious, Violent, and Chronic Juvenile Offenders (SVCJO)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>$120,000</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key elements

- Implement programs, such as
  - tutoring and remedial education
  - employability skills training
  - health and mental health services
  - AODA prevention services
  - leadership development
  - recreational services

- Follow Spergel's National Youth Gang Suppression and Intervention models, including
  - targeting gang-involved youth
  - community mobilization
  - provision of social and economic opportunities
  - youth outreach and social intervention
  - gang suppression
  - organizational change and development
  - involving 11 key agencies
  - May use $100,000 for gang prevention

- Provide intensive outpatient, community-based treatment centers for pre- and postadjudicated youth, with five areas of service:
  - day treatment
  - prep school
  - AODA services
  - foster care
  - family systems counseling

- Implement a comprehensive continuum of services specifically for girls:
  - case management and follow-up
  - basic education
  - life management
  - personal growth
  - health and counseling
  - parenting
  - child care services for teen parents
  - interaction with positive role models
  - family involvement
  - Plan and implement graduated sanctions for delinquent offenders:
    - immediate
    - intermediate
    - secure confinement and aftercare

Program designs should include family involvement and aftercare

Note: Required elements appear in bold typeface.


elements of each program area. Each community was eligible for approximately $1.4 million per program year. An additional supplement of $25,000 was available during year three to implement a management information system to support client tracking.

OJJDP provided sites with flexibility in implementing programs and blending funds across categoric components, to enable them to address local needs and resources. For example, two communities blended funding from the JUMP and At-Risk and Delinquent Girls components to engineer mentoring activities targeted to females.

**Annual Priorities Identified by OJJDP**

As part of the annual continuation award process, OJJDP disseminated guidance packages that emphasized the particular elements on which the communities should focus their efforts for the upcoming grant year. Such guidance was consistent with the expectation that local SafeFutures initiatives would evolve over time. For example, the year two emphasis was placed on five key areas (OJJDP 1997): community assessment, strategic planning, implementation of priority activities articulated in the strategic plan, ensuring a coordinated system of care, and evaluation preparedness (including
developing a local logic model and MIS). Guidance for year three (OJJDP 1998c) anticipated continuing the efforts of earlier years, while focusing on the full implementation of a gang suppression/intervention program consistent with the models developed by Spergel (Spergel et al., 1994) and the Client Indicator Database (described below in the section on national evaluation). The priority areas for the remaining two years of funding included expanding service coordination and integration; planning for sustaining SafeFutures efforts beyond the demonstration period; full implementation of the gang component (as communities continued to encounter difficulties with this requirement); and the ongoing refinement and implementation of the strategic planning process, with an emphasis on achieving systems change (OJJDP 1999).

### Training and Technical Assistance

The local demonstrations were authorized to set aside $50,000 annually as line-item budget costs for training and technical assistance (T/TA) activities, including attendance at cross-site cluster conferences. During the demonstration period, SafeFutures sites were eligible to draw upon T/TA from OJJDP’s National Training and Technical Assistance Center and the Systems Improvement Training and Technical Assistance Project (SITTAP), as well as from other federal agencies or private providers, including partners in the SafeFutures program. Additionally, grantees routinely were linked to automated services (e.g., the SafeFutures web site and listservs), sent a wide range of resource materials on relevant funding opportunities and topical information, and informed of juvenile justice specialists within their home states from whom they could request T/TA.

Individual SafeFutures management teams played critical roles in identifying appropriate T/TA needs for local staff and program partners, and for coordinating with OJJDP site coordinators to receive such services from appropriate providers. Collectively, sites participated in a wide variety of T/TA activities. Cross-site conferences offered sites assistance in topical areas such as comprehensive strategies, systems change, services integration, and information technology. Most of the sites received training or assistance either on the Spergel model or other gang-related matters.
such as how to identify and outreach to gang-involved youth. Several sites sent staff to Chicago to interact with the Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project that operationalized the model. Sites also received OJJDP-sponsored assistance in the areas of collaboration and mentoring. Most of the sites requested and received T/TA on care coordination and sustainability. In addition, staff requested and received assistance on such issues as aftercare case management, family strengthening, communication, identifying youth resiliency factors, parent education, and mental health.

THE SAFEFUTURES DEMONSTRATIONS

The demonstration sites received their awards at slightly different times, and different lengths of time were needed both within and across jurisdictions to reach the stage of actually serving youth under the various components. Across the six communities, some components were provided by agencies that were fully operational and already providing the same, or similar, services as anticipated for SafeFutures clients. By contrast, service delivery under other components could not begin until staff was hired and other start-up activities completed. As is often the case in undertakings of this nature, implementation efforts were hindered in some cases by unforeseen challenges or barriers (these are detailed in Morley et al. 2000, as well as in this report and others in this series).

The participating sites varied in the number and types of parties collaborating in the SafeFutures demonstration; however, most tended to have a core organizational structure comprised of (1) an administering entity (fiscal agent or grantee), (2) a management team responsible for day-to-day implementation of the grant, and (3) a policy advisory group that provided oversight and direction to the initiative.

Governance

SafeFutures grants were administered by the following entities:

- the Office of Community Partnerships, a department in the city’s Human Services Cabinet in Boston.
- the County Administrator’s Office in Contra Costa County.
- Fort Belknap Community College, a tribally operated college.
- the County Office of Education in Imperial County.
- the Department of Human Services,² a city agency in Seattle.

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² Formerly the Department of Housing and Human Services.
- the Mayor’s Office of Youth Development in St. Louis.

In all sites, project directors were staff members of the lead administrative entity responsible for the grant. However, the scope (and title) of project directors’ responsibilities varied across sites. For example, in Boston, Fort Belknap, and St. Louis, project directors (or executive directors) retained overall administrative responsibility, while day-to-day management responsibilities were either shared with, or assigned to, project coordinators. ³

OJJDP introduced the concept of a SafeFutures management team, which the sites implemented to varying degrees. Management teams generally included the project director or project coordinator and two or three supporting positions. In some sites (e.g., Imperial and Contra Costa counties), representatives of key partner agencies were part of the management team. St. Louis, for example, was the only site that included local evaluators as part of its management team, although the local evaluators in Boston began attending management team meetings during year two.

Although each site’s organizational structure included a policy board, or its functional equivalent, there was considerable variation in models for involving key leaders and community representatives in the policy role. The SafeFutures policy boards varied with respect to composition, size, breadth, and scope of advisory responsibility, and by whether responsibilities were overlapping or shared with other local policymaking bodies (a detailed discussion of policy boards is provided in Rossman et al. 1998).

Several sites also convened a variety of task forces to strategize and support the implementation of activities that transcended individual agency boundaries. For example, the Imperial County Interagency Steering Committee formed a working group focused on budget issues and fiscal strategies. Leaders of county departments serving youth (such as the Office of Education, Mental Health, Probation, and Social Services) collaborated to set funding priorities, share resources, blend funds, and plan for sustainable financing.

**Service Delivery**

Given the local autonomy and flexibility built into the initiative, services provided by the six sites under specific components varied considerably, as described in this report series, as well as in the interim report on SafeFutures (Morley et al. 2000). Variation among the sites also was due to their having placed differing amounts of emphasis on particular components.

³ In Boston, the coordinator position held the title of project director.
Typically, program administrators relied on local partnerships or contracted with independent providers for service delivery to youth and families. Fort Belknap and Seattle differed from the other sites in that some service delivery staff were directly employed by the SafeFutures initiative and reported to the individual with direct management responsibilities at those sites (i.e., the project coordinator and project director, respectively). In effect, these sites hired direct service-delivery staff in addition to relying on local partnerships or instead of contracting for services delivered by independent providers. For example, Seattle hired staff for the SafeFutures Youth Center as employees of the Department of Human Services (the agency that administered SafeFutures), since it was perceived that the facility would become operational more expeditiously than if subcontracting was used. The Fort Belknap grantee also hired direct service staff, primarily due to the relative lack of existing service delivery agencies available to provide SafeFutures services.

**The Local Context**

Three of the six SafeFutures demonstrations were multijurisdictional or large scale in their geographical scope: Contra Costa and Imperial counties, California, and Fort Belknap, Montana. The remaining grantees targeted relatively circumscribed neighborhoods. Although not required to do so, virtually all of the initiatives focused their efforts on minority youth and families, which escalated the relevance of developing culturally competent responses to critical needs or risk factors. Early on, the grantees characterized their local communities and target areas as follows:

- **Boston SafeFutures** targeted an area consisting of three neighborhoods—Grove Hall, Franklin Hill/Franklin Field, and Mattapan—known as the Blue Hill Avenue Corridor. The corridor had approximately 56,000 residents, 31 percent of whom were younger than 18 years of age. The neighborhoods are historically linked into one community through transit, housing, and commerce. The Corridor is characterized by high unemployment and poverty, and typifies inner-city decline: vacant lots and boarded-up buildings abound, and few residents use parks and open areas. It contained three large public housing developments and a number of granites—scattered apartment buildings managed by the state housing finance agency through private for-profit companies. Almost 87 percent percent of the area’s residents were African American (including Caribbean American), and the remaining population was 9 percent percent Latino, 3 percent percent white, and 1 percent other non-Hispanics. There has

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4 The Youth Center later was incorporated as a 501(c)3.
5 In addition to delivering services to a defined target population, SafeFutures sites were required to conduct planning and implement systems change jurisdiction-wide.
6 Unless otherwise noted, the information contained in this section and the section covering community risk factors was extracted from applications submitted to OJJDP for first- and second-year funding of SafeFutures demonstrations. These documents were submitted in spring/summer 1995 and 1997.
been a noticeable influx of Caribbean Americans during the past two decades, and service providers cited large gaps in culturally specific services available to meet the needs of this population.

- Contra Costa County is located on the northeastern shore of the San Francisco Bay. The SafeFutures demonstration focused its efforts on two levels: most of the prevention and gang intervention activities were concentrated in several neighborhoods—known as the Iron Triangle area—in Richmond (located in the western section of the county), where the population was approximately 73 percent percent African American, 11 percent percent caucasian, 10 percent percent Latino, 6 percent percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2 percent percent Native American. Graduated sanctions and aftercare case management programming were countywide in scope. Countywide, the initiative targeted seriously emotionally disturbed juvenile offenders, female offenders, and juveniles returning to the community from the Orrin Allen Youth Rehabilitation Facility.

- Fort Belknap Indian Reservation was one of two SafeFutures sites in rural settings, and the only site in a Native American setting. The reservation is located in the north central part of Montana and is isolated from major service areas. The closest big cities, Great Falls and Billings, are each two to three hours driving distance from Fort Belknap. The nearest towns are quite small, severely limiting the availability of social services. Fort Belknap had a tribal enrollment of 5,232 individuals from two different tribes; approximately 3,800 individuals resided on, or adjacent to, the reservation. The reservation includes four distinct communities that are isolated from each other by distance and cultural differences associated with different tribes. Approximately 45 percent of the reservation’s residents lived in poverty, and unemployment was high (68 to 72 percent). Alcoholism reportedly was a major problem. The primary population targeted for SafeFutures were the nearly 1,370 Gros Ventre and Assiniboine youth—ages 6 to 18, and roughly 51 percent—living on or adjacent to the reservation.

- Imperial County, located in the southeastern corner of California near the Mexican border, was the other SafeFutures rural site. The county has roughly 4,300 square miles, approximately 100,000 people, and contains the largest percentage of Latinos of any county in the state. Approximately 31 percent of Imperial County’s youth live in poverty, and 24 percent of county residents had incomes that were at or below the poverty level. The targeted area for SafeFutures services included the county’s north end communities of Brawley, Calipatria, Westmorland, and Niland. These communities are isolated from other services by distance and topography (i.e., mountains and desert), and have few activities or supportive programs for youth. Most local services are located in the county seat, El Centro, which is approximately 30 to 60 minutes driving distance from the north end.
Seattle’s initial target area included four distinct low-income neighborhoods: the Central Area, International District, Delridge, and Southeast Seattle communities. Poverty and unemployment rates were triple the citywide average in these areas, and all of the city’s low-income public housing is located within them. These areas have experienced some of the highest crime rates in the city, and are focal points for gang-related violence. The population in these four areas is racially and ethnically diverse, and many of the residents are recent immigrants or are linguistically isolated. Seattle has modified its focus to target at-risk populations citywide, specifically Asian/Pacific Islander youth—especially individuals of Vietnamese and Cambodian origin—younger and older girls, gang-affiliated youth, and youth already in the juvenile justice system.

St. Louis SafeFutures targeted three well-defined neighborhoods known for high levels of socioeconomic risk, juvenile crime, gang participation, and drug activity. The selected neighborhoods, comprised of approximately 58,000 residents, had community-based resources to support the planned initiative, including three of the 15 schools refashioned as community education centers (CECs) jointly established by the City of St. Louis and St. Louis Public Schools. The CECs originally targeted as hubs of SafeFutures programming and services were Carver and Sherman (elementary schools), and Williams (middle school). Virtually half of the children in these neighborhoods were living in poverty, and nearly one-quarter of 16- to 19-year-olds were neither in school, nor had received a high school diploma. African Americans accounted for 91 percent and 99 percent of the population, respectively, in the Carver and Williams CEC catchment areas, while 47 percent of population in the Sherman CEC area was African American.

THE NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE SAFEFUTURES PROGRAM

The evaluation of the SafeFutures initiative occurred at both national and local levels. The underlying purpose of the cross-site evaluation, conducted by Urban Institute, was to document and understand the process of community mobilization, planning, and collaboration needed to build a comprehensive continuum of programs for at-risk youth and juvenile offenders.

Goals of the national evaluation included:

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7 Local evaluations, independently commissioned by each community at OJJDP’s request, were conducted under the direction of respective SafeFutures’ management teams by BOTEC Analysis Corporation for Boston; Resource Development Associates for Contra Costa County; RJS & Associates, Inc., for Fort Belknap; the Center for Applied Local Research for Imperial County; Toucan Associates for Seattle; and Drs. Scott Decker and David Curry (University of Missouri–St. Louis) for St. Louis.
Providing formative feedback grounded in timely analysis of information to permit federal agencies and community initiatives to assess and refine policies and practices, where needed.

Documenting and assessing the extent to which federal initiatives that facilitate concurrent, coordinated resources promote the ability of communities to implement continuums of care that include prevention, intervention, treatment, and sanctions to prevent and reduce juvenile delinquency and victimization.

Describing the nature of the SafeFutures interventions adopted, including program components and features; assessing how closely the programs adhered to their planned interventions; and identifying the reasons for deviations.

Identifying factors that contributed to or impeded successful implementation of comprehensive continuums of care.

Promoting use of performance monitoring to enhance accountability, improve program management, and develop an understanding of program accomplishments.

Determining the feasibility of conducting an impact evaluation.

Consistent with OJJDP’s guidance to participating communities, the national evaluation addressed five core areas that were identified as crucial concerns: (1) community assessment, at baseline (before completion of strategic planning) and ongoing throughout the life of the demonstration; (2) strategic planning; (3) program implementation of activities identified in the strategic plan, including policies, practices, programs, and services not directly funded under the SafeFutures demonstration; (4) service linkages and coordination at the direct service level (i.e., client point of contact with the system); and (5) program outcomes.

Research plans for the national evaluation evolved throughout the early years of program operations. Discussions with OJJDP’s research staff and site monitors, as well as contact with the local communities, shaped the agenda to include a range of activities in support of process and outcome evaluation objectives, including

Annual multi-day site visits to each SafeFutures community by Urban Institute’s research team. Such field visitation provided opportunities to observe programs in action and to conduct one-on-one interviews, as well as small-group guided discussions (focus groups) with program staff and clients. Regularly scheduled site visits were occasionally augmented with brief (one-person) trips to permit firsthand observation of significant
activities and events that took place at times not anticipated by the annual site visitation schedule.

- Telephone interviews with selected decisionmakers and stakeholders to clarify and update program status, collaborative activities, and other relevant information between site visits.

- Secondary analysis of program documents, such as training materials, progress reports, and local evaluation reports.

- Collection and analysis of core performance indicators reported by each site on a semiannual basis to document (1) SafeFutures outputs, such as duration and intensity of service delivery; (2) changes in client risk and protective factors; and (3) client outcomes.

- Surveys of youth and caregivers to capture the baseline; and follow-up self reports of risk and protective factors, involvement in SafeFutures activities, and other prosocial attachments, as well as school performance, substance abuse, gang activity, lawbreaking, and other important outcomes. Surveys were developed (in English and Spanish), pilot tested, and implemented in two sites. Despite considerable protections for human subjects that had been approved by an institutional review board, during the pilot, local actors surfaced numerous concerns relating to recruitment and confidentiality of respondents. After extensive dialogue, OJJDP and the research team concluded that survey data collection was not feasible.

- Mini-studies of selected SafeFutures clients to profile the cases local staff regarded as indicative of the best practices or most successful results of program efforts. Each site was asked to identify not more than five clients who fit the criteria of exemplary service and outcomes. UI staff interviewed the clients, including youth and adult members of affected households, and the service providers to develop a detailed understanding of how SafeFutures operated and its effects in these cases. In addition, parallel case studies were conducted examining cases that local staff and providers deemed failures, despite providers’ best efforts.

OJJDP staff from both the Research and Program Development Division and the Special Emphasis Division worked with the evaluation team to draft a logic model conceptualizing (1) prevention and intervention strategies and (2) anticipated outputs and outcomes for systems, communities, and individuals. Exhibit B presents the underlying assumptions regarding how SafeFutures was expected to contribute to community-based systems reforms, strategic responses to youths’ risky or lawbreaking behavior, and improvements in community safety. Exhibit C details the major outputs and both intermediate and end outcomes anticipated at the systems, community, and individual levels; dotted lines are used to indicate that program managers should continue to adapt and expand the model to suit the local context.
Exhibit B: Safe Futures Initiative to Develop a Community-Based Continuum of Care

1. Establish broad-based coalition to facilitate a comprehensive strategy for:
   - Delinquency prevention
   - Treatment, rehabilitation, and sanctioning of juvenile offenders to reduce recidivism

2. Perform community risk and resource assessments focused on outcomes, including:
   - Community risk and protective factors to gauge needs
   - Available services/programs that comprise continuum of care

3. Determine service/program gaps

4. Select priorities for gap-filling

5. Strategic Plan
   - Systems reform
   - Service/programs

6. Identify resources for systems change and new services/programs through:
   - Reallocation of existing resources
   - Generation of new resources

7. Design new initiatives/programs based on Strategic Plan

8. Implementation in institutional domains
   - New services/programs
   - New policies/procedures
   - Augmentation/increased capacity of existing services/programs
   - Elimination/replacement of some existing services/programs
   - Elimination/replacement of some policies/procedures

9. Target Population Outcomes

10. Institutional/Systems Outcomes

11. Community Outcomes

Key principles:
   - Strengthen families
   - Support core social institutions to alleviate risk factors and enhance protective factors
   - Promote prevention strategies (risk reduction/asset building) for youth at greatest risk of delinquency
   - Intervene immediately when delinquent behavior first occurs
   - Establish broad spectrum of graduated sanctions for accountability, and provide continuum of services for treatment and rehabilitation
   - Identification and control of SVCJOs
   - Requires all sectors of community to take part in determining local needs and in planning and implementing programs to address these needs

12. Use information about outcomes to re-assess coalition; needs; available services; and priorities.
   a. Continue implementing original strategic plan
   - or -
   b. Revise based on lessons learned and new data
Exhibit C: Logic Model—Detail Indicators

**Outputs**
- Strategic plan
- Case management/services integration
- Implementation of risk and needs assessment tools
- Cross-agency MIS
- Fund-raising or leveraging of existing resources
  - New services/programs/policies
  - Resource guide
  - Institutionalization of continuum of care

**Intermediate Systems Outcomes**
- Increased opportunities for pro-social involvement of youth and families
- Increased accountability of youthful offenders
- Least restrictive intervention
- Reduction of mental health problems among youth coming into the juvenile justice system

**Intermediate Community Outcomes**
- Increased citizen participation
- Increased positive relationships between citizens and police
- Increased reporting of problems/crimes
- Reduced gang presence

**Intermediate Target Population Outcomes**
- Positive self-image/self-efficacy
- Pro-social bonding
- Enhanced life-skills/competencies
- Improved academic performance
- Improved mental and physical health
- Job training/employment
- Reductions in problem behavior -- gang involvement, teen pregnancy
- Reduced school dropout
- Reduced truancy
- No lawbreaking by those at risk
- Increased accountability of offenders (restitution)
- Reduced recidivism of delinquents
- Reduced need for secure correction
- Reduced gang violence
- Reduced child abuse
- Reduced alcohol and other drug use among SF youth
- Improved family dynamics

**End Outcomes**
- Cost-effective use of services
- Citizen perception of increased neighborhood safety
- Fewer juvenile crimes
- Reduction in serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenses (and offenders)
- Fewer adult crimes (long-term result of increasingly pro-social youth, families, communities)
- Reduced victimization
- Reduced victim harm
- Reduced costs of delinquency and crime

**Continuum of Care**
- Mobilization and involvement in anti-crime activities

**Targeted Services/Populations**
- Mentors recruited and matched with youth
  - Number of youth/families receiving case managed services
  - Number of youth with mental health needs identified and treated
  - Number of youth engaged in prevention activities, by type
  - Number of youth in graduated sanction programs, by type
  - Number of youth receiving aftercare services
  - Number of families receiving services
  - Number of gang-involved youth served
  - Number of youth receiving AODA treatment

- Mentoring
- Life skills
- Mentors recruited and matched with youth
- Services for teen youth

**Targeted Services/Populations**
- Aftercare
- Mental Health
- SafeFutures
- Prevention Programs
  - Receit
  - Tutorial
  - Vocational/entrepreneurial
  - Life skills
  - Services for teen parents
- Immediate sanctions
- Intermediate sanctions
- Service corrections
- Aftercare
The OJJDP/UI working group also collaborated on designing a performance indicator database, using the logic model as a guide. A lengthy list of candidate indicators was iteratively generated and circulated to project managers and local evaluators, to solicit their recommendations for modifications. Ultimately, the decision was made to develop a set of data elements that would be clearly defined in a data dictionary for cross-site comparative purposes, rather than a “turn-key” automated management information system (MIS). Although each site was expected to report their data using Access97 software, each community retained local ownership for the overall design (and location) of their respective MIS, and some communities elected to augment the core data with other variables that met their site-specific needs or interests.

The cross-site database included approximately 240 data elements, spanning demographic characteristics; workload characteristics; service referral information (including type and duration of services received); client risk and resiliency characteristics; and a variety of service, school, and juvenile justice outcomes.

The database was designed for semiannual collection of data, covering the periods of January 1 through June 30, and July 1 through December 31, for the purposes of the cross-site evaluation. However, school records data were collected annually, and reported within 60 days of the close of the school year, along with the data submission covering January 1 through June 30. Annual school data reports also were expected to cover the July 1 through August (summer school) period from the preceding year.

Issues associated with the cross-site evaluation of SafeFutures are detailed as part of this report series (see Buck and Rossman 2005). In addition to the set of reports generated at the conclusion of this research (which are listed at the beginning of this report), the research also produced several interim reports on SafeFutures’ implementation (Morley et al. 2000; Rossman et al. 1998, 1999, 2000).

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8 The data dictionary was designed between February and May 1998. Representatives of each site attended two-day training sessions in June 1998, which covered the definition and potential use for each element. Some minor revisions were made in early July of that year to incorporate suggestions made by various sites during the training period.

9 OJJDP provided additional funding of $25,000 on a one-time basis to assist sites in developing or enhancing MIS infrastructure.
Taken together, this body of work provides a snapshot of youth and families served by local SafeFutures initiatives, while chronicling key issues and challenges encountered by system reform efforts, difficulties and successes of programs implemented to prevent and reduce problem behaviors and delinquency in at- and high-risk youth populations, and the sustainability of local activities beyond the federally funded period.
At-Risk and Delinquent Girls: SafeFutures Programs, Successes, and Issues for Research and Practice

1. Introduction

SafeFutures was one of the early efforts undertaken by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) to support communities’ needs to simultaneously address prevention and intervention responses to diverse local populations of underserved youth at risk of future delinquency and crime. A long-standing criticism of programs targeting at- and high-risk populations is that categorical funding often undermines success by limiting grantees’ capacity to concurrently meet various needs within and across individuals and systems. In an effort to ameliorate such limitations, OJJDP deliberately bundled a range of activities and resources into SafeFutures programming. At the same time, the funding strands underscored the agency’s interest in targeting services to particular subgroups (e.g., youth with mental health problems; gang members; serious, violent, and chronic offenders) deemed critically important to crime and delinquency reduction. At-risk and delinquent girls were specifically identified as a population of considerable interest because of the increasing involvement of female youth in the juvenile justice system.

The At-Risk and Delinquent Girls component of SafeFutures was intended to provide services to meet the unique emotional and developmental needs of young women. Each site was eligible to receive $120,000 per year, for each of five years, to focus on delivering comprehensive, gender-specific prevention, intervention, and treatment services. Such services could include (1) health, such as preventive health care, mental health care, gynecological care, pregnancy prevention, safe sex education, and prenatal care; (2) parenting skills training; (3) child care for girls who are parents; (4) basic education; (5) job training; (6) life skills training; and (7) personal growth and development support to enhance positive self-images or to facilitate better understanding of one’s personal responsibilities and the roles that girls and women assume in our society. In addition to services, OJJDP envisioned that this component also would include case management and follow-up, as well as opportunities for interaction with positive role models.

This report examines the programs targeted to at-risk girls in each of the six SafeFutures sites. The report first
sets the context for these programs by reviewing the risk factors for female delinquency, the
history of government funding, and the literature evaluating girls programs. The report also
includes a brief overview of some promising national programs. This information is drawn from
a review of literature on the theory that guides gender-specific programming for girls and
analyses of secondary documents, including program planning guides and curriculum from
promising national programs. The report then specifically focuses on the efforts of the six
SafeFutures sites in developing and maintaining programs targeted to at-risk and delinquent
girls. The latter half of the report contains profiles of the specific programs targeted to at-risk and
delinquent girls that each SafeFutures site operated, as well as a discussion of key cross-site
issues.

SafeFutures site-specific information is based on analysis of secondary documents, multiple
visits to each community during and subsequent to the funding period, indicator data reported by
each program, and follow-up discussions with selected informants to clarify specific aspects of
program implementation. The research team reviewed such documents as the SafeFutures
solicitation and OJJDP’s yearly guidance to grantees, sites’ original proposals and annual work
plans for each of the five years, correspondence between OJJDP site monitors and local program
managers, progress reports, and materials describing discrete project activities and services.
Approximately two site visits were conducted annually to each SafeFutures community, during
which two- or three-person field teams toured targeted areas, interviewed program managers and
other key individuals within the community (e.g., justice system stakeholders and SafeFutures
service providers), observed project activities, and collected relevant local documents. After each
site visit, the research team generated formative evaluation memos that detailed the site visit
agenda, together with highlights of local program status and issues, which were disseminated to
OJJDP and the local program leadership. Relevant information contained in those documents has
been reworked for inclusion in this report.
2. At-Risk and Delinquent Girls: Overview of Research and Practice

The history of research on juvenile delinquency has been, until relatively recently, primarily the study of male juvenile offenders. Traditionally, analyses of female juvenile delinquent behavior have used males as the focal referent, examining how girls differ from boys, or explaining girls’ juvenile delinquency by comparison to boys’ delinquency. Similarly, girls have been largely absent in the development of theories of adolescent delinquency. Most currently accepted theories of juvenile delinquency were formulated to explain delinquency based on examinations of male behavior (Cain 1990; Chesney-Lind and Shelden 2004).

Theories of adolescent development either have identified (1) internal physiological or biochemical factors, (2) sociocultural factors, or (3) the interaction of both internal and external factors as determinants of behavior (Marchant and Smith 1977). Until relatively recently, efforts to better understand female juvenile delinquency were weakened by general societal stereotypes about women and girls. Early explanations tended to characterize most female delinquency as sexual in nature, as opposed to the aggressive or violent characterizations depicted for young males. Furthermore, perceptions of female juvenile behavior were rooted in the belief that differential socialization of boys and girls made girls not only less inclined to nonconformity, but also less likely to engage in illegal or criminal activities (Chesney-Lind and Shelden 2004). While contemporary efforts have progressed in shedding gender stereotypes as foundations on which theory is grounded, their influence remains in many “mainstream” contemporary explanations of juvenile delinquency.

Most contemporary efforts to develop theories of delinquent behavior, for both females and males, focus on sociocultural factors as determinants of delinquent behavior. Researchers and practitioners agree that adolescent girls and boys take different physical and emotional developmental pathways to adulthood. Therefore, it is logical to anticipate that most of the issues adolescents deal with, such as peer and family relations, academic or school issues, sexuality and dating, violence, and social and sporting activities, affect each gender differently (Chesney-Lind 1989; Phillips 1998). Nevertheless, interventions targeted specifically to young females, while gender segregated, have tended to be mirror images of programs designed for boys; that is, they do not reflect the distinctive risk and resiliency factors associated with girls and young women. Only recently have efforts been expended not only to develop theories of female adolescent delinquency, but also to implement programs and services specifically designed for young women that are grounded in gender-specific knowledge of female adolescent development.

One of the major challenges in developing theories of female adolescent delinquency is framing explanations of girls’ involvement in the criminal justice system specifically in the context of girls’ experiences. Both to construct better theories of female adolescent delinquency and improve prevention and intervention responses, efforts have been made to identify and better understand the web of factors that often interact and are associated with female delinquent behavior.
RISK FACTORS FOR FEMALE DELINQUENCY

Several risk factors have been identified as having a causal effect on female delinquency, including sexual or physical abuse, mental health and self-esteem issues, academic issues, substance abuse, teen pregnancy and parenting, gang membership, and other social factors such as sexism, racism, and classism. These risk factors should be viewed specifically within the context of the female adolescent experience. It also is important to recognize that there may be causal relationships between these factors that can lead to female delinquent behavior. They often do not appear in isolation, and may compound each other. For example, a history of sexual abuse may lead to mental health issues that may contribute to substance abuse, involvement in abusive relationships, or academic and behavior problems in school and at home.

Sexual and Physical Abuse

A large body of research suggests that sexual or physical abuses are among the most important factors in determining female juvenile delinquent behavior (Acoca and Austin 1996; Chesney-Lind 1989; Chesney-Lind and Shelden 2004). While it is estimated that one-quarter to one-third of all girls are victims of sexual abuse by the time they reach age 18 (Benson 1990; Finkelhor and Dzuiba-Leatherman 1994), estimates suggest that 70 percent of female juvenile delinquents have been sexually abused (Calhoun, Jurgens, and Chen 1993). Several recent national studies of girls in the juvenile justice system (Acoca 2000; Acoca and Dedel, 1998) reported alarming rates of abuse and neglect. They found that 81 percent of girls interviewed were victims of physical abuse, and 56 percent were victims of sexual abuse.

Researchers have pointed to the fact that the behaviors that often lead to a young girl’s involvement in the juvenile justice system could, and perhaps should, be interpreted as rational coping strategies rather than as deviant, delinquent behaviors. A majority of girls enter the juvenile justice system due to status offenses, such as truancy or running away. Often these young females may be removing themselves from abusive environments (Chesney-Lind 1989).

Furthermore, research suggests that abuse in a young girl’s life may lead to a variety of negative behaviors (Chesney-Lind and Shelden 2004; OJJDP 1998b; Oregon Commission on Children and Youth Services 1990; Schoen et al., 1997). Based on a survey conducted in 1997, the Commonwealth Fund reported that girls who had been the victims of sexual or physical abuse were more than twice as likely as nonabused girls to report smoking (26 percent vs. 10 percent), drinking (22 percent vs. 12 percent), and illegal drug use (30 percent vs. 13 percent). The 1998 report, Women in Criminal Justice: A Twenty-Year Update (OJJDP 1998b, 28) also underscored the significance of such victimization, noting “the abuse and exploitation of young girls should be viewed as a major and pervasive public health threat and a primary precursor to involvement in the criminal justice system.”

Mental Health Issues and Self-Esteem Issues

Data indicate that females involved in the juvenile justice system are more likely than their male counterparts to also have been involved in the mental health system (Federle and Chesney-
A study of the Virginia juvenile justice system reported that in 2000, 52 percent of the girls in the system were currently taking psychotropic medication or had in the past (McGarvey and Waite 2000). The American Association of University Women (1991) found that young females with mental health and learning problems are more likely to internalize the negative consequences associated with these problems, thereby affecting their self-esteem and confidence. Bergsmann (1994) found that over half of the girls in the training schools he studied had attempted suicide, and two-thirds of those had tried to take their lives on more than one occasion.

Many of the other risk factors that have been identified as determinants of involvement in the juvenile justice system for girls, such as physical, sexual, or mental abuse, and substance abuse, may lead to mental health problems for young girls. Recent national studies found that 88 percent of girls involved in the juvenile justice system were victims of emotional abuse\(^\text{10}\) (Acoca 2000; Acoca and Dedel 1998).

Furthermore, research findings indicate that the development and maintenance of positive adult relationships—with those other than primary caregivers—is important to the healthy development of adolescent girls. Lasting, healthy relationships with nonparental adults appear to play an important role in the healthy development of an adolescent girl’s maturing identity (Acoca 1995).

**Academic Issues**

There is agreement within the research community that academic difficulties or problems—either scholastic or behavioral—are risk factors associated with female juvenile delinquent behavior (Dryfoos 1990; Girls Incorporated 1996; Greenwood et al. 1996; Yoshikawa 1994). In fact, some researchers identify academic problems as the most significant risk factor in predicting delinquent behavior in girls (Dryfoos 1990; Greenwood et al. 1996; Yoshikawa 1994). According to a recent study of girls in the Georgia juvenile justice system, over 90 percent experienced behavioral problems in school, and nearly 80 percent had been expelled or suspended previously (Marsteller et al. 1997). Additional research has documented high dropout rates among female juvenile offenders. A study conducted by the American Correctional Association found that “the typical female juvenile offender is a high school dropout, and that 65 percent of girls in training schools had completed only 1 to 3 years of high school and had not received a general equivalency diploma (GED)” (American Correctional Association 1990).

Furthermore, data from the U.S. Department of Justice indicates that 26 percent of female juvenile offenders have been diagnosed with some kind of learning disability (OJJDP 1994). There may be significant overlap between these disability issues and mental health issues that may place a young girl at risk.

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\(^{10}\) Emotional abuse occurs when a person uses words or actions to make another person think less of himself or herself. It may be accompanied by physical abuse or sexual abuse.
Substance Abuse

Drug and alcohol abuse are additional risk factors of female delinquent behavior (Krohn et al. 2001; OJJDP 1998b; Rotheram-Borus 1993). Several studies consistently have found that girls involved in the criminal justice system have high rates of alcohol and drug use and abuse. Three-quarters of girls in Georgia’s juvenile justice system reported using or abusing drugs or alcohol, and 56 percent were characterized as having problems with drugs or alcohol (Marsteller et al. 1997).

Research indicates that substance abuse often overlaps with other factors associated with female delinquent behavior, and can intensify other issues in a girl’s life that are already placing her at risk, such as mental health issues; poor academic performance; premature sexual activity, which may, in turn, place a young girl at risk of violence or lead to pregnancy; and involvement in violent relationships (OJJDP 1998b). In fact, substance abuse coexists with other identified risk factors, at a significantly higher rate for young females than for young males. (Rotheram-Borus 1993).

Teen Pregnancy and Parenting

Teen pregnancy and parenting place girls at risk of a variety of negative consequences, many of which are risk-factors associated with female juvenile delinquency, including dropping out of school, substance abuse, and mental health issues associated with identity development and self-esteem (Apfel and Seitz 1996; Caspi et al. 1993; Chesney-Lind 1998; Corley and Chase-Lansdale 1998; OJJDP 1998b). Even with a strong support system, teen pregnancy and parenting can disrupt normal adolescent development and pose threatening challenges to young women.

Girls involved in the juvenile justice system are sexually active at earlier ages than girls who are not involved in the system (Chesney-Lind 1998; OJJDP 1998b). The prevalence of sexual abuse in the female juvenile offender population, which was discussed previously, may have a compounding effect on early sexual activity and therefore teen pregnancy and parenting (Chassler 1997).

Gang Membership

Gang membership also has been identified as a key risk-factor in predicting female juvenile delinquent behavior. Membership in a gang places young females at risk of numerous negative and potentially dangerous situations. The requirements of gang membership may lead to promiscuous sexual activity, unprotected sex, sexual abuse, substance use and abuse, and violence (Family and Youth Services Bureau 1993; Morris et al. 1995; OJJDP 1998b).

In addition to the potential dangers associated with gang membership, much like teen pregnancy and parenting, involvement in a gang can interrupt normal adolescent development. As discussed previously, research findings indicate that the development and maintenance of positive adult relationships—with primary caregivers as well as others—is critical to the healthy development of adolescent girls (Acoca 1995; Phillips 1998).
Other Societal Factors—Sexism, Racism, Classism

Researchers that incorporate structural components into their analyses of female juvenile delinquency also point to the pervasiveness of institutional sexism, racism, and classism as observable facts that should be considered risk factors for female juvenile delinquency. These forms of institutional discrimination that pervade American society further place young girls—particularly those of color and living in poverty—at greater risk of involvement in the juvenile justice system. Research findings support the claims that girls are treated differently than boys, girls of color are treated differently than white or caucasian girls, and girls who live in poverty are treated differently than girls who do not (Belknap 1996; Bergsmann 1994; Chesney-Lind 1997; Federle and Chesney-Lind 1992; Girls Incorporated 1996; Lindgren 1996; Sarri 1983). Minority girls and girls who live in poverty are more likely to be incarcerated than provided with appropriate treatment (Girls Incorporated 1996; Sarri 1983), and white girls are more likely than minority girls to receive mental health treatment as opposed to incarceration in a juvenile justice facility (Federleand Chesney-Lind 1992).

The Need for Gender-Specific Programming

Females are more likely to be victims than perpetrators of crime. Nonetheless, for the past 30 years, girls have been increasingly involved in the juvenile criminal justice system, initially as adolescent nonviolent status offenders, but more recently at younger ages and for more serious crimes (e.g., robbery, assault, drug trafficking, and gang incidents). Whether one looks at the number of delinquency cases, arrest rates for varying offense categories, or the Violent Crime Index, girls have outpaced boys on...
many crime trend indicators (see sidebar showing crime trends by gender). From 1988 to 1997, an increasing number of girls were involved in delinquency cases, and more girls were detained for their involvement in these cases. During that 10-year period, the delinquency cases involving girls increased 83 percent, and the number of cases in which girls were detained increased 65 percent (Porter 2000).

Girls have long been associated with the majority of arrests for particular crimes such as running away and prostitution (i.e., 59 percent and 69 percent, respectively, in 2001 (Snyder 2003). However, increasingly, the trend has been for juvenile girls to represent larger proportions of total juvenile arrests in almost every Index offense category. In 1980, females represented 11 percent of juvenile arrests for violent crimes; by 2001 (the most recent year for which analysis is available), that proportion had increased to 18 percent (OJJDP 2001; Snyder 2003). From 1990 to 2001, the proportion of juvenile arrests that girls comprised increased from 15 percent to 23 percent for aggravated assault, from 27 percent to 39 percent for larceny-theft, and from 10 percent to 17 percent for motor vehicle theft. The proportion of total Index arrests that juvenile girls comprised increased from 19 percent to 29 percent during that period (Snyder 2003; Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics Online 2001).

The debate rages as to the root causes of the increased involvement of girls in the juvenile justice system—is it due to lower base arrest rates, shifts in law enforcement practices, changes in state and federal policies, or simply because young girls are becoming more criminal? Regardless of cause, by the 1990s, policymakers and practitioners seriously began to recognize the need to address gender-specific juvenile justice programming for girls.

History of Funding and Priority Focus on Girls Programming

In 1992, Congress passed and then-President George H. Bush signed the reauthorization of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974. In addition to reauthorizing existing programs dealing with juvenile justice and delinquency prevention, runaway and homeless youth services, and missing children’s assistance, provisions were added to require states that receive Formula Grant funding to submit state plans containing two components: “an analysis of gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency, including the types of such services available and the need for such services for females; and a plan for providing needed gender-specific services for the prevention and treatment of juvenile delinquency” (JJDPA 1974, § 223(8)(B)).

The 1992 reauthorization also established a new State Challenge Activities Grant Program. The new Challenge Grant program enabled states to receive up to a 10 percent increase in their formula grant funding for each challenge activity they developed programs to address. For the first time in federal policy, the new Challenge Grant E Activities included an incentive for states to develop gender-specific programs for girls in the juvenile justice system. Specifically, the reauthorization defined one of the challenge activities as, “developing policies to prohibit gender bias in placement and treatment, and establishing programs to ensure that female youth have access to the full range of health and mental health services, treatment for physical or sexual
assault and abuse, self-defense instruction, education in parenting, education in general and other training and vocational services” (JJDPA 1974, 42 USC 8501 et.seq.).

More states responded to the Challenge Activity designed to provide full and equal access to programming for young girls within the juvenile justice system than to any of the nine other Challenge Grant Activities. In 1992, twenty-three states applied for and received funds through Challenge Grant E programs. In 1998, OJJDP invited states to submit descriptions and products of their Challenge efforts. Twenty-four states and one territory responded to the request, providing information on 465 selections. Analysis of the information gathered showed that of 10 types of challenge activity themes described across the states, gender specific activities were most often selected (88 selections out of 465) (OJJDP 2000).

Continuing interest in female juvenile delinquency has spurred efforts at federal, state, and local levels, as well as within private and nonprofit organizations, to collect more data on girls involved in the juvenile justice system in order to better understand the profiles of female juvenile offenders and develop programs and services to better meet their needs. Nevertheless, more concerted effort is still needed. For example, in 2002, the Children’s Defense Fund in collaboration with Girls Incorporated performed an analysis of states’ three-year plans. After contacting juvenile justice specialists within each state and requesting copies of each state’s three-year plan, the team evaluated 26 state plans. They found that although states acknowledged the need for gender-specific programming and services for juvenile girls, the majority of plans reviewed were deficient in terms of analyzing the availability of services and assessing the need for such services in the respective states. They also found a majority of states lacked future planning to provide needed preventative services, and more than 40 percent of the plans reviewed lacked planning to provide needed treatment services for juvenile girls (CDF and Girls Inc. 2002).

For its part, OJJDP has been instrumental in supporting a number of research and demonstration activities aside from SafeFutures that were intended to improve prevention programming, as well as the response of the juvenile justice system to court-involved girls.
For example, beginning in 1997, OJJDP funded a collaboration between Cook County, Illinois, and the State of Connecticut to conduct studies of female juvenile offenders, train juvenile justice staff, develop risk and needs assessment instruments and case management systems for girls, as well as to pilot gender-specific services. In FY 1999, the Office’s Field-Initiated Research Program supported several grantees whose projects focused on at-risk and delinquent girls, including community-based models of treatment in Wayne County, Michigan, to reduce institutional placements of adjudicated female offenders; a Georgia study of two Gaining Insight into Relationships for Lifelong Success (GIRLS) interventions designed to provide both counseling for girls and institutional capacity building; and research in Illinois examining gang-involved females.

OJJDP also partnered with other federal agencies to further this agenda. With the National Institute of Mental Health, the Office funded longitudinal research at the University of Pittsburgh, beginning in 1998, to study developmental processes in girls, particularly conduct disorders, to help identify mechanisms for preventing and intervening in female delinquency. And, the Office collaborates as part of the Interagency Working Group on Gender Issues that provides a federal forum for sharing information about gender-specific research, programs, training, and technical assistance.

Further, the Office commissioned a national training and technical assistance effort through Green, Peters, and Associates (GPA) to promote gender-specific programming. In turn, between 1996 and 2000, GPA collaborated with the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL of Portland, Oregon) to identify fundamental elements of promising programs for adolescent girls and to pilot test a training series. Additionally, in FY 2000, OJJDP prepared to launch two major initiatives—the Girls Study Group and the National Girls Institute—to address the gender-specific needs of girls in the juvenile justice system.

Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programs

The fundamental elements of promising programs outlined in the 1998 collaborative effort between OJJDP and Greene, Peters, and Associates, “Guiding Principles for Promising Female Programming,” are based on recent research and motivated by the changing trends in female juvenile delinquency (OJJDP 1998a). These principles are an attempt to synthesize the current knowledge of “best practices” for girls’ programming by creating a national model, which will help guide and inform other programs through replication.

The model can be broken down into five primary areas, which encompass several subtopics that constitute specific program components. These five areas are (1) Administrative Functions; (2) Life Skills; (3) Interpersonal; (4) External/Social; and (5) Outcome Measures.

The first, Administrative Functions, contains suggested practices for organization and management of staff, staff training, and intake processes. Because many of the girls who seek out or are referred to these programs come from families who face many challenges, a program that is well organized and efficiently managed has been demonstrated to have a more positive impact as a stabilizing force.
The second area under the guiding principles is life skills. The life skills section pertains to education, skills training, career opportunities, and health services. The third area is interpersonal. The Guiding Principles recommend that the interpersonal aspect of comprehensive treatment should contain the following program elements: problem solving, positive relationship skills, community-based initiatives, development to womanhood, and finally, discovery of strengths and abilities. Through these elements, it is expected that young girls will develop a sense of belonging to their community. These elements intersect to help construct a social and community framework for healthy lives and lifestyles. The external/social aspect of the Guiding Principles encompasses the development of community and familial ties. It emphasizes the need for culturally relevant activities, as well as recreational activities that include mentoring, and peer activities.

The last of the five areas deals with outcome measures and the provision for adequate evaluation measures. Because the implementation of gender-specific programming is still quite new, there is very little empirical research available. This lack of evidence impedes the transmission of “lessons learned” in the shaping of future programs.

National Models

An examination of existing national models reveals that most incorporate a variety of the components detailed in the Guiding Principles. There are many programs that have been implemented in response to the increase in female juvenile delinquency. However, most operate at the community level, and do not adhere to the criteria that guide the national programs. The following is an overview of three nationwide programs that incorporate the type of comprehensive services prescribed by the Guiding Principles.

P.A.C.E. Center for Girls

The P.A.C.E. Center for Girls (Practical, Academic, Cultural Education) is based in Florida and was founded in 1985. The Center is the first of its kind to offer continuum of care services to at-risk girls, highlighting prevention and early intervention. While the initial focus of the Center was education, PACE has expanded the scope of its curriculum, incorporating a more comprehensive agenda. The expanded curriculum promotes self-sufficiency through the completion of education, while emphasizing the need to develop gender identity, build self-esteem, and nurture relationships among family members.

Additionally, the PACE program includes sophisticated staff training that adheres to the guidelines set forth by the Guiding Principles. Their staff instruction curriculum, “Working Effectively With Girls”, incorporates six “domains of adolescent development”: Intellectual, Spiritual, Emotional, Relationships, Sexual, and Physical. According to their literature, the scope of training information ranges from prevention to commitment, with special attention given to sensitizing staff to the unique needs of at-risk adolescent girls.
Evaluations of the PACE model demonstrate the program has had a substantial impact on the girls who have successfully completed the program. In 1998 and 1999, it was the only program in Florida where the relationship between program completion and reduced delinquency was statistically significant. According to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice Prevention Outcome Evaluation Reports, 98 percent of girls who committed crimes prior to enrollment and successfully completed the PACE program, did not reoffend one year after leaving PACE. As a result of its success, PACE has been replicated in eighteen cities across Florida, serving an estimated 4,000 girls and their extended families.

**Girls, Incorporated**

Girls, Incorporated is a national education-based organization that promotes positive female development with their message “inspiring all girls to be strong, smart and bold.” The program, founded in 1945 as Girls Clubs of America, has expanded to serve more than 350,000 girls age 6 to 18 in an ever-growing network of over 1,000 program sites located in more than 134 cities nationwide. A unified programmatic framework—facilitated by trained staff—offers six programs, which address various aspects of the Guiding Principles. These six programs are formulated based on research gathered from the Girls, Incorporated National Resource Center.

The first program, Operation SMART, develops girls’ interest in science, math, and technology. The activities are orchestrated in a way that encourages girls to ask questions and cultivate their problem-solving skills. The program is intended to encourage girls to pursue careers in the fields of science, medicine, and computer information technology, fields that are historically underrepresented by women.

The Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy component focuses on health education, teaching girls communication skills that help them learn behavior to avoid risk of pregnancy. The program also assists girls by orienting them toward the future with four age-appropriate modules: Growing Together, Will Power/Won’t Power, Taking Care of Business, and Health Bridge. The fundamental message is to teach girls how to make smart decisions regarding their relationships and their future.

Dovetailing with the gender and cultural identity component described in the Guiding Principles, the Girls Re-Cast TV program allows girls to explore the way gender is portrayed on television and film. It provides a forum through which girls are able to identify gender and racial stereotypes, and enables them to think critically about media images. Since its inception, more than 15,000 girls have participated in this program.

Substance abuse and stress management education is offered through the Friendly PEERsuasion program. This program utilizes aspects of mentoring, pairing teenagers with younger girls, to teach girls healthy strategies in dealing with peer pressure and how to manage anger and stress. This program is unique because it reframes drug and alcohol use as a peer pressure issue, and then uses positive behavior modeling to change girls’ behavior.
The Discovery component more directly incorporates mentoring, pairing girls with women in the community. Here the girls select local projects that are then carried out with the help and guidance of the mentor. The girls learn how to conceptualize a project and develop leadership skills as they execute their endeavors. Additionally, the girls gain experience in a leadership role, taking responsibility and making decisions relevant to their action projects.

Because so many girls in the at-risk population are exposed to unsafe and violent surroundings, the Project Bold program educates girls about how to assess their physical environment and identify dangerous situations. The program teaches them violence reduction techniques, helping them prevent future victimization and overcome past abuse. There is also a self-defense class, Action for Safety, developed in cooperation with the Center for Anti-Violence Education, available to girls age 9 to 11.

Overall, the six different Girls, Incorporated programmatic features offer comprehensive services that address the criteria outlined in the Guiding Principles. Because the Girls, Incorporated programs are implemented and facilitated by adhering to the same programmatic “blueprint” across all sites, the programs are capable of undergoing cross-site evaluation. Most programs have experienced moderate to substantial success. For example, according to a three-year evaluation of the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention program, older teens who had completed the program were half as likely to have had sex and one-third as likely to have gotten pregnant in the year following. ¹¹

**Girl Power!**

The third program that is nationally administered is called Girl Power!, launched in 1996. Girl Power! is a “multiphase, national public education campaign sponsored by the Department of Health and Human Services to help encourage and empower 9 to 14 year old girls to make the most of their lives.” ¹² The programmatic attributes are organized around health education, and are based on research suggesting that this stage in a girl’s life is the most critical in terms of effecting positive developmental changes. The program emphasizes three fundamental goals, as listed on their web site:

- to increase public awareness among 9 to 14 year old girls and their caregivers about risks and consequences associated with alcohol, tobacco, and illicit drug use; health issues associated with poor nutrition, including calcium deficiencies and eating disorders; health issues associated with lack of physical activity; risks and consequences associated with early sexual activity including pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases; and mental health problems including depression and suicide.

- to increase knowledge among girls and their caregivers about how girls can develop positive interpersonal and social skills, and to provide resources and materials for girls to achieve these skills.

¹¹ from [http://www.girlsinc.org](http://www.girlsinc.org), accessed 2/5/01
to demonstrate the benefits to girls and their caregivers of developing competencies and increasing self-efficacy (e.g., developing interests and abilities in their education, the arts, sports, and other activities).  

While the program lacks the comprehensive structure, in that certain program elements found in the Guiding Principles and in the previous two programs are absent, it does address girls health issues in a comprehensive manner. All facets of health issues are addressed—from mental health to pregnancy prevention to cultivating girls’ self-esteem—and transmitted as part of a national agenda on health care through the Department of Health and Human Services. Girl Power! has more than 100 private and public partnerships that together work toward the goal of reinforcing positive development and providing meaningful opportunities for girls to nourish their self-confidence and interests.

These programs adhere to a comprehensive framework involving services for healthy peer relationships, pregnancy prevention, life management classes, counseling, and community service, as prescribed by OJJDP’s Guiding Principles.

**EVALUATION FINDINGS**

Although at-risk girls’ programming has become a topic of interest among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers, the literature examining girls’ programming remains scarce. Of 443 program evaluations covered in a 1990 review of delinquency prevention programs, only 2 percent of the programs served only girls (Lipsey 1990). OJJDP’s “model program” initiative reviewed more than 150 delinquency prevention and intervention programs, and only five programs specifically targeted girls. Furthermore, all five programs targeting girls were rated “promising” by the guide, as opposed to “exemplary” or “effective.” “Promising” was defined as programs that display a strong theoretical base and have been demonstrated to prevent delinquency or reduce/enhance risk/protective for delinquency in specific social contexts using limited research and/or non-experimental designs. The evidence associated with these programs appears promising but requires confirmation using scientific techniques (see [http://www.dsgonline.com](http://www.dsgonline.com) for more information).

A review of the literature reveals there are a few studies that have found gender-specific effects of interventions. Research examining school-based interventions to delay sexual activity and reduce HIV and other STDs has found some programs have gender-specific effects. A study evaluating the long-term effectiveness of a three-year, school-based HIV, other STD, and pregnancy prevention program in Northern California found that the program benefited boys, but not girls (Coyne et al. 2004). The evaluators suggested that girls may need more support for handling coercion, and a more supportive social environment (e.g., one that addresses gender-role and peer influences). They added that the influence of older boyfriends may have contributed to the lack of effects for girls.

With regard to rigorous evaluations of programs targeted only to girls, only a few published studies exist. A recent evaluation of an empowerment program for adolescent girls found that, after the intervention, girls in the experimental group had higher peer esteem, greater ability to recognize when help was needed, and a more positive self-image than girls in the comparison group. The broad-based prevention program was gender specific because the program designer hypothesized that early adolescent girls need to master unique tasks to transition successfully into adulthood. The curriculum, known as the Go Grrrls Program, focuses on gender role identification, developing a positive self-image, establishing independence, making and keeping friends, developing resources, and planning for the future.

In short, the “what works” literature is almost nonexistent with regard to programs and interventions targeted to girls. Furthermore, evaluations of programs that serve both boys and girls often fail to examine differences in outcomes based on gender. Those that do, when differences are found, often do not hypothesize about the possible causes of these differences, and readers are left to wonder whether the results are spurious.
3. SafeFutures At-Risk and Delinquent Girls Programs

As discussed in the preface, SafeFutures funded programming under nine components: (1) after-school programs (Pathways to Success), (2) juvenile mentoring programs (JUMP), (3) family strengthening and support services, (4) mental health services for at-risk and adjudicated youth, (5) delinquency prevention programs, (6) comprehensive community wide approaches to gang-free schools and communities, (7) community-based day treatment programs (i.e., Bethesda Day Treatment Center model), (8) continuum-of-care services for at-risk and delinquent girls, and (9) serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offender (SVCJO) programs. Local communities were intended to assemble a range of services to address diverse client needs, and to develop collaboration across institutional domains (e.g., human services, juvenile justice, and educational systems).

Although SafeFutures demonstrations were required to provide programming for at-risk and delinquent girls, they were given flexibility to determine what types of girls’ programming would best serve their community. The programs that were developed across the sites varied, though the majority of sites developed one or more mentoring programs. Interventions also included parenting skills and pregnancy prevention, life skills, basic education and tutoring, counseling, and recreational activities. Exhibit 1 highlights the programs developed in each of the sites and provides a cross-site view of the variation in targeted population and activities. Although OJJDP suggested that a continuum of services for ARDG be provided, the programs developed specifically for this population did not provide a full continuum by themselves. The activities shown in exhibit 1 include services typically targeted to girls, such as child care, health/pregnancy education, and parenting skills, as well as gender-neutral activities, such as basic education, life skills/personal growth, and family involvement.

For this exhibit, ARDG programs are considered to include case management if the ARDG program itself includes case management or major elements of case management. It is reasonable to assume that girls participating in ARDG programs without a case management component could be referred to other SafeFutures partners for case management on an as-needed basis, as would be the case for a youth in other SafeFutures component programs. However, it is not known whether all girls participating in ARDG programs were automatically referred to case management, nor is the number or percent of girls receiving such services known.

In some sites, the at-risk and delinquent girls’ efforts had already been implemented prior to SafeFutures funding. In these instances, SafeFutures funding helped expand resources in a number of ways, from increasing the number of girls served, to increasing the types of programming and activities that were available. In all sites, at-risk girls’
Efforts addressed multiple SafeFutures components, including family strengthening services, delinquency prevention, mentoring programs, and mental health services.

**Exhibit 1. Overview of At-Risk and Delinquent Girls' Programming in SafeFutures Sites**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boston, Massachusetts</td>
<td>ReVision House</td>
<td>Life skills, personal growth, child care, parenting skills, and health and pregnancy prevention</td>
<td>Teen mothers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Various small grant programs</td>
<td>Life skills, academic assistance, vocational training, and recreation</td>
<td>Girls age 8–16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contra Costa County, California</td>
<td>MIIND Mentoring</td>
<td>Mentoring, basic education and tutoring, family involvement.</td>
<td>African American and Latina elementary school girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step-Up and Lead</td>
<td>Mentoring, mental health counseling, parenting skills, child care, basic education and tutoring</td>
<td>Juvenile justice system–involved girls age 14–18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fort Belknap, Montana</td>
<td>Talking Circles</td>
<td>Life skills and personal growth</td>
<td>Girls age 10–17; most juvenile justice system involved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imperial County, California</td>
<td>100% Girl Power</td>
<td>Case management, basic education and tutoring, life skills, health and pregnancy prevention, family involvement</td>
<td>Girls age 11–17</td>
</tr>
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<td>Seattle, Washington</td>
<td>Big Sisters Mentoring</td>
<td>Mentoring, life skills, family involvement</td>
<td>Elementary school girls age 5–12</td>
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<td>HERS</td>
<td>Case management, basic education and tutoring, life skills, family involvement, job training, mental health counseling</td>
<td>Cambodian girls age 12–18</td>
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<td>Save Our Sisters</td>
<td>Case management, basic education and tutoring, life skills, family involvement, job training</td>
<td>African American girls age 12–18, juvenile justice system involved</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Sister to Sister</td>
<td>Mentoring, recreation</td>
<td>Girls ages 8–14</td>
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<td>Site</td>
<td>Program</td>
<td>Type of Activity</td>
<td>Target Population</td>
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<td>St. Louis, Missouri</td>
<td>Project Change</td>
<td>Case management, basic education and training, life skills, health and pregnancy prevention, job and vocational training.</td>
<td>Girls age 13–19 in alternative schools</td>
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<td>PIIP</td>
<td>Case management, life skills, health and pregnancy prevention, child care, parenting skills.</td>
<td>Pregnant and parenting teens</td>
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**BOSTON**

The unique management structure of the Boston SafeFutures program created a very different arrangement for operating SafeFutures component programs. Service delivery under Boston SafeFutures is typically conceptualized at the neighborhood level. Coalition members have emphasized that Boston neighborhoods present distinctive profiles, have differential access to various resources and services, and confront different problems. Under Safe Futures, each NGB is responsible for identifying gaps in services, presenting a “neighborhood plan” to the CGB, and allocating Safe Futures funds provided to each NGB for prevention activities (e.g., after-school programming, family strengthening, mentoring) in their neighborhoods. The NGBs view these funds as block grants; each of the NGBs is receiving approximately $200,000 for this purpose. These funds can be used for services provided by the NGB itself, or may be subcontracted to other agencies.

Within year one, Boston initially planned to implement Choices for Young Women in Transition through a single subcontract to provide prevention, early intervention, and case management for 100 girls age 10 to 18, with an emphasis on status offenders and girls with some JJS involvement. After the intended subcontractor decided not to participate, the component was restructured as small “enhancement” grants to existing programs for at-risk girls in the target area. This was seen as an approach that would quickly distribute funds and serve a lot of girls. At the end of year one, Boston Safe Futures solicited proposals for at-risk girls programming. Boston awarded grants for the period May–July 1997, to 14 existing programs for at-risk girls (about $4,800 each). The programs enhanced their existing services in a variety of ways; most also expanded the
numbers served, usually adding 10 to 20 girls. The agencies providing ARDG programs in Boston varied considerably, as did their programming and target clients. Half of these agencies, such as the Boys and Girls Club, CPASA, MDCA, Perkins Community Center, and the Klub, received SafeFutures funds for other components (primarily after school and mentoring). Agencies that only received ARDG grants included such organizations as the Dorchester Family YMCA; YWCA Boston; ReVision House, Inc.; and Roxbury Comprehensive Health Center. Because of the large number of programs and short time period during which services were delivered, with the exception of ReVision House, Inc, these programs are not discussed here in this section. The programs, however, are briefly discussed in chapter 4.

An innovative aspect of Boston’s ARDG enhancement grant program was that recipients were required to participate in an at-risk girls’ program network, which met monthly with the SafeFutures Family Strengthening Task Force coordinator. The network was intended to provide input and assist in developing the RFP for the ARDG program for year two. The network also served to familiarize program staff with each other’s services and create linkages among them. Network members were heavily involved and continued meeting after their grants ran out. (Safe Futures did not provide funds for the network.)

Boston reverted to the single subcontractor format for at-risk girls programming in year two. The RFP for the at-risk girls’ component was issued in April 1998 and a decision was made to make an award to ReVision House, in collaboration with the Boys and Girls Clubhouse, Franklin Hill/Franklin Field Teen Center, and the Perkins Teen Center. ReVision House is discussed in the following section.

A mini-grant was awarded in 1999 to the Youth Service Provider Network (YSPN), a collaboration between the Police Department and Boys and Girls Clubs. Under this grant, YSPN has developed a series of eight workshops for at-risk girls, age 12 to 14, at the Lewenberg Middle School to address issues such as self-esteem, behavioral problems, and the like. Groups were scheduled to begin during the week of our visit and will end in April.

An all-day at-risk girls training session was planned for July 19, 2000, with Sally Smith. The presentation (as described in a brochure being circulated to SafeFutures contractors) was titled “Building Self-Reliance in Young Women.” In addition to the contractors, this session was expected to be open to members of the at-risk girls network and girls in the community (to be identified by the PIC representative, and other partners, including ReVision House). Program staff were hoping to attract approximately 40 to 50 attendees.
ReVision House

**Target Population and Focus**

ReVision House is a transitional home for young women and families, offering a number of services designed to prepare women to live independently and nurture their children. As part of the SafeFutures contract, ReVision House contracted to provide services to 20 young women and 24 children—including parenting workshops, personal health and hygiene, and workshops on budgeting and financial management.

**Major Strategies and Activities**

Residents of ReVision House are required to participate in job training or education activities, as well as parenting workshops that address health and hygiene issues. A family-life advocate is on staff to provide training geared toward promoting self-sufficiency among residents. It is also mandatory that residents have physical and dental exams, and that their children get immunizations on time.

Residents also have case managers, counselors, and family-life advocates as part of the program. They would have a case manager, and everyone sees their family-life advocate weekly—that’s the person who deals with helping them get other services, such as food stamps or education. The case managers are at ReVision House from 4:00 p.m. to 12:00 p.m.; they help the residents cook dinner or help with personal problems. Residents can talk to anyone on staff, but one family-life advocate is assigned that they meet with weekly. Case managers and advocates also do room checks. Counselors are only used on an as-needed basis.

SafeFutures funding supported stipends for three resident interns (mothers) to work with at-risk girls from partner organizations, including the Boys and Girls Club and the Perkins Center. Activities with the girls included training for a double-dutch competition, tours, and workshops about the fish farming and herb cultivation that takes place in the back of the house. Girls who participated in the double-dutch program received small stipends. Resident interns also helped coordinate workshops for other residents on topics such as urban environmental issues and women’s herbal medicine products. These workshops were supplemented by presentations from individuals outside ReVision House on labor, education, and budget issues.

Interns were paid $6 per hour and worked 20 hours each week. The wages were considered a stipend, not an income, and interns were not held from finding a job. Throughout the program, a number of interns worked as program assistants to do gardening and after-school education at Franklin Field and Franklin Hall. The interns worked with peer leaders from another SafeFutures–sponsored program to provide supervision of services for youth. The youth worked in the community gardens and were educated about its various aspects by peer leaders and ReVision House interns. The
program is sponsored by 4H. 4H is assisting with curriculum design and training the interns to be the teachers.

Interns are selected based on their interest in working on the urban farm. They post the internship position and residents apply. No special criteria except interest are required. Women leave ReVision House when they find housing or otherwise leave the shelter. The average tenure of an intern is roughly 10 months.

Interns are not directly working in schools, but some may do part of their internship at other organizations (e.g., Aquarium, Audubon Nature Center) and hence, may work with teacher/naturalists and go into schools. ReVision tried to link with other community organizations to broaden the “education” provided. Interns may also work on their GEDs while at the shelter.

Collaborative partners maintain separate caseloads of at-risk girls and offer a variety of services, including a number of workshops linked with those offered at ReVision House. Some of the girls from these programs work at ReVision House and receive stipends for their help in the greenhouse, herb garden, or fish farm. Girls are identified at the Boys and Girls Club and by staff at the Community Centers.

An outside agency, Share our Strength, conducts a 12-week workshop on life skills. Topics include nutrition, buying groceries, and maintaining a bank account. Offered once a year, the program is mandatory for residents. Parenting workshops were also offered, as well as workshops on substance abuse prevention, smoking cessation, HIV/AIDS, preparation of what is grown in the garden; beekeeping, women’s herbal medicine, soil preparation, herbal medicines, and container and rooftop gardening.

ReVision House staff have utilized training and technical assistance provided through the Safe Futures grant. Staff went to a training session that addressed culturally appropriate ways to build self-esteem in young women.

**IMPERIAL COUNTY**

**Reality Edition and 100% Girl Power**

Over the five-year program cycle, Imperial County had one program targeted to at-risk girls. The program began as Reality Edition, provided by a community-based health agency—Clinicas de Salud. The program consisted of a weekly meeting that included a presentation on different topics (generally falling within the life skills, personal growth, or health/pregnancy education domains), followed by discussion and socialization over pizza or snacks. Girls also performed various tasks in the Clinicas offices to earn “points” that could be traded in for various items (gum, candy, etc.). The program’s coordinator functioned as an informal counselor/case manager, in the sense of making
referrals to other partner agencies, keeping track of what was happening in the girls’ lives (including going to school to check their grades and talk with teachers), making home visits or calling parents in to meet if there were problems, and checking with probation officers (where applicable). There was a modest amount of family involvement in this program (in addition to home visits/parent meetings) in the sense that parents were welcome to attend the weekly meeting (staff reported that a group of four parents showed up for every meeting). Boys were also allowed to attend (except when the topic is more female-focused and sensitive), and a small number of boys regularly participated during year one.

By year two, Reality Edition was discontinued by Clinicas de Salud. The program, its funding, and staff (a part-time coordinator) were transferred in November 1997 to the Brawley Boys and Girls Club (BBGC) for administration. Meeting participation had declined (possibly due to the summer vacation) to a handful of girls, and it was believed that transferring program administration to the Boys and Girls Club would allow the program better access to youth. At this juncture, the program was serving a very small, rather low-risk population. The size of meeting group had varied from 10 to 50, depending on what topic was discussed. Only a few parents attended these meetings.

When the program was transferred to BBGC, the staff of SafeFutures decided to target the program only to girls. This decision was met with some resistance by the clients and the program director, and it soon became difficult to recruit girls into the program. In an effort to revitalize the program, a new program was implemented that was modeled after the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services girls’ health services initiative called 100% Girl Power. The program took the Girl Power name, and strong recruitment efforts were made in early 1998. More detail on this program is provided below.

**Target Population and Focus**

At-risk girls age 11 to 17 comprise the target population. Girls are considered to be “at risk,” primarily for teen pregnancy, although several have older siblings who are involved in delinquent activities; additionally, various demographic and socioeconomic factors such as economic disadvantage and minority status (i.e., many girls are African American or Latino) also qualify these girls as at risk.

**Major Strategies and Activities**

The group primarily met after school, although some weekend activities were provided. Both the structure and content of the group were designed to empower girls and strengthen life skills; the group context also provided the opportunity for the girls to build positive peer relationships. Activities were structured to promote three underlying themes: problem solving, conflict resolution, and group decisionmaking. Group activities
covered a range of topics, including financial management and development of career interests. Guest speakers were regularly brought in to address the girls. Recreational activities such as movie nights also contained an educational dimension. Parental involvement was encouraged. Activities such as Ladies’ Night Out, a monthly dinner the girls plan and host for their mothers, facilitated positive mothers-daughter interaction.

By the end of year three, 100% Girl Power met twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. The first hour was spent doing various activities like Tae Bo with discussion and support groups filling the second hour. An average of 10 girls attended the meetings.

Baby Think It Over was implemented in year three. Designed to help girls cope with the day-to-day challenges related to being a teenage mother, the support group met once a week. A pregnancy prevention initiative, the Baby Think It Over component used automated baby dolls to simulate, for teenage girls (junior- and senior-high age girls) the experiences and responsibilities of caring for a real baby. With a cost of $250 per doll, the Club sought financial support from local businesses to purchase 25 dolls.

To build its membership, 100% Girl Power enlisted the assistance of several SafeFutures partners such as the Family Resource Center, the law enforcement team (generally probation), and the SAR and SELPA representatives. All girls were referred to the ICOE for mentoring; some of the girls were also referred to anger management.

**THE SEATTLE SAFEFUTURES PROGRAM**

**Big Sisters Mentoring**

Big Sisters of Seattle (which later merged with Big Brothers of King County during the third year of SafeFutures to form Big Brothers/Big Sisters of King County) operated a school-based mentoring program for girls in elementary schools to prevent future high-risk behaviors (e.g., dropping out of school prior to graduation) and delinquency. The program fit within such SafeFutures components as after-school programs and programming for at-risk and delinquent girls. Although Big Sisters had a history of operating mentor programs, serving high-risk girls and operating a school-based program represented a departure from their standard operations.

*Target Population and Focus*

The program originally was implemented in two Seattle elementary schools, Highland Park (west side) and Bailey-Gatzert (near the International district) under SafeFutures, but later expanded to five schools. Each of the original schools had high immigrant populations (e.g., one school had a high Eastern-European/Russian refugee
population), which sometimes required the program to rely on school services (e.g., translators) to facilitate its activities.

Services were targeted to girls who had low attachment to school, were at risk of academic failure, or had demonstrated inappropriate classroom behavior. Youth could self-refer to the program, or be referred by teachers or other school staff, family members, or friends. Regardless of the referral route, parental consent was required for participation. Although this was a school-based program, Big Sisters was interested in engaging adult caregivers of youth participants. As a result, parental involvement in the mentoring relationship was encouraged. Monthly dinners, hosted by Big Sisters and held at the schools, provided safe forums for parents, mentors, and the children to interact.

Major Strategies and Activities

Initially, the program had two distinct components: School Buddies for girls in grades 1 to 4, and activities for girls in grade 5 that included mentoring and participation in the Life Choices Club (LCC). Girls in the School Buddies program met with their mentors, on site during the school day, for a minimum of one hour per week. The focus of the mentoring was on educational development and academic improvement, which included activities such as working with flash cards, learning to tell time, reading and writing stories, spelling games, and working on homework or class projects, as well as recreational activities like playing chess or building models. No contact between the girls/families and the mentors was expected to occur outside of school activities. However, during at least one holiday season, the program did arrange for local companies to “adopt” the girls and their families to provide gifts, food, school supplies, and warm clothing.

The program for fifth grade girls was somewhat different. It was perceived as a precursor to community-based mentoring. In terms of school-based experiences, girls primarily were served through the LCC. LCC was a prevention education program conducted in 10 weekly sessions (four times during the school year), for girls age 10 to 14, designed to cultivate decisionmaking skills and teach girls that they have control over events in their lives. The LCC curriculum addressed a variety of topics, such as drug and alcohol use; decisionmaking and problem-solving skills; friendship and how to deal with peer pressures; stress, conflict, and violence; career choices; gang awareness; gender roles, assertiveness, and personal safety; self esteem and body language; and love and relationships (including some sex education, such as pregnancy/STD education). Big Sisters modified operations during the second program year to focus exclusively on one-to-one mentoring; this component was eliminated at that time, and the target population for the School Buddies component was expanded to include fifth graders.

Mentors were required to make a one-year commitment to the project and to be on site during regular school hours for a minimum of one hour per week. Mentors pledged
not to exchange phone numbers with their buddies and not to see them off-school grounds unless asked or approved to do so. Nonetheless, many mentors became involved beyond the minimum requirements. Some mentors reportedly attended school several times per week, devoting two or three hours to working with higher-need girls; others volunteered to attend school-related events not held on site, such as field trips with the girls. A large majority of the mentors reportedly cemented multiyear relationships that continued until the girls aged out of the school and program.

To qualify as a mentor, volunteers had to be 21 or older and undergo a screening process that included a reference check, a Washington State Patrol background check, and psychological screening (Child Abuse Potential Inventory screen). In addition, they were expected to complete a comprehensive orientation (about three hours), which profiled the organization and discussed topics/issues relevant to child development/behavior. Originally, the program reported that the initial screening process took about three months to complete; it is not known whether this was streamlined as the program evolved. A two-hour staff interview followed the screening process. The Big Sisters policy (which covered community-based mentoring) dictated that staff conduct home assessments of the candidate’s home. However, home assessments were not standard procedure for the mentors working with the School Buddies girls because that mentoring was school based, and expressly intended to avoid out-of-school contact.

Matches were made by the mentor coordinators, and intended to be based on the fit between the volunteer’s skills and child’s needs. Factors considered in the match process were geographic proximity, compatibility of values, life experiences, individual interests, and personality traits. Any of the involved parties (i.e., the mentor, parent, or girl) could reject the match for any reason; identifying information was kept confidential until all parties approved the match. The mentor coordinator shared information about potential mentor matches with the girls only after parental permission had been obtained. The child and parent were given 24 hours to change their minds on a match.

Mentor coordinators functioned to support the matches and were responsible for conducting regular follow-up and in-person supervision meetings, as well as case planning and maintaining case records. Specifically, the mentor coordinators monitored the mentor-child relationship, the girls’ relationships with their parents, and changes in the girls’ needs and behaviors. This entailed contact with the students at school and sometimes meeting with the mentor-mentee pair when they were together. When problems arose, the mentor coordinators would brainstorm with the volunteers about what to do. Typically, the coordinators had two contacts per month with the mentors, which gave the volunteers an opportunity to ask questions about whether they were doing things as expected, and also provided a way for the program to acknowledge their contribution.
**Sister to Sister Mentoring Project**

The Sister to Sister Mentoring Project was implemented under SafeFutures in 1997 as a two-tiered program—after-school activities and one-on-one mentoring—administered by Girls Incorporated/YWCA of Seattle-King County-Snohomish County. The program operated through two locations: (1) the East Cherry Street YWCA in central Seattle that primarily attracted African American youth, and (2) the High Point Center situated in a west Seattle racially and ethnically diverse public housing community comprised primarily of Southeast Asian, East African, and Latino families.

**Target Population and Focus**

Sister to Sister targeted at-risk elementary and middle school girls, age 8 to 14, to enhance their developmental assets and diminish the likelihood of future involvement in high-risk and delinquent behaviors. Girls either self-referred or were referred to the after-school program by parents, schools, juvenile justice and health and human services agencies, or, in west Seattle, by the High Point public housing office. Most participants were considered at risk because they came from economically disadvantaged single-parent families and had multiple siblings; these factors combined with their minority status qualified them for program inclusion. However, in year three, as the program stabilized with a level of structure appropriate to higher-risk youth, staff not only continued to serve an at-risk population, but also tried to engage higher-risk and delinquent girls.

**Major Strategies and Activities**

The mentoring program served roughly 20 to 40 girls each year. The mentor match goal was 20 each year in each location. This goal was met in years two and three. Mentors were recruited through every avenue, including churches, sororities, grassroots efforts, and professional women’s groups. Mentor pairs met once each week and had telephone conversations once each week. In addition, supplemental activities were held periodically. These activities included job fairs, life skills workshops, and career guidance. In year four, tutors were added to the program to work with girls. The program director articulated the program focus as improvement in academics and attitudes toward school by the end of the school year, in addition to achievement of personal goals set by the youth. The project director made school visits to inquire about evidence of outstanding achievement and other recognition.

Mentor training involved a one-day training lasting roughly six hours. A checklist was administered at the end of the training to query prospective mentors about their personal lives and to determine an individual’s capacity to undertake the role of mentor. Training elements included a group discussion on the definition of a mentor, mentor dos and don’ts, and how to develop rapport with the mentees. Mentors also met monthly with the project director to discuss issues. Mentors were required to maintain journals to
record the types of activities and nature of interaction with the mentee. In addition, mentors were asked to record information about how the youth was doing in school. Youth were required (with parental consent) to provide copies of their report cards and attendance to their mentors and the project director.

Helping Each Other Reach the Sky

Helping Each Other Reach the Sky (HERS) was administered by the Harborview Medical Center. HERS addressed criteria for SafeFutures family strengthening, mental health services, and at-risk and delinquent girls components. Originally, the program was called the Cambodian Girls Group (CGG)\(^{14}\) and began as an offshoot/adaptation of an outreach program of the Medical Center’s Community House Call project. Community House Call had been initiated to eliminate cultural and institutional barriers for East Africans and Cambodians by hiring community residents as advisors. Some enhancements were made to the original format to accommodate specific interests of the SafeFutures initiative (e.g., risk reduction and family strengthening) or to capitalize on lessons learned as staff became more proficient in working with the targeted girls and their families.

Target Population and Focus

The program primarily served Cambodian girls aged 12 to 18 and their parents. Potential participants had to be regarded as at risk of becoming gang involved or from high-risk families, many of whom were served in the Refugee, Children and Women’s Clinic at Harborview Medical Clinic. As the program continued operations, new referrals came from a variety of sources; for example, participants encouraged siblings and peers to join the group. Some referrals were made by pediatricians at Harborview, and some cases were referred by probation or Child Protection Service officers.

Early eligibility criteria considered gender, ethnicity, age, and low-income status. Girls were selected and screened into the program as if for employment. Job descriptions were sent to career centers, ESL teachers, and middle and high schools with Cambodian students. Participants essentially self-selected for the program by filling out applications for the jobs as community advisors; then both the girls and their parents were interviewed, and parents had to sign a contract (which included agreement to participate in parenting classes). Staff reported that although all of the applicants had need; they eliminated a few who weren’t committed to participating or whose issues were too serious for the program to address.

\(^{14}\) In 1999, CGG changed its name (using one suggested by its clients) after the passage of Washington State’s Initiative 200 that prohibited “preferential treatment” based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public employment, education, and contracting. This affirmative action legislation, which passed in November 1998, essentially prohibits public monies from serving an exclusive ethnic group.
The initial participants included a mix of girls: a few had peripheral gang involvement (in the past or present), many had relatives in gangs; and some had siblings in the juvenile justice system. The HERS application form asked about criminal background, and several girls reported shoplifting (girls were not eliminated for criminal background; however, those with criminal histories could not be given work assignments in Harborview due to its restrictions on staffing). Some girls self-reported substance abuse, mostly minimal use of marijuana or alcohol, which staff did not regard as major problems (although they did indicate that at least one participant had been admitted to the hospital for an overdose). Staff suggested that although alcoholism and substance abuse are problems in the Cambodian community (primarily more prevalent in males), gambling addiction is more serious for both adults and older teens. None of the original girls were teen parents, though several had sisters who were (and one of the program goals was to prevent teen pregnancy).

Although the program tried to accommodate SafeFutures interests in serving higher-risk youth, and did enroll some with status offenses (e.g., runaways, truants) or delinquency histories, most were primarily linked to the justice system through siblings, especially gang-involved brothers, or boyfriends who were in and out of jail. In general, HERS had something of a prevention focus. The emphasis was on girls from families with risk histories (e.g., older siblings who were teen parents or who had dropped out of school), not just on the girls’ individual risk factors. The clientele typically lived in households that fell below the poverty level, where there were high levels of conflict, and serious mental health needs were exhibited by caregivers (e.g., parents often needed treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder; had been abused as children; had experienced the death of their own parents at an early age; or were being medicated or needed treatment for depression). Staff reported that they learned early in the program that they really didn’t have the capacity to help the girls seriously involved in antisocial or criminal behaviors, and began referring these girls to the SafeFutures Youth Center as it developed the capacity and reputation to deliver relevant services to those youth.

The process for determining eligibility was structured more formally over time. Regardless of the referral source, the program would set up an interview attended by several of the program staff, the girl, and her parents. If interest was expressed, the team would split up the girl and parents to ask about particular risk factors—legal involvement, gang involvement, use of substances, mental, and physical health. A clinical assessment would be conducted later, typically using the Achenbach instrument, ideally within the first month of the girl’s participation. The orientation for the parents covered program expectations and consents to permit program staff to work with the school (e.g., to access report cards and progress reports).

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15 The instrument is now called the Achenbach System of Empirically Based Assessment (ASEBA).
Major Strategies and Activities

Under SafeFutures, as under CGG, HERS programming was initially described as falling within three components: (1) job training and employment, (2) support services for girls, and (3) parenting education. Although these general areas continued as part of the program throughout the demonstration period, various aspects evolved and the relative emphasis placed on some of these activities expanded considerably (e.g., the parenting education approach evolved into more comprehensive family strengthening than originally anticipated).

Many of the girls and families received the full complement of services available within HERS, but some had more limited exposures (e.g., only received tutoring assistance). HERS only guaranteed one year of employment to participants; however, they reassessed the girls’ status at the end of that period. Reportedly, girls often were not ready to move on or no other program would take them, and staff felt the girls should be retained in the program due to concerns about their well being without it. Hence, it was not unusual for girls to remain in the program for two or more years.

The first component—one year of job training and employment—was essentially used to attract eligible girls into the program (the program regarded itself as the only Seattle organization that employed Cambodian girls younger than 16). As with the original Community House Call project, girls were approached as “knowledgeable insiders,” stipended as “community advisors,” and given opportunities to explore educational and career paths.

One intent of the program was to prevent girls from dropping out to seek low-income jobs, while promoting their job-market readiness upon program completion (e.g., by imparting basic computer and other business skills). They were assigned to work at Harborview or at nonprofit organizations in the community (e.g., a day care center in an elementary school), performing such tasks as clerical work or helping with research projects. These assignments were expected to impart basic employment skills, such as filling out job applications and time sheets, and to build self-esteem (from working and receiving positive feedback from adults other than teachers). Work commitments varied: girls who were doing well academically might be assigned to 10 hours per week for an hourly wage, while girls who were having trouble in school received reduced work assignments (ranging from two to nine hours per week) for which they were compensated $75 per month.

In addition to their employment readiness activities, the girls worked on assignments to promote positive relationships with their parents by developing a book of Cambodian folk stories and historic information, using information obtained by talking to parents and other adults. Staff intended to make the book available as reading material that would interest Cambodian patients in the Harborview clinic waiting room.
The girls’ employability skills were assessed when they entered the program, and they were trained in basic areas where skills were needed. Program staff hoped to assist the girls in locating other job training programs once they completed the program; however, they noted that the one year of employment provided by HERS was not sufficient for some girls to achieve longer-term employment objectives.

A second program focus was oriented to support services for girls, including mental health counseling, academic assistance, recreation, and other prosocial interactive experiences. Girls were required to attend weekly 90-minute group sessions led by a psychologist (there were separate groups: one for middle-school girls age 12 to 14, and the other for high schoolers age around 15 to 16). The groups provided a predictable, safe, and confidential place for the girls to open up; there was no formal curriculum. Both groups dealt with issues related to school (how to succeed, conflicts with teachers, how to choose classes) and friendships (conflicts, fights). Other issues that might be addressed included conflicts with parents (especially around rules and dating), drugs, teenage pregnancy, moods (e.g., depression), and eating disorders. Discussions also included conversations about Cambodia. Reportedly, the girls knew relatively little about the history of the country and their parents/families’ experiences under war-torn conditions—and they initially expressed little interest, but eventually this led to discussions about safety in own their neighborhoods.

An initial mental health assessment was conducted to identify those girls needing individual attention; however, when the program started, the assessment approach itself did not appear very rigorous. Nevertheless, during the first year, about half of the girls were seen for individual therapy, typically consisting of hour-long individual sessions on a weekly basis. Subsequently, the program began relying on the Achenbach Youth Self Report as an assessment tool, which confirmed that roughly 60 percent of the girls needed extra support.

Staff noted they were seeing girls whose major issues included dealing with abandonment, youth rage, longing for a mother, and having a mother involved in drugs. Counseling was intended to address issues where the level of individual emotional distress escalated beyond what the group was prepared to deal with. For example, sexual abuse or sexual activity was discussed in individual counseling if no one else in the group was at that point. Girls in counseling exhibited significant depression, and some required medication. The schedule for one-on-one counseling was flexible and varied from client to client.

In general, staff perceived that mental health issues for program participants were often related to their immigrant/refugee status, and frequently included post-traumatic stress. Initially, the program coordinator informally provided case management, but indicated that relatively few referrals were made for services outside of the Harborview network. There was a resource list of providers compiled for the Cambodian House Calls.
project that was translated into Cambodian and accessible on the Internet; CCG staff gave
the list to the girls’ parents and also trained them in accessing and using it to seek needed
support for themselves and other family members. Over time, the program expanded its
in-house counseling staff (as discussed under the family strengthening component) and
its focus on case management services.

In addition to the support group, girls were required to attend tutoring class every
Saturday. Early on, the program hired three part-time Cambodian group leaders—
university students—as tutors and mentors, each of whom worked with four to six girls;
this later expanded to four tutors, one of whom was male. Staff noted the group leaders
were hired and compensated, rather than recruited as volunteers, because it is difficult to
find Cambodian mentors/tutors willing and able to donate such service (presumably due
to high poverty and low education levels among that population). Group leaders
participated in most aspects of the program: they provided tutoring on a rotating basis,
attended the support group sessions, and served as mentors (as did the program
coordinator). Group leaders also made site visits to girls’ workplaces, conducted home
visits, took the girls to visit educational institutions, and met individually for recreational
activities (e.g., going to the movies) with the girls. During the first year, staff noted that
they had started building in some health and safety programs (such as swimming/water
safety), and that they recruited an organization called Seattle Inner City Outings to
provide recreational activities (such as riding a ferry or skiing) for program participants.
Several years into the demonstration, the program began using six or seven computers, as
well as software geared to teens, to place greater emphasis on computer training.

HERS partnered with the University of Washington to offer summer programming
(the University provided space in its Cultural Center, and a bus transported the girls from
Harborview Medical Center to the campus). The summer program included job training;
educational activities focused on language arts, English as a second language, and
writing; and field trips; as well as the ongoing support groups and individual counseling
that carried over from the school year.

In 2000, leveraging funds from the City of Seattle’s Summer Youth Employment
Program (SYEP), HERS was able to add a more intensive summer pre-employment
component oriented toward journalism training, in which participants improved their
reading skills, attended writing classes, learned to create a web page, and took weekly
field trips to release stress, get connected with each other, and share new experiences.
Their stories and poems were displayed on a web site and also appeared as a printed book
(using some funds provided by an anonymous donor).

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16 SYEP provided funding for a teacher and teacher’s assistant to help with the education component, and
also enabled the youth to receive close to minimum wage for participation (the summer stipend was about
$400). A language arts teacher was selected on basis of input from girls. Staff asked the girls who they
liked at the local middle school, and selected a teacher the girls said was “tough, but she’s good.”
The third original HERS activity was parenting classes, required for all parents of participants. Parenting classes were conducted as part of the contract with the girls participating in the job-training program. The program required that at least one parent attend each of the classes as a condition of the continued participation of the juvenile. The girls’ pay was docked $20 for each session their parents missed after the first missed session, offering a strong incentive for ongoing parental participation.

SafeFutures funding enabled HERS to hire a staff member, who had written books on Cambodian parents and teenagers, to develop a relevant parenting curriculum for this program. She tried to find a curriculum that would cover issues (e.g., lying, disobedience, and runaways) related to at-risk youth that are not traditionally encountered in Cambodian families, but determined that existing products did not meet the needs of this population. In the parenting classes, staff implemented culturally appropriate teaching styles (such as using drama and proverbs, which is consistent with cultural expectations), and avoiding role-playing or simulation techniques that Cambodians considered embarrassing.

During the first year, the parenting classes were held as two-hour, eight-week sessions that first introduced the program and identified topics parents were interested in discussing, in addition to focusing on those considered critical by staff. The parenting classes were cofacilitated by an English-speaking teacher (who designed the curricula) and a Cambodian counselor on the staff at the Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS), which provided these services under a subcontractual arrangement with SafeFutures. The cofacilitators sought to address three substantive areas: cultural issues, parental skills building, and creation of a support structure for parents. Topics covered by the program included school-related issues, such as reading report cards and calling school counselors; positive discipline, and how to deal with problem behaviors; and police and justice issues.

The cofacilitators reported that parents showed a high level of interest in some topics, including opening a bank account to save for college for their children (many thought that their financial circumstances would preclude any chance of their children receiving higher education, and were quite intrigued by the notion that college might be possible with a combination of parental and outside support). Nevertheless, the teachers reported it was difficult to get parents to attend classes, because they had short time horizons and were not used to planning ahead (most come from agricultural/village backgrounds). To remedy this, staff called parents the day before the meetings to remind them to attend and also provided food at meetings as an incentive.

The facilitators noted that they had been overly ambitious at first in trying to “pour information” into the parents. Over time, they learned to pick out a few key points, and

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17 Many of the clientele were from single-parent families; in two-parent families, typically only one parent usually attended these classes.
repeat these key messages over a few sessions to permit the parents to synthesize the information. Also, they became more experienced and selective in commissioning speakers to augment their own teaching, since some experts had substantive knowledge but clearly lacked the skills to communicate information effectively.

The parent education program evolved substantially between the first and second years. During the first year, considerable time was spent devising the curriculum, while in year two, the basic curriculum was repeated and an advanced component was added. Staff worked to frame parenting classes in terms of cultural situations, trying to compare how things operate in Cambodia versus in the United States, for example. The coordinator identified communication between parents and girls as a major issue, observing that often parents were unable to look beyond their personal needs (which could be quite debilitating, as noted above) to help their children.

The advanced parenting class aimed to improve communication between parents and youth. This series was perceived as differing from most other parenting classes in Seattle, in that it was geared toward parents of an older group of youth (i.e., not early childhood parenting education). A number of the group sessions brought both parents and children together to talk about personal issues, after each cohort had discussed these topics in their respective age-group sessions. Staff observed that both adults and teenagers were initially nervous about these encounters, which focused on situations that apparently had created or were causing considerable family friction. One issue, for example, concerned gender equity: the girls felt their male siblings were being treated better and given more freedoms than they were, while parents saw it differently (moms especially felt that their daughters’ circumstances were so much better than those they had experienced in their native country).

Around the third year of the demonstration, program staff asked SafeFutures management not to renew the ACRS subcontract, largely related to dissatisfaction with staff turnover, qualifications, and availability to meet with parents. The program’s budget was expanded by a commensurate amount, and it expanded staffing to fulfill ACRS’s duties in-house. The new arrangement was cited as creating a better team, where the various members shared the same priorities, had more efficient communication, and could more readily coordinate their activities. Thus, the new team was hailed as expanding case-management contact and services to levels that original staff found considerably more satisfactory. For example, the new arrangement gave rise to more flexibility in scheduling home visits at times that were convenient for parents, and more visits to parents during times that were not crisis-driven; much more individualized support to parents; more linkages/referrals to services; increased contact that provided more opportunities to build trust between staff and families, which fed into greater success in family therapy; and more contact with schools, particularly when girls had problems (e.g., truancy).
Save Our Sisters

Save Our Sisters (SOS) was a youth development program under the SafeFutures at-risk and delinquent girls component that provided support services to young women of color involved in the juvenile justice system. SOS was administered by Sisters in Common (SIC) and provided case management (including referral to services and advocacy on behalf of participants), educational support, computer training, and positive youth development activities.

The program predated SafeFutures: SIC started as a volunteer organization in 1990, founded by some Department of Youth Services (DYS) staff, probation officers, and women from city agencies and the school district to address the lack of services for girls involved in the juvenile justice system. The group approached Atlantic Street Center for meeting space, then started weekly information and support group meetings using a network of professional volunteers to provide services and make presentations on such topics as health, juvenile justice, self esteem, and transition to responsible lifestyles.

Target Population and Focus

SOS intended to empower young women to (1) increase their self-esteem, ethnic identity, and attachment to community by exposing them to guest speakers and volunteers who were positive role models; (2) increase their positive social skills by engaging them in group activities with other program participants in ways that encouraged respectful communication and offered opportunities to learn and practice conflict resolution, negotiation, and problem-solving skills; and (3) increase employment and leadership skills. Eligible participants included girls of color, age 12 to 18, who demonstrated at least one of the following risk factors: history of substance or sexual abuse, school problems including dropping out prior to high school graduation; personal, family, or peer involvement with the criminal justice system; and high-risk behaviors associated with delinquency.

Although the program’s emphasis was on juvenile justice–involved girls, it also accepted those at-risk (including, for example, friends of the girls who were offenders). Juvenile justice clients reportedly were mostly status offenders—runaways and cases with “social dysfunction;” however, a number were identified as gang involved. Some of the girls were diversion cases, and others had families involved in the mental health system.

Major Strategies and Activities

Before SafeFutures, primary activities offered by SIC included support groups and other social activities. The support group operated on a 13-week cycle (quarters); presentations in each cycle differed, so girls could attend more than one cycle. Cycles, or portions of a cycle, sometimes focused on a single theme; for example, they might spend
four or five weeks on such topics as health, self-esteem, cultural relations, or death and dying. The first half of group typically was devoted to talking about whatever the girls wanted to discuss, while the second half focused on educational topics usually facilitated by a guest speaker. SIC provides transportation and food for the meetings.

SIC also provided positive social experiences, such as visits to museums, theater, and cultural events, and chances to participate in black women’s forums (e.g., a health conference in California) and engage the girls in community service projects on weekends. Although the programming was presented in 13-week cycles, girls were encouraged to participate in multiple support group series, and most stayed with the program for a year or longer. While program participation varied, staff felt that 6 to 12 months was really needed to have an impact.

Under SafeFutures support, SIC expanded SOS programming in a number of ways. Somewhere along the way, the group facilitator noticed that many of the girls in the group were homeless and lacked life skills, so the program began placing more emphasis on the latter. In addition, during the third year of the program, SOS organized computer-training classes to teach participants basic computer skills, as well as to provide hands-on experience using computers for job-related tasks, such as writing a resume or basic word processing.

Two key components—case management services for girls and family strengthening case management (to serve 20 families annually)—were made part of the SafeFutures subcontract. Two new case managers were hired, one for each new component, to provide core services, including outreach/home visits, needs assessments, advocacy, referral, monitoring, and follow-up. In conjunction with the girls and their parents, the case managers were expected to develop individual service plans (ISPs) that set goals and time lines for achieving them. The case managers would see girls at their weekly support group meetings and make additional contact (at least once per month, not counting contact at support group meetings), including school or home visits every other week and telephone calls at least weekly (to remind girls about the group meeting and other contacts they should be making). If more intensive services were needed, such as individual or family therapy, the case manager made referrals to other agencies/services (e.g., a local government family reconciliation service that provided assistance to avoid placing a child out of the home).

Family case management referrals came from the juvenile probation/parole staff, the courts, the schools, individual lawyers, the State Department of Child and Youth Services (only referring Seattle families to SIC), and some self-referral. Many were perceived as lacking the skills necessary for family success. The case manager provided counseling assistance in some core areas—problem-solving skills, constructive communication skills, conflict resolution skills (i.e., not relying on physical force)—all seen as highly connected to relational issues. Poor skills in these areas were viewed as leading to the
breakdown of the family unit and, ultimately to breaking down the families’ sense of community. The case manager tried to resolve circumstances where families were not engaged in activities together and had no sense of belonging to a unit, which in turn impacted their daughters and how they were socialized about relationships.

Although families often were identified as needing family case management services because of a justice problem involving their child, many of the referred families arrived with overwhelming problems—problems that clearly went beyond the child. Some parents had ongoing issues that made the family unit a challenge for the justice system to cope with. However, the program found it difficult to provide services to some of these referrals (e.g., parents with severe substance abuse or certain levels of mental illness, particularly those who were medicated and often just not compliant or cooperative), because it was not structured to handle those kinds of issues.

The parents’ case management component was distinct from the girls’ component. They operated separately, serving different populations until September 1998, at which point, the components started to make “cross-referrals.” The program found it very challenging to provide intensive, comprehensive services to families with the planned number of caseloads; consequently, in year four, SafeFutures management agreed to reduce the expected caseload in half from the original 20 anticipated, in order to permit SOS to serve families more intensively.

Save Our Sisters’ Family Intervention Services (FIS), implemented in 1998, was open to the girls and families served by Sisters in Common or the FIS case management component. The family strengthening piece was intended to build parenting skills and promote positive communication between the girls and their parents, promote healthy family values and customs, and promote stronger cultural and heritage awareness among participants. It also was intended to increase parental knowledge about community resources, and increase to linkages to and use of such services.

ST. LOUIS AT-RISK GIRLS PROGRAMMING

Parent Infant Interaction Program and Project Change

In St. Louis, the Parent Infant Interaction Program (PIIP), a dropout prevention program that had been operating for a number of years under the auspices of St. Louis Public Schools Pupil Personnel Services, expanded its services under SafeFutures. PIIP had been providing child care for teen parents and parenting skills classes as part of the curriculum at one high school, and a weekly after-school parenting skills class at another. Services added through SafeFutures during year one were individual and group counseling for students in PIIP classes (which included parenting skills, male involvement, career education, and family life). A social worker was hired to provide the
counseling and some of the instruction. Her activities encompassed case management and referral to other services, such as finding a transitional shelter for a teen mother and her baby, arranging transportation from the shelter to school, and finding a source for diapers and baby clothing.

Project Change, newly developed under SafeFutures in St. Louis, provided a range of services to at-risk and delinquent girls attending an alternative school because of behavioral problems. Project Change focused on self-control (avoidance of violent behavior), self-esteem, pregnancy prevention, academics, and encouraging positive behavior. A school-home liaison operated the program and functioned as an informal counselor/case manager. The liaison provided one-on-one or group counseling, tutoring, and parental contact, including occasional home visits (as needed). Girls participated in a variety of programming provided at the alternative school (not all of which was provided through SafeFutures), including weekly volunteer projects sponsored by the Service Learning Project; job readiness training (Productive Futures); weekly art enrichment classes (Creative Expressions); and mentoring (provided through the Dropout Prevention program, not Big Brothers/Sisters, reportedly due to capacity issues). Some activities were performed by the liaison in conjunction with the school counselor, social worker, or nurse (e.g., discussions on preventing pregnancy/STDs).

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

Contra Costa County SafeFutures girls programming encompassed two one-on-one mentoring programs. The first was a mentoring program for at-risk girls in elementary schools, and the second served juvenile justice-involved girls who were on probation or leaving Juvenile Hall.

MIND Mentoring

Target Population and Focus

The MIND program, operated by the Youth Services Bureau (YSB), worked with elementary-school girls (age 8 to 12) to develop substantial one-on-one mentoring and provide a number of group activities. The group activities were intended to create an alternative peer group for the girls and connect them to a larger adult community. Group activities included a variety of field trips.

Girls were referred to the program by neighborhood resource specialists for academic failure; frequent behavioral referrals to counselors, resource specialists, or principals; poor attendance; and truancy. Mentors made weekly phone calls with mentees and had two face-to-face contacts per month. The girls mentored were African American and Latina, which largely reflected the population in the schools they attended.
Major Strategies and Activities

Although MIND Mentoring got off to a slow start, the program picked up momentum by the end of 1997 (year two). By January 1999, the MIND mentoring program operated by YSB had 21 mentors and 29 girls (with some girls on a waiting list). Modifications were made to the MIND program during year two, including discontinuation of a book club, which had served as an opportunity for group meetings of girls and mentors and was intended to improve reading and academic skills. This was discontinued because girls in the program were not reading at a level where they felt comfortable reading aloud in a group. Also, girls’ report cards showed they were doing worse in school than previously believed. New practices were adopted to address the girls’ academic deficiencies. Girls were sent to a study skills center operated by the University of California at Berkeley for assessment of reading and other skills, and need for medication or other assistance (YSB provided funds for these assessments). In addition, YSB provided support to enable MIND mentees to participate in tutoring provided at the YMCA (which shares a facility with YSB) and operated through UC-Berkeley.

The MIND program also conducted social skills and sex education workshops for mentees. The former was introduced in part because mentors often took girls out to dinner or events, and it was felt that social skills and hygiene education were desirable. The coordinator sought donations of soap, deodorant, cosmetic items, and the like, from local retailers.

Mentors participated in an orientation and training that totaled 18 hours. The training was provided by a staff member from the East Bay Paranatal Council, and was based on the needs of mentors. The director held monthly mentor meetings, and on occasion, met individually with mentors.

Step Up and Lead

Target Population and Focus

The Step Up and Lead mentoring program in Contra Costa was administered by Families First and focused on girls age 12 to 18 who were on probation. Families First is a nonprofit agency that addressed foster care, but the mentoring program had its own director and assistant director, both of whom functioned somewhat as case managers for the girls.

This program was originally intended to serve girls transitioning out of Juvenile Hall. However, that plan turned out to be impractical, since many girls leaving the Hall were sent to group homes that were located outside of the county (and target area), thus making the girls ineligible for SafeFutures services. In addition, most group homes in the
county did not allow visits by mentors. To address these issues, the program’s focus was changed to girls on probation within the county.

**Major Strategies and Activities**

The program was implemented in January 1998. Mentors met with girls once per week for two hours, and made a one-year commitment to the program. The girls and their families were asked about preferences for ethnicity of the mentor, to assist in making matches. However, location was a key factor in matching, since both the girls and the mentors could live anywhere in the county.

Mentor selection and training included an extensive telephone interview, followed by a home visit/interview, a 90-minute orientation, and a full day of training. The coordinator held meetings every couple of months that enabled mentors to share experiences and ideas.

Group activities for girls and mentors also were provided, usually occurring once every couple of months. Activities included self-defense classes, attending a play, going to a renaissance fair, and roller skating. In addition, the program arranged tours of some businesses in the city to provide the girls with career exposure.

The director also referred girls or their families to other services. Referrals were generated if the mentor thought additional services were needed (e.g., counseling), or at the request of the girl or caregiver. The coordinator called the caregiver approximately once per month to ask if the family needed any services or if they thought the girl needed services. Such communication also enabled the coordinator to obtain feedback about how the mentoring relationship and other activities were working from the clients’ perspectives.

There was a fair amount of interaction between the coordinator of Step Up and Lead and the VIP mentor coordinator, since each program served youth on probation. The two programs also “transferred” girls to each other’s program if one program had a mentor available for a girl for whom the original program was having difficulty locating a mentor.

**FORT BELKNAP**

**Counseling, Case Management, and Talking Circles for At-Risk Girls**

In Fort Belknap, at-risk girls programming was provided through a larger family-strengthening initiative. Family strengthening was not linked to specific programs, but was primarily provided by two SafeFutures counselors: a family services counselor
(FSC) who worked out of the central SafeFutures office, and a family court counselor (FCC) assigned to the Family Court. The counselors and other SafeFutures staff also referred parents to other services that promoted family strengthening. Referrals were commonly made to parenting skills classes (described below) and “family pilgrimages” (both programs predated SafeFutures). The latter are occasional weekend retreats incorporating a 12-step format in conjunction with traditional ceremonies to discuss family problems, emphasizing alcoholism and drug use.

Both the FSC and FCC provided case management, as well as individual and group counseling for youth and adults, although they reportedly served more youth than adults. The key distinction between the efforts was that the FCC primarily served court-involved youth (males or females) and their families. The FCC initiated and facilitated a variety of groups over the course of the initiative, including a women’s support group that addressed such issues as anger management, domestic violence, and sexual abuse. The adult counseling and groups primarily addressed family strengthening objectives.

The family services counselor position was intended to provide case management and counseling services for at-risk girls. Because of difficulty engaging teenage girls in individual case management or counseling, the first FSC initiated girls’ talking circles. Each group generally met once per week for six to eight weeks. Circles were intended to address health, relationship, and decisionmaking issues, and to promote communication and leadership skills (Fort Belknap College 1998b, 33).

Talking circles were adopted by other SafeFutures staff, in part to address gaps in programming for at-risk girls during a period when the FSC position was vacant. For example, one community coordinator initiated a girls’ talking circle in her site. Although it was intended to serve court-referred girls, girls from the community began participating on a voluntary basis, often brought by friends or relatives who attended the group. The coordinator involved women from the community (making it a talking circle for women).

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Talking Circles

Talking circles are a culturally focused approach similar to a support group. They are structured opportunities for exchanging information and ideas, discussing feelings, and providing mutual support, and may include ceremonial practices.

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18 The FSC position apparently was discontinued after the fourth year of the initiative.
19 SafeFutures community-based staff also provided informal counseling and referrals to address family strengthening.
20 Pilgrimage participants participated in existing support groups, treatment options, and traditional cultural practices, such as sweat lodges and other ceremonies, to support ongoing recovery after the pilgrimages.
21 Due to staff turnover, each position was filled by several different individuals over the course of the initiative, each with a somewhat different approach to the positions. Most individuals hired for these positions did not have backgrounds that enabled them to provide therapeutic counseling. Youth needing the latter were referred to a clinical psychologist.
22 This was cofacilitated with a counselor from the Chemical Dependency Center. An anger management group for men was initiated in 1998 due to the perceived success of the women’s group.
23 These were held in the four Fort Belknap communities when there were sufficient numbers of girls to mount them, usually a minimum of six to eight girls.
and girls) to help impart cultural values, guidance, and practical information to the girls. A new FSC hired during the third year of the initiative began a talking circle for girls from Harlem High School, and also conducted some gender-specific talking circles in other schools.

Talking circles were the primary consistent form of programming for at-risk girls in Fort Belknap, although the groups appeared to be conducted somewhat sporadically. Some of the activities in the after-school programs were gender specific, but not specifically focused on girls who were at greater risk than others. These activities included cultural elements, including dance and regalia making, which was felt to address traditional values and life skills such as paying attention, respect for elders, discipline, planning and working toward goals, honoring friends and family, and sharing skills and material goods (Fort Belknap College 1997, 9). Some after-school activities for girls touched on hygiene, reproductive health, and dating issues—topics considered to fall under the at-risk girls component.

There appeared to be few programs targeted to teen mothers or expectant mothers in the area. During the first two years of the initiative, SafeFutures provided funds to partially support an existing program in the Hays/Lodge Pole school that provided child care while the mothers attended school. A public health nurse provided the mothers with training in health and parenting skills. When the school stopped its support for the program, SafeFutures felt there was insufficient need for the program for them to maintain it unilaterally. Some teenaged girls who were pregnant or parenting likely participated in services that were not specifically focused on at-risk girls, such as PIP classes, individual counseling, or case management.

During the final year of the initiative, the outreach worker for the north agency area was assigned to serve as a mentor/case manager to six girls who were pregnant or had recently had babies. This was not structured as a specific program for at-risk girls, however. The outreach worker conducted home visits and informally imparted parenting skills (she had several children of her own). She encouraged the girls to obtain prenatal and well-baby care, or to obtain WIC assistance to purchase appropriate groceries, and often provided transportation or other assistance to enable them to do so. She also encouraged them to continue their educations, reportedly helping two girls return to high school and two others to enter GED programs.

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24 SafeFutures was not involved in staffing or managing the program.
25 While this was not formally viewed as an at-risk girls program, and it did not include structured curriculum or content, it served one of the populations intended to be targeted by this component.
4. Performance Indicators for At-Risk Girls Programs: A Look at Data Available from the SafeFutures Management Information System

As discussed in the preface, the Urban Institute collaborated with ODDJP and the sites to design a performance indicator database. The decision was made to develop a set of data elements that would be clearly defined in a data dictionary for cross-site comparative purposes, rather than a “turn-key” automated management information system (MIS). The cross-site database included over 200 data elements that included demographic characteristics; workload characteristics; service referral information (including type and duration of services received); client risk and resiliency characteristics; and a variety of service, school, and juvenile justice outcomes.

Data were collected semiannually. The first full database submission of the client indicator system—including data from SafeFutures program records, as well as official school, police, and court records—was scheduled for August, 1999. Local databases were expected to include complete client records (i.e., prescribed data elements) for participants served between July 1998 and June 1999. All clients who entered SafeFutures prior to July 1998, and were still participating in any SafeFutures activity/service after July 1998, were expected to be included in the database. However, communities were given the option of including clients who had both entered and exited SafeFutures prior to July 1998.

Guidelines and protocols were developed to facilitate access to data and information sharing (1) between clients, service providers, and key institutions; and (2) between the demonstration sites and the national evaluator. At the local level, program administrators or service providers were expected to

- obtain parental consent to permit cross-agency information sharing and reporting for national evaluation purposes.
- implement information-sharing agreements (e.g., MOA/MOUs), consistent with multiagency collaboration, to access individual school, police, and court records. Since jurisdictions are governed by different procedures and requirements in each of these areas, the discretion was left to each program manager to negotiate access to data in whatever manner was deemed most appropriate.

26 The data dictionary was designed between February and May 1998. Representatives of each site attended two-day training sessions in June 1998, which covered the definition and potential use for each element. Some minor revisions were made in early July of that year to incorporate suggestions made by various sites during the training period.

27 OJJDP provided additional funding of $25,000 on a one-time basis to assist sites in developing or enhancing MIS infrastructure.
At the national level, UI developed a data security plan to ensure protections for the confidentiality of the data transferred from local sites to the national evaluation team.

During the development phase and throughout the pilot phase, numerous correspondence and conversations took place between and among staff from OJJDP, each community, and the national evaluators. The process was dynamic and iterative. Subsequently, for each round of data submitted, UI staff reviewed the data for completeness, identified outliers, and developed queries and logic checks on particular data elements. Observations were documented in memoranda to sites to facilitate discussions about data quality, consistency of reporting by various providers, possible misinterpretation of definitions, and other concerns about the validity and reliability of data provided. In most cases, UI also reviewed these observations with local project staff and evaluators during regularly scheduled site visits. At least one cross-site guidance memo was generated to address definitional issues common to many sites.

DATA ISSUES AND LIMITATIONS

As with any evaluation technique, performance monitoring has its challenges and limitations. Several general cautions should be observed about the SafeFutures client indicator data:

- A key distinction between program evaluation and performance monitoring is the latter typically does not establish what caused a particular outcome or result. Performance monitoring data tells the score, but does not indicate why the score is what it is.

- The cross-site client indicator database only tracked individual clients for whom parental consents were obtained. In some sites, parents either were not approached to grant such consents or declined to participate. Similarly, the cross-site database only tracked those who were enrolled in particular site-defined services or activities (considered “trackable programs”) that met minimum thresholds for service duration and intensity or other specified criteria—therefore not all consenting individuals served by SafeFutures were represented in the database. Clients for whom multiple or completely blank intake records existed and adult clients not associated with at least one youth client were excluded from the data analysis.

- A number of obstacles prohibited sites from consistently providing the full suite of data requested. Difficulties included (1) the inability to negotiate access to official records, (2) the need to retrieve some data manually, (3) local decisions to not collect or report certain data elements, and (4) inability or unwillingness of individual providers to obtain data from clients. This
resulted in a considerable amount of missing data. UI analyses are based on the best data available from each site.

- Throughout the period of data collection, logic checks performed on the data provided revealed a number of data validity concerns for specific elements in the database (e.g., teen parenting status at baseline.) Sites were notified of such issues and were expected to take the steps necessary to reduce such errors. Errors that remained uncorrected by the time of the sites’ final data submission were recoded as missing data or as the most probable logical value.

- For site-level data analyses, UI included all clients with a valid intake record regardless of whether they were assessed, referred, or served by a SafeFutures provider. For provider-level data analyses, UI included all clients for whom valid service contact hours were recorded and excluded any clients assessed or referred, but not served by a SafeFutures provider. In addition to the general data issues and limitations described above, a number of site- or topic-specific limitations exist. These issues are identified below.

**SafeFutures Client Indicator Database: Analytic Approach**

The intent of the SafeFutures Client Indicator Database was to collect individual-level data in three key areas: (1) client profiles, including selected risk and resiliency factors; (2) service referral processes and service utilization; and (3) educational, juvenile justice, and other specific behavioral outcomes. The discussion below briefly highlights these core elements, together with generic UI analytic approaches to resolve various issues with the furnished data. Appendix B presents the database guidance and specific indicators used in the SafeFutures initiative.

**Client Characteristics at Intake**

Sites were instructed to assess client characteristics at intake for all individuals who participated in the SafeFutures initiative, including those who were admitted and those who refused service. Information was intended to reflect client status at the time of initial contact with SafeFutures. Most sites provided data on clients for the full set of characteristics specified in UI’s data dictionary (e.g., gender, race, family income, school enrollment, grade, employment). UI used all data provided to compute the following client characteristics:

DATE OF FIRST CONTACT with SafeFutures was derived from the earliest date entered for a client across three fields: date of assessment (3.4), date of referral (4.4), and date of service (5.5). An average date of first contact was computed within each site and applied to those clients for whom an earliest date of contact could not otherwise be obtained (i.e., no data were entered for such clients in fields 3.4, 4.4, or 5.5).
AGE was derived using a client’s date of first contact and date of birth.

YOUTH were defined by UI as clients aged 22 years or younger at intake.

FAMILY/HOUSEHOLD INCOME was assessed as low, medium, or high by each site using locally defined and rated income levels. In Imperial, low income was defined as less than $16,000, medium as $16,001 to $35,000, and high income as $35,001 or more.

**Client Risk and Resiliency**

OJJDP anticipated that service providers at each site would systematically assess risk and resiliency factors for eligible youth at program intake and periodically thereafter to gauge client progress and to identify new issues that may have emerged during the period between assessments. However, local program administrators and practitioners were given considerable latitude in determining how, when, and by whom such assessments would be conducted. Service providers were also given leeway to decide how many risk and resiliency factors they would assess youth for during each assessment episode.

As a result, there is considerable variability in the risk and resiliency data. Furthermore, some providers reported conducting reassessments of clients before initial assessments had been performed, and some dates of assessments appear inaccurate or were missing for a fair number of clients. For the purpose of data analysis, UI used the first valid assessment of each factor for each client regardless of the provider conducting the assessment. These assessments indicate whether a youth is perceived to have (or not have) each risk or resiliency characteristic.

**Service Log**

Each SafeFutures provider was to maintain a chronological record of client entry into, and receipt of, services/activities throughout the data collection period. Reliable estimates of the duration of client services could not be computed, because valid exit date information provided by sites was limited. Consequently, analyses focus on client entry into services, type of services/activities received, and number of contact hours.

CONTACT HOURS were defined by UI as the actual amount of time the client participated in an activity or service, regardless of how long the client was in the program. However, because some sites recorded seemingly impossible (extraordinarily high) contact hours, UI truncated the number of hours reported to a maximum of 1,344 hours per any six-month period (8 hours of service, 7 days a week for 24 weeks).
School Outcomes

Sites were instructed to provide school outcome data for all clients for the school year prior to SafeFutures entry through the end of the five-year demonstration, regardless of whether the youth remained active as a SafeFutures participant for the entire duration of the demonstration. However, no sites provided comprehensive school outcome data for all clients for all years, as requested. Consequently, UI analyses are based on the best available data regarding school attendance, grade point average, suspensions, and expulsions.

Where possible, UI conducted pre-post comparisons of clients for the school years prior to and subsequent to clients’ date of first contact with SafeFutures. In several sites, school outcome data sufficient for pre-post comparisons were unavailable. In Imperial County, no information from school years preceding Safe Futures was provided and virtually no (6 percent) clients had information from the school years during and after which initial Safe Futures contact.

Juvenile Justice Outcomes

Comprehensive information on client contacts with police, courts, and parole/probation violations was to be provided by all sites, including all incidents prior to SafeFutures participation and those occurring from SafeFutures entry to the end of the demonstration period (regardless of whether the youth remained active in SafeFutures throughout that timeframe). However, no sites provided comprehensive juvenile justice outcome data for all clients for all years requested. For this report, UI analyses focus on police arrest data provided by Imperial County.

PERFORMANCE INDICATORS BY SITE

Boston At-Risk Girls Programming

The discussion of at-risk girls programming for Boston is divided into two sections: (1) smaller programs implemented through small grants; and (2) ReVision House for young mothers.

The data for the smaller efforts in at-risk girls programming in Boston include a number of programs, primarily Anthony Perkins Center’s double-dutch program, the Franklin Field teen center peer leaders, and Girls on the Move, which received a SafeFutures mini-grant early in the initiative. These initiatives were not discussed in the preceding chapter because, for the most part, they were part of 14 small efforts that did not continue past year two. However, some small grant programs (those listed above) collected data for the Client Indicator Database. Client indicator information covering the period from July 1998 through June 2002 shows that 40 youth clients were served by
these at-risk girls programs. All (100 percent) clients were female, and client ages ranged from 8 to 16 years, with an average age at intake of 11.5 years. Race/ethnicity reported for 38 of 40 youth show that 79 percent were African American, 16 percent were Hispanic/Latino, 3 percent were American Indian/Alaska Native, and 3 percent identified as other race/ethnicity. Most youth (80 percent) and their parents/caregivers (71 percent) spoke only English, while 18 percent of youth and 24 percent of their parents were multilingual, including English. Limited data on caregiver setting reported for 12 of 40 youth identified 67 percent as living with a single mother and 33 percent in two-parent homes. Family/household income reported for 32 of 40 youth showed that nearly two-thirds of youth (63 percent) resided in low-income households (less than $14,999), and 38 percent lived in medium-income households ($15,000 to $34,999).

Nearly all youth (95 percent) were attending regular school at intake, 3 percent were being home schooled, and 3 percent were suspended. Grade levels at intake included 3rd grade (8 percent), 4th grade (8 percent), 5th grade (17 percent), 6th grade (25 percent), 7th grade (25 percent), 8th grade (11 percent), 9th grade (3 percent), and 10th grade (3 percent). Nearly three-quarters of youth (72 percent) were unemployed at intake, 22 percent were employed part time, and 6 percent were employed occasionally. No youth (92 percent) was known to be receiving substance abuse treatment at intake; the treatment status of 8 percent was unknown.

Service provider assessments of the juvenile justice involvement of 27 of 40 clients at intake reported that 96 percent had no prior involvement and 4 percent were on probation. In addition, police arrest data covering the period prior to May 2001 showed that none of the 40 clients entered SafeFutures with a juvenile offense history. Information on youth risk and resiliency characteristics is presented in exhibits 2 through 5. With regard to youth resiliency, all of the at-risk girls reportedly came from a stable home environment with parent/caregiver support, and more than three-quarters possessed a number of other resiliency factors, including academic proficiency/honors (84 percent), attachment to prosocial adult (81 percent), recreational/service club member (77 percent), sports team member (77 percent), and religious/cultural attachment (73 percent). Service provider assessments of risk characteristics showed that relatively few youth exhibited juvenile justice, substance use, school or behavior problems, or family-related or other types of risks, though nearly one-fifth of youth (19 percent) were in an age-inappropriate grade level.

28 Client and parent/caregiver primary language spoken was reported for 39 and 37 youth, respectively.
29 School enrollment status was reported for 38 of 40 youth.
30 Grade level was reported for 36 of 40 youth.
31 Employment status was reported for 18 of 40 youth.
Exhibit 2. Boston At-Risk Girls Client Resiliency (N=40)*

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.
Exhibit 3. Boston At-Risk Girls Client Risk: Juvenile Justice and Substance Use (N=40)*

- Parent/Caregiver CJ Involvement (n=38): 5.3%
- Other Non-Medical Drug Use (n=39): 2.6%
- Inhalant Use (n=39): 2.6%
- Marijuana Use (n=39): 2.6%
- Access to Guns (n=39): 2.6%
- Carrying Knives (n=39): 2.6%
- Subst. Abuse by Parents/Siblings (n=33): 0.0%
- Alcohol Use (n=39): 0.0%
- Tobacco Use (n=39): 0.0%
- Runaway/Homeless/Street Youth (n=39): 0.0%
- Gang Involvement of Parents/Siblings (n=35): 0.0%
- Sibling CJ Involvement (n=37): 0.0%
- Gang Involvement/Risk (n=39): 0.0%
- Carrying Other Weapons (n=39): 0.0%
- ANY FACTOR (n=39): 12.8%

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.

Exhibit 4. Boston At-Risk Girls Client Risk: School and Behavior Problems (N=40)*

- Age-Inappropriate Grade Level (n=37): 18.9%
- Special Educ./Learning Disability (n=38): 10.5%
- Frequent Absenteeism/Truancy (n=37): 8.1%
- School Hist. Disruptive Behavior (n=36): 2.8%
- Behavior Problems with Peers (n=37): 2.7%
- Verbal Aggression against Peers (n=37): 0.0%
- Physical Aggress. against Peers (n=38): 0.0%
- Verbal Aggression against Adults (n=37): 0.0%
- Physical Aggress. against Adults (n=37): 0.0%
- Behavior Problems with Adults (n=37): 0.0%
- ANY FACTOR (n=38): 31.6%

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.
The Boston at-risk girls participated in a wide range of services, including prevention education (70 percent), recreation (68 percent), skills development (60 percent), health care (48 percent), support services for teen parents (45 percent), academic assistance (38 percent), vocational or entrepreneurial activities (38 percent), mentoring (8 percent), and mental health treatment (8 percent). In addition, 80 percent received services other than those specifically identified and defined within the database. Cumulatively, across all types of services, assistance to these clients reportedly consisted of as few as 20 and as many as 782 hours of staff time per client, though program duration varied by client; the average amount of contact time per client was 319 hours. Exhibit 6 presents the average amount of contact hours reported for youth who participated in specific services. The database indicates that these at-risk girls’ programs did not refer clients to other providers for additional services not delivered directly by its staff.

32 In contrast, local evaluators report that the average amount of contact time per client for At-Risk Girls youth was as follows: 20 hours for Girls on the MOVE youth, 387 hours for ReVision House—Anthony Perkins youth, and 47 hours for Double-Dutch Peer Training youth (Harvey 2003, table 27).
To assess delinquency outcomes among Boston at-risk girls in these programs, information about police arrests was to be obtained for the period prior and subsequent to participation in SafeFutures. For youth with no prior arrests, evaluators expected to see a continuance of no arrests post-SafeFutures. For youth with prior arrests, evaluators expected to observe a reduction or complete cessation in the number of arrests accumulated post-SafeFutures. Delinquency outcome data provided by Boston was limited to youth whose SafeFutures intake preceded May 2001; of the 40 youth served by at-risk girls’ programs, juvenile justice data are available for all 40 youth. According to police arrest data, none of the at-risk girls accumulated any arrests, either before or after enrolling in SafeFutures, through May 2001.

33 However, absent a control or comparison group (something which was not feasible in the SafeFutures national evaluation), pre-post evaluations cannot establish that the event in question definitively caused any observed changes in behavior. For example, if improvement in youth behavior was observed, the difference could be attributed to participation in SafeFutures, maturation over time, both events, or neither.

34 Arrest figures reported here, especially data about prior arrests, must be interpreted with caution as several SafeFutures communities had multiple law enforcement agencies with overlapping jurisdictions, but were only able to access police data from one agency or from a limited number of police agencies.
To assess educational outcomes among Boston at-risk girls, information about school performance was to be obtained for the school years prior and subsequent to first involvement with a SafeFutures provider. Performance measures were to be derived from administrative data on school attendance, grade point average, suspensions, and expulsions. However, educational outcome data provided by Boston was only forthcoming for the years 1997 through 2000, even though SafeFutures data collection extended through June 2002. Also, no information on grade point average was available.

Exhibit 7 shows educational outcomes for at-risk girls before, during, and after SafeFutures contact, based on information provided by Boston schools. School attendance data available for subsets of youth served show that the percentage of school year attended increased slightly from 86 percent before SafeFutures participation to 91 percent after SafeFutures involvement. Suspension data, on the other hand, show a slight jump in the percentage of youth suspended before versus during SafeFutures. Expulsion data available for 28 of 40 youth show that none were expelled during or after SafeFutures participation.

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<th>PERCENT OF SCHOOL YEAR ATTENDED</th>
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<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance pre-SF</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance during SF</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance post-SF</td>
<td>90.5%</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended post-SF</td>
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<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions pre-SF</td>
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<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions during SF</td>
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<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions post-SF</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th>EXPELLED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of youth expelled during or post-SF</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ReVision House

ReVision House in Boston provided transitional housing and other services for mothers (with children up to five years of age) or pregnant women who lacked housing. Client indicator information through June 2002 shows that 13 youth clients were served by Boston SafeFutures provider ReVision House. All (100 percent) clients were female, and client ages ranged from 20 to 23 years, with an average age at intake of 21.2 years. Race/ethnicity reported for all 13 youth show that 54 percent were African American, 31 percent were Hispanic/Latino, and 15 percent were non-Hispanic white. Most of these young women (62 percent) and their parents/caregivers (67 percent) spoke only English, while 38 percent of the young women and 25 percent of their parents were multilingual, including English. Limited data on caregiver setting reported for 5 of 13 clients identified 60 percent as living with a single mother, 20 percent in a group home, and 20 percent as a runaway or homeless/street youth. Family/household income reported for 11 of 13 youth showed that all youth (100 percent) resided in low-income households (less than $14,999).

Most clients had dropped out of school (38 percent) or were enrolled in post–high school education (31 percent); an additional 8 percent each were attending court or alternative school, were attending BIA boarding school, had graduated from high school, or had completed their GED. Most clients (85 percent) were not enrolled in grades K–12, although one client was enrolled in 12th grade and one in a GED program. Nearly all youth (92 percent) were employed part time at intake; only one client (8 percent) was not employed. No youth (92 percent) was known to be receiving substance abuse treatment at intake; the treatment status of 8 percent was unknown.

Service provider assessments of the juvenile justice involvement of 10 of 13 clients at intake reported that 70 percent had no prior involvement, 20 percent were not currently involved, and 10 percent were on probation. In addition, police arrest data were reported for a period that covered 10 youth whose intake preceded May 2001. Arrest data showed that none of these 10 clients entered SafeFutures with a juvenile offense history.

Information on youth risk and resiliency characteristics is presented in exhibits 8 through 11. With regard to youth resiliency, a large majority (82 percent) of ReVision House youth reportedly had support from a parent/caregiver, but less than one-third came from a stable home environment (25 percent) or were attached to a pro-social adult (22 percent). Few youth possessed other resiliency characteristics, such as involvement in extracurricular activities or academic achievement. Provider assessments of risk characteristics showed that all youth (100 percent) were runaway or homeless/street

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35 Client and parent/caregiver primary language spoken was reported for 13 and 12 youth, respectively.
36 School enrollment status was reported for 13 of 13 youth.
37 Grade level was reported for all 13 youth.
38 Employment status was reported for 12 of 13 youth.
youth who were teen parents or expectant, and nearly three-quarters (70 percent) used tobacco. Very few youth possessed any other characteristics indicative of juvenile justice risk, illegal drug or alcohol use, school or behavior problems, and family-related or other problems.

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.
Exhibit 9. ReVision House Client Risk: Juvenile Justice and Substance Use (N=13)*

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.

Exhibit 10. Revision House Client Risk: School and Behavior Problems (N=13)*

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.
With regard to service activities, young women served by ReVision House mainly participated in vocational or entrepreneurial activities (100 percent), parenting education (23 percent), and prevention education (8 percent) (not shown). Cumulatively, across all types of services, assistance to ReVision House clients reportedly consisted of as few as 84, and as many as 892 hours of staff time per client, though program duration varied by client; the average amount of contact time per client was 481 hours. Exhibit 11 presents the average amount of contact hours reported for youth who participated in specific services. The database indicates that ReVision House did not refer these clients to other providers for additional services not delivered directly by its staff.

Delinquency outcome data provided by Boston was limited to youth whose SafeFutures intake preceded May 2001; of the 13 youth served by ReVision House, juvenile justice data are available for 10 young women. According to police arrest data,

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Exhibit 11. ReVision House Client Risk: Family and Other Problems (N=13)*

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.

With regard to service activities, young women served by ReVision House mainly participated in vocational or entrepreneurial activities (100 percent), parenting education (23 percent), and prevention education (8 percent) (not shown). Cumulatively, across all types of services, assistance to ReVision House clients reportedly consisted of as few as 84, and as many as 892 hours of staff time per client, though program duration varied by client; the average amount of contact time per client was 481 hours. Exhibit 11 presents the average amount of contact hours reported for youth who participated in specific services. The database indicates that ReVision House did not refer these clients to other providers for additional services not delivered directly by its staff.

Delinquency outcome data provided by Boston was limited to youth whose SafeFutures intake preceded May 2001; of the 13 youth served by ReVision House, juvenile justice data are available for 10 young women. According to police arrest data,

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39 In contrast, local evaluators report that the average amount of contact time per client for ReVision House youth was 459 hours (Harvey 2003, table 27).
none of the ReVision House clients accumulated any arrests, either before or after enrolling in SafeFutures, through May 2001.40

Educational outcome data provided by Boston was only forthcoming for the years 1997 through 2000, even though SafeFutures data collection extended through June 2002. Exhibit 12 shows educational outcomes for ReVision House clients before, during, and after SafeFutures contact, based on information provided by Boston schools. Unfortunately, virtually no educational data was available for ReVision House clients.

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**Exhibit 12. Educational Outcomes of ReVision House Clients (N=13)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENT OF SCHOOL YEAR ATTENDED</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance pre-SF</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance during SF</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance post-SF</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspended pre-SF</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended during SF</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended post-SF</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
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<th>NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions pre-SF</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions during SF</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions post-SF</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<th>EXPELLED</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of youth expelled during or post-SF</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Information described as N/A was not available for any clients, while information described as N/R was unavailable for 90 percent or more clients and is for that reason not reported.

40 As noted previously, arrest figures reported here, especially data about prior arrests, must be interpreted with caution as several SafeFutures communities had multiple law enforcement agencies with overlapping jurisdictions but were only able to access police data from one agency or from a limited number of police agencies.
CONTRA COSTA AT-RISK GIRLS PROGRAMMING

MIND Mentoring

MIND Mentoring (operated by the Youth Services Bureau) provided mentors to elementary school girls, ages 8 to 12. Client indicator information covering the period from July 1998 through June 2001 shows that 11 youth were served by MIND Mentoring in Contra Costa. The MIND program director had indicated that obtaining parental consents for the youth was very difficult; as a result, only a small subset of mentored youth have information in the Client Indicator Database.

All (100 percent) youth were female, and client ages ranged from 8 to 12 years, with an average age at intake of 10.0 years. Race/ethnicity reported for all 11 girls show that 73 percent were African American, 18 percent were Hispanic/Latino, and 9 percent identified as other race/ethnicity. Most youth (91 percent) and their parents/caregivers (82 percent) spoke only English.

Family/household income was not reported for any youth. Caregiver setting reported for all 11 youth identified 46 percent as living in two-parent homes, 18 percent with a single mother, 18 percent with a single father, and 18 percent in kinship care with a nonparent relative or family friend. Most (82 percent) of the girls were attending regular schools at intake, and 18 percent had been suspended. Grade levels at baseline ranged from 3rd to 6th grade according to the following distribution: 27 percent in 3rd grade, 18 percent in 4th grade, 36 percent in 5th grade, and 18 percent in 6th grade. Employment data reported for 8 of 11 youth showed that no clients were employed at intake. With regard to treatment status at intake, none of the 11 youth were receiving substance abuse treatment.

Service provider assessments of the juvenile justice involvement of 10 of 11 clients at intake reported that 90 percent had no prior involvement and 10 percent were not currently involved. In addition, arrest data were reported for a period that covered three youth whose intake preceded June 2000. Arrest data showed that none of these three clients entered SafeFutures with a juvenile offense history.

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41 While local evaluators do not separately report the number of youth served by each Contra Costa mentoring program, demographic information presented show that at least 64 youth received services from MIND Mentoring, Step Up and Lead, and/or VIP Mentoring between January 1, 1996, and June 30, 2001 (Bennett et al. 2002, 9). However, local evaluators also report risk and resiliency information for approximately 143 mentoring youth, implying that twice as many mentoring youth were served during the duration of SafeFutures (Bennett et al. 2002, 12–17).

42 School enrollment status was reported for all 11 youth.

43 Grade level at intake was reported for all 11 youth.
Information on youth risk and resiliency characteristics is presented in exhibits 13 through 16. With regard to youth resiliency, more than three-quarters of MIND Mentoring girls reportedly had support from a parent/caregiver (80 percent) and slightly less than half were attached to a prosocial adult (40 percent). However, less than one-third possessed other resiliency characteristics, such as stable home environment (27 percent), recreational/service club membership (27 percent), academic proficiency/honors (10 percent), sports team membership (9 percent), or religious/cultural attachment (9 percent). Provider assessments of risk characteristics showed that virtually all (91 percent) MIND Mentoring youth were runaways or homeless/street youth, and three-quarters or more exhibited a school or behavior problem, including verbal aggression against adults (100 percent), physical aggression against peers (73 percent), physical aggression against adults (73 percent), age-inappropriate grade level (73 percent), or special education/learning disability (73 percent). More than half had a history of disruptive behavior at school (64 percent) or behavior problems with peers (55 percent), and most youth also possessed other family risk/disruption factors.

*Exhibit 13. MIND Mentoring Client Resiliency (N=11)*

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment to Prosocial Adult (n=10)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable Home Environment (n=11)</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational/Service Club (n=11)</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Proficiency/Honors (n=10)</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Team Member (n=11)</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious/Cultural Attachment (n=11)</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANY FACTOR (n=11)</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.
Exhibit 14. MIND Mentoring Client Risk: Juvenile Justice and Substance Use (N=11)*

- Runaway/Homeless/Street Youth (n=11): 90.9%
- Subst. Abuse by Parents/Siblings (n=10): 20.0%
- Parent/Caregiver CJ Involvement (n=11): 9.1%
- Other Non-Medical Drug Use (n=11): 0.0%
- Marijuana Use (n=11): 0.0%
- Alcohol Use (n=11): 0.0%
- Tobacco Use (n=11): 0.0%
- Gang Involved/Risk (n=11): 0.0%
- Carrying Other Weapons (n=11): 0.0%
- ANY FACTOR (n=11): 90.9%

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.

Exhibit 15. MIND Mentoring Client Risk: School and Behavior Problems (N=11)*

- Verbal Aggression against Adults (n=11): 100.0%
- Physical Aggression against Peers (n=11): 72.7%
- Physical Aggression against Adults (n=11): 72.7%
- Age-Inappropriate Grade Level (n=11): 72.7%
- Special Educ./Learning Disability (n=11): 72.7%
- School Hist. Disruptive Behavior (n=11): 63.6%
- Behavior Problems with Peers (n=11): 54.5%
- Behavior Problems with Adults (n=11): 9.1%
- Frequent Absenteeism/Truancy (n=11): 9.1%
- ANY FACTOR (n=11): 100.0%

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.
Exhibit 16. MIND Mentoring Client Risk: Family and Other Problems (N=11)*

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.

The client indicator data portray MIND girls participating in only mentoring, with the exception of one youth receiving case management services and one youth participating in recreation. However, we know from our site visits, that youth served by the MIND program also participated in life skills workshops and recreational activities. Cumulatively, across mentoring, recreation, and case management, assistance to MIND Mentoring clients reportedly consisted of as few as 15 and as many as 2,484 hours of staff time per client, though program duration varied by client; the average amount of contact time per client was 1,133 hours. The database indicates that MIND Mentoring did not refer these clients to other providers for additional services not delivered directly by its staff.

Delinquency outcomes among MIND Mentoring youth were assessed based on police arrest data obtained from Contra Costa. Arrest data was limited to youth whose SafeFutures intake preceded June 2000; of the 11 youth served by MIND Mentoring,
arrest data are available for only 3 youth. Of these youth, none were arrested either before or after enrolling in SafeFutures, through June 2000.44

To assess educational outcomes, information about school performance was to be obtained for the school years prior and subsequent to first involvement with a SafeFutures provider. However, in Contra Costa, only two consecutive years (1998–1999 and 1999–2000) of school data on educational outcomes was forthcoming, and few clients had information from both periods. Therefore, a pre-post comparison of the same clients was not possible. As a result, educational outcome data are not shown.

Families First: The Step Up and Lead Mentoring Program

Families First was the agency that implemented and operated the Step Up and Lead mentoring program for girls on probation. Client indicator information covering the period from July 1998 through June 2001 shows that 30 girls were served by Families First in Contra Costa.45 Client ages ranged from 12 to 19 years, with an average age at intake of 14.8 years. Race/ethnicity reported for 29 of 30 youth show that: 45 percent were non-Hispanic white, 31 percent were African American, 21 percent were Hispanic/Latino, and 3 percent identified as other race/ethnicity. Most youth (90 percent) and their parents/caregivers (86 percent) spoke only English.46

Caregiver setting reported for 28 of the 30 youth identified 11 percent as living in two-parent homes, 36 percent with a single mother, 7 percent with a single father, 25 percent in kinship care with a nonparent relative or family friend, 7 percent in foster care, 11 percent in group home, and 4 percent in other settings. Approximately half (52 percent) of all youth were attending court or alternative school at intake, 40 percent were attending regular school, 4 percent had completed their GED, and 4 percent had dropped out.47 Grade levels at baseline ranged from 6th to 12th grade according to the following distribution: 15 percent in 6th grade, 11 percent in 7th grade, 22 percent in 8th grade, 15 percent in 9th grade, 15 percent in 10th grade, 4 percent in 11th grade, 11 percent in 12th grade, and 7 percent were not enrolled in grades K–12.48 The majority of youth (92 percent) were unemployed at intake, although 8 percent reported being employed part time.49 With regard to treatment status at intake, most youth (90 percent) were not

44 As noted previously, arrest figures reported here, especially data about prior arrests, must be interpreted with caution, as several SafeFutures communities had multiple law enforcement agencies with overlapping jurisdictions but were only able to access police data from one agency or from a limited number of police agencies.
45 See previous note (in the MIND Mentoring section) for the number of youth that local evaluators report as being served by all Contra Costa mentoring programs combined.
46 Client and parent/caregiver primary language spoken was reported for 29 and 22 youth, respectively.
47 School enrollment status was reported for 25 of 30 youth.
48 Grade level at intake was reported for 27 of 30 youth.
49 Employment status was reported for 26 of 30 youth.
receiving substance abuse treatment, 3 percent were, and the treatment status of 7 percent was unknown.

Service provider assessments of the juvenile justice involvement of 28 of 30 clients at intake reported that 46 percent had no prior involvement, 18 percent were not currently involved, and 36 percent were on probation. In addition, arrest data were reported for a period that covered 25 youth whose intake preceded June 2000. Arrest data showed that 7 of these 25 clients entered SafeFutures with a juvenile offense history, and their average age at first arrest was 12.4 years.

Information on youth risk and resiliency characteristics is presented in exhibits 17 through 20. With regard to youth resiliency, more than two-thirds of Step Up and Lead youth reportedly came from stable home environments (77 percent), had support from a parent/caregiver (75 percent), or showed attachment to a prosocial adult (67 percent). However, less than half (46 percent) demonstrated academic proficiency/honors, and relatively few were involved in sports teams (25 percent) or recreational/service clubs (14 percent). Provider assessments of risk characteristics showed that nearly one-quarter were runaway or homeless/street youth, and approximately half were in an age-inappropriate grade level, exhibited physical or verbal aggression against adults, suffered some type of family risk/disruption, or had been treated for or diagnosed as having a mental health condition.

Exhibit 17. Step Up and Lead Client Resiliency (N=30)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stable Home Environment (n=26)</td>
<td>76.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Caregiver Support (n=28)</td>
<td>75.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attachment to Prosocial Adult (n=24)</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Proficiency/Honors (n=26)</td>
<td>46.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports Team Member (n=28)</td>
<td>25.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious/Cultural Attachment (n=27)</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreational/Service Club (n=28)</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANY FACTOR (n=28)</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients
served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.

**Exhibit 18. Step Up and Lead Client Risk: Juvenile Justice and Substance Use (N=30)**

- Runaway/Homeless/Street Youth (n=30): 23.3%
- Alcohol Use (n=25): 20.0%
- Parent/Caragiver CJ Involvement (n=17): 17.6%
- Tobacco Use (n=24): 12.5%
- Gang Involved/Risk (n=29): 6.9%
- Other Non-Medical Drug Use (n=28): 0.0%
- Marijuana Use (n=24): 0.0%
- Carrying Other Weapons (n=29): 0.0%
- ANY FACTOR (n=25): 36.0%

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.

**Exhibit 19. Step Up and Lead Client Risk: School and Behavior Problems (N=30)**


* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.

Exhibit 20. Step Up and Lead Client Risk: Family and Other Problems (N=30)*

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.

AT-RISK AND DELINQUENT GIRLS PROGRAMMING IN THE SAFEFUTURES DEMONSTRATION
As expected, all of the youth served by Step Up and Lead participated in mentoring activities. Assistance to Step Up and Lead clients reportedly consisted of as few as 30, and as many as 6,486, hours of staff time per client, though program duration varied by client; the average amount of contact time per client was 1,314 hours. Service referral data provided by Contra Costa indicate that one of the 30 youth was referred for services provided by other SafeFutures partners (the provider to whom this youth was referred is listed as “Other”).  

Delinquency outcome data for Step Up and Lead girls was limited to youth whose SafeFutures intake preceded June 2000; of the 30 youth served, arrest data are available for 25 youth. Exhibit 21 shows delinquency outcomes for these clients: 72 percent had no arrests; 24 percent were arrested before but not after enrolling in SafeFutures; none were arrested only after they were enrolled in the program; and 4 percent were arrested both before and after exposure to SafeFutures.

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50 Youth may have been referred to other practitioners within Families First.
51 As noted previously, arrest figures reported here, especially data about prior arrests, must be interpreted with caution, as several SafeFutures communities had multiple law enforcement agencies with overlapping jurisdictions but were only able to access police data from one agency or from a limited number of police agencies.
Of the 7 youth (28 percent) arrested prior to SafeFutures, their average age at intake was 15.4 years, and the average number of arrests they accumulated prior to intake was 6.1 arrests. Subsequent to SafeFutures, one of these youth (14 percent) accumulated a new arrest. Overall, the average number of arrests accumulated by youth post-SafeFutures was 0.4 arrests. Of the 18 youth (72 percent) with no arrests prior to SafeFutures, their average age at intake was 14.2 years. All of these youth maintained their arrest-free status subsequent to SafeFutures.

To further explore delinquency outcomes, we also examined the severity of offending by Step Up and Lead girls for the 7 clients (28 percent) who accumulated at least one arrest. Exhibit 22 shows the distribution of youth’s most serious arrest, depending on whether they occurred before (N=7) or after (N=0) SafeFutures. Because the SafeFutures initiative was designed to reduce violence among juveniles, we expected to observe fewer serious crimes subsequent to SafeFutures than we observed prior. Accordingly, all youth had their most serious arrest occur prior to SafeFutures than did after.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-SafeFutures</th>
<th>Post-SafeFutures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Because educational outcome data for Step Up and Lead youth were only available for a few clients, these data are not shown.

53 This finding is at least partially driven by the varying lengths of time for which arrest data were available pre- and post-SafeFutures. For example, pre-SafeFutures arrest data for a 15-year-old youth were available for 15 years prior to SafeFutures, while post-SafeFutures data were available only for the time period between the youth’s entry into SafeFutures and June 2000. No arrest data were available after June 2000.
FORT BELKNAP AT-RISK GIRLS PROGRAMMING

Talking Circles

Data in the Client Indicator Database provided by Fort Belknap were limited. The database only contained information on two youth who participated in Youth Talking Circles or Family Talking Circles. Hence, a discussion of performance indicators is not provided.

IMPERIAL COUNTY AT-RISK GIRLS PROGRAMMING

100% Girl Power

Due to an error in Imperial County’s final submission of the Client Indicator Database, it was not possible to identify services provided by specific programs or providers. Therefore, no data on youth served by 100% Girl Power were distinguishable in the final Client Indicator Database provided by Imperial.

SEATTLE AT-RISK GIRLS PROGRAMMING

Big Sisters Mentoring

Big Sisters provided one-on-one mentoring services for at-risk girls showing low attachment to school, risk of school failure, or inappropriate classroom behavior. Client indicator information for the period from July 1998 through June 2001 shows that 118 youth were served by Big Sisters; this is a conservative estimate that excludes any youth who were assessed or referred, but not served by the program. Based on these cases, we estimate youth ranged in age from 5 to 12 years old (average age at intake was 8.6 years); 100 percent were female; 60 percent were Black/African American; 18 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander; 11 percent were white (non-Hispanic); 7 percent were Hispanic/Latino; 1 percent were American Indian or Alaska Native; and 3 percent identified as other race/ethnicity, including multiracial.

Most youth (72 percent) and their parents/caregivers (70 percent) spoke only English, though 25 percent of youth were multilingual including English, and 24 percent of parents spoke limited or no English. Fifty percent of youth lived with a single mother, 29 percent in a two-parent household, 14 percent in kinship care with a relative or family friend, 5 percent in foster care, 2 percent with a single father, and 1 percent in joint

54 In contrast, local evaluators report that Big Sisters served 101 clients from July 1996 through June 30, 2000 (Doran & Doran 2001, 14).
55 Information on race/ethnicity was available for all 118 clients.
custody.\textsuperscript{56} Family/household income reported for 110 of 118 youth showed that all (100 percent) came from low-income households.

All youth (100 percent) were attending regular school at intake, and all were in elementary school grades: 1 percent in kindergarten, 13 percent in 1st grade, 23 percent in 2nd grade, 27 percent in 3rd grade, 22 percent in 4th grade, 14 percent in 5th grade, and 1 percent in 6th grade.\textsuperscript{57} Not surprisingly, given their young age, employment data reported for 51 of 118 youth indicated that none were employed at intake, and information on substance abuse treatment available for 116 of 118 youth showed that 62 percent were not receiving treatment at intake, and the treatment status of 38 percent was unknown.

The number of Big Sisters clients for whom risk and resiliency factors were reported fell below our 50 percent threshold for reporting risk indicators. However, service providers assessed the juvenile justice involvement for 117 of 118 clients at intake, reporting that 99 percent had no prior involvement and 1 percent was not currently involved. Police data for the period up to August 2001 indicate that none of the 118 had been arrested prior to their first contact with SafeFutures.

All of the 118 youth served by Big Sisters received mentoring activities. The database listed no other activities for Big Sisters clients. Mentoring assistance to clients reportedly consisted of as few as 2 and as many as 106 hours of staff time per client, though program duration varied by client; the average amount of contact time per client was 31 hours. The data indicate that none of the Big Sisters youth were referred for services provided by other SafeFutures partners.

Delinquency outcome data provided by Seattle was limited to youth whose SafeFutures intake preceded August 2001; of the 118 youth served by Big Sisters, juvenile justice data are available for all 118 youth. Exhibit 23 shows delinquency outcomes for these clients: 97.5 percent had no arrests; none were arrested before but not after enrolling in SafeFutures; 2.5 percent were arrested only after they were enrolled in the program; and none were arrested both before and after exposure to SafeFutures. For the three youth arrested after SafeFutures involvement, their most serious arrests were for property crimes.\textsuperscript{58}

\textsuperscript{56} Family/caregiver setting was reported for all 118 youth.
\textsuperscript{57} School enrollment and grade level was reported for all 118 youth.
\textsuperscript{58} As noted previously, arrest figures reported here, especially data about prior arrests, must be interpreted with caution, as several SafeFutures communities had multiple law enforcement agencies with overlapping jurisdictions but were only able to access police data from one agency or from a limited number of police agencies.
Educational outcomes for Big Sisters youth were assessed based on school data provided by Seattle for the years prior, during, and subsequent to first involvement with a SafeFutures provider. Exhibit 24 shows educational outcomes for Big Sisters youth before, during, and after SafeFutures contact. School attendance remained relatively high and constant across the study period. Although the percentage of youth suspended appeared to jump, suspension data was unknown for 70 percent or more youth, rendering interpretation of this difference virtually impossible.

### Exhibit 24. Educational Outcomes of Big Sisters Clients (N=118)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENT OF SCHOOL YEAR ATTENDED</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance pre-SF</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance during SF</td>
<td>89.5%</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance post-SF</td>
<td>86.9%</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE POINT AVERAGE</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average pre-SF</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

59 Information described as N/R was unavailable for 90 percent or more clients and is for that reason not reported.
Helping Each Other Reach the Sky (HERS)

Helping Each Other Reach the Sky (HERS, formerly Cambodian Girls Group) provided academic assistance, pre-employment skills building and employment opportunities, mental health counseling, and family strengthening services for at-risk girls and their parents. Client indicator data show that 36 girls were served by HERS during the period from July 1998 through June 2001. Most youth (97 percent) were multilingual including English, and most parents/caregivers (92 percent) spoke limited or no English, though 8 percent were multilingual, including English. About three-quarters (78 percent) of youth lived in two-parent homes, 17 percent lived with a single mother, 3 percent in kinship care with a relative or family friend, and 3 percent in other family/caregiver settings. Family/household income reported for all 36 girls showed that 94 percent came from low-income households, and 6 percent came from medium-income households.

Exhibit 24. Educational Outcomes of Big Sisters Clients (N=118)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average during SF</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average post-SF</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended pre-SF</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended during SF</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended post-SF</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions pre-SF</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions during SF</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions post-SF</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXPelled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of youth expelled during or post-SF</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

60 In contrast, local evaluators report that HERS served 31 clients from July 1996 through June 30, 2000 (Doran & Doran 2001, 14).
61 Family/caregiver setting was reported for all 36 girls.
62 School enrollment and grade level were reported for all 36 girls.
indicated that most (97 percent) were unemployed at intake, and 3 percent were employed full time. Most youth (75 percent) were not receiving substance abuse treatment at intake, the treatment status of 22 percent was unknown, and 3 percent were receiving drug treatment.

Information on the resiliency and risk characteristics of HERS clients is presented in exhibits 25 through 28. Nearly three-quarters (71 percent) of youth had parent/caregiver support, but less than one-third (32 percent) reportedly were attached to a prosocial adult and one-fifth (19 percent) lived in a stable home environment. However, almost half (48 percent) showed academic proficiency/honors, and 32 percent exhibited religious or cultural attachment. Thirteen percent of youth were runaways or homeless/living on the street, and 13 percent reported inhalant use. Only one girl (4 percent) was frequently absent or truant from school and none had a history of disruptive behavior at school, though 11 percent were in special education and/or had a learning disability. Nearly all (94 percent) youth were recent refugees or immigrants. Nearly one-quarter (23 percent) had been exposed to domestic violence.
Exhibit 25. HERS Client Resiliency (N=36)*

- Parent/Caregiver Support (n=31): 71.0%
- Academic Proficiency/Honors (n=31): 48.4%
- Religious/Cultural Attachment (n=31): 32.3%
- Attachment to Prosocial Adult (n=31): 32.3%
- Stable Home Environment (n=31): 19.4%
- ANY FACTOR (n=31): 80.3%

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.
Exhibit 26. HERS Client Risk: Juvenile Justice and Substance Use (N=36)*

- Runaway/Homeless/Street Youth (n=30) 13.3%
- Inhalant Use (n=24) 12.5%
- Marijuana Use (n=24) 4.2%
- Alcohol Use (n=24) 4.2%
- Gang Involved/Risk (n=18) 0.0%
- Other Non-Medical Drug Use (n=24) 0.0%
- Tobacco Use (n=24) 0.0%
- ANY FACTOR (n=24) 25.0%

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.
Exhibit 27. HERS Client Risk: School and Behavior Problems (N=36)*

- Special Educ./Learning Disability (n=28) 10.7%
- Frequent Absenteeism/Truancy (n=24) 4.2%
- School Hist. Disruptive Behavior (n=24) 0.0%
- ANY FACTOR (n=21) 9.5%

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.

Exhibit 28. HERS Client Risk: Family and Other Problems (N=36)*

- Recent Refugee or Immigrant (n=31) 93.5%
- Domestic Violence (n=31) 22.6%
- Mental Hlth Treatment/Condition (n=29) 6.9%
- Teen Parent or Expectant (n=29) 3.4%
- Any Child in Protective Custody (n=29) 0.0%
- ANY FACTOR (n=28) 96.4%

* Percents for each factor are based on valid Ns, which vary by characteristic but never fall below 50 percent of clients served. This means that some factors for which youth were assessed may not be reported here, because fewer than 50 percent of clients were assessed for them.
In addition, service providers assessed the juvenile justice involvement for all 36 clients at intake, reporting that 72 percent had no prior delinquency history, 22 percent were not currently involved, 3 percent were preadjudicated with charges pending, and 3 percent had other justice/disposition status. Police data for the period up to August 2001 indicate that 11 percent of the 36 had been arrested prior to their first contact with SafeFutures; their average age of first arrest was 12.5 years.

Youth served by HERS participated in a wide range of services, including academic assistance (97 percent), vocational or entrepreneurial activities (94 percent), mental health treatment (94 percent), skills development (83 percent), recreation (78 percent), mentoring (72 percent), family strengthening (47 percent), prevention education (28 percent), case management (25 percent), and health care (3 percent); additionally, 47 percent reportedly received services other than those specifically identified and defined within the database. Cumulatively, across all types of services, assistance to these clients reportedly consisted of as few as 20 and as many as 1,804 hours of staff time per client. The average amount of contact time per client was 624 hours. Exhibit 29 presents the average number of contact hours received by youth who participated in HERS. Service referral data provided by Seattle indicate that one of the 36 girls was referred for services provided by other SafeFutures partners (the providers to whom this youth was referred are ACRS and a non-SafeFutures funded program).  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Hours (n)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Assistance</td>
<td>237.1 (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention Education</td>
<td>18.7 (10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Development</td>
<td>69.0 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>49.4 (28)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring</td>
<td>43.0 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational/Entrepreneurial</td>
<td>158.5 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Treatment</td>
<td>70.6 (34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Strengthening</td>
<td>57.6 (17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>4.7 (17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

63 Family strengthening services likely involved youth clients, as well as other family members.
64 Youth may have been referred to other practitioners within Families First.
Delinquency outcome data provided by Seattle was limited to youth whose SafeFutures intake preceded August 2001; of the 36 youth served by HERS, juvenile justice data are available for all 36 youth. Exhibit 30 shows delinquency outcomes for these clients: 86 percent had no arrests; 8 percent were arrested before but not after enrolling in SafeFutures; 3 percent were arrested only after they were enrolled in the program; and 3 percent were arrested both before and after exposure to SafeFutures.65

Exhibit 30. Delinquency Outcomes of HERS Clients (N=36)

No arrest 86.1%
Arrest before not after 8.3%
Arrest after not before 2.8%
Arrest before and after 2.8%

65 As noted previously, arrest figures reported here, especially data about prior arrests, must be interpreted with caution, as several SafeFutures communities had multiple law enforcement agencies with overlapping jurisdictions but were only able to access police data from one agency or from a limited number of police agencies.
Of the 4 youth (11 percent) arrested prior to SafeFutures, their average age at intake was 14.3 years, and the average number of arrests they accumulated prior to intake was 1.3 arrests. Subsequent to SafeFutures, only one (25 percent) of these youth accumulated a new arrest. Overall, the average number of arrests accumulated by these youth post-SafeFutures was 0.3 arrests. Of the 32 youth (89 percent) with no arrests prior to SafeFutures, their average age at intake was 13.3 years. Nearly all (97 percent) of these youth maintained their arrest-free status subsequent to SafeFutures; overall, the average number of arrests accumulated by these youth post-SafeFutures was 0.03 arrests.

To further explore delinquency outcomes, we also examined the severity of offending by HERS girls for the 5 clients (14 percent) who accumulated at least one arrest. Exhibit 31 shows the distribution of youth’s most serious arrest, depending on whether they occurred before (N=3) or after (N=2) SafeFutures. Because the SafeFutures initiative was designed to reduce violence among juveniles, we expected to observe fewer serious crimes subsequent to SafeFutures than we observed prior. Since very few youth accumulated any arrest during the study period, it is virtually impossible to assess the effect of HERS at reducing severity of offending.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-SafeFutures</th>
<th>Post-SafeFutures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>3</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational outcomes for HERS youth were assessed based on school data provided by Seattle for the years prior, during, and subsequent to first involvement with a SafeFutures provider. Exhibit 32 shows educational outcomes for HERS youth before, during, and after SafeFutures contact. School attendance remained high throughout the study period, notwithstanding a slight decline, and the percentage of youth suspended from school dropped fairly substantially.

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Save Our Sisters

Save Our Sisters was a program that provided youth development, case management, and family intervention services to at-risk girls and their families through its sponsoring agency, Sisters in Common. Client indicator information for the period from July 1998 through June 2001 shows that 42 youth were served by Save Our Sisters; this is a conservative estimate that excludes any youth who were assessed or referred, but not served by the program. In contrast, local evaluators report that Save Our Sisters served 31 clients from July 1996 through June 30, 2000 (Doran & Doran 2001, 14).

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Exhibit 32. Educational Outcomes of HERS Clients (N=36)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENT OF SCHOOL YEAR ATTENDED</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance pre-SF 94.9% 26 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance during SF 92.7% 31 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance post-SF 89.1% 25 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE POINT AVERAGE</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average pre-SF 3.0 22 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average during SF 2.9 23 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average post-SF 2.7 24 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspended pre-SF 22.2% 9 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended during SF 10.0% 10 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended post-SF 0.0% 4 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions pre-SF 0.6 9 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions during SF 0.1 10 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions post-SF 0.0 4 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPELLED</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of youth expelled during or post-SF 0 33 36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most youth (93 percent) and their parents/caregivers (88 percent) spoke only English, though 7 percent of youth and 10 percent of parents were multilingual including English. Nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of youth lived with a single mother, 17 percent were in kinship care with a relative or family friend, 10 percent were in a two-parent household, 2 percent with a single father, 2 percent in foster care, and 5 percent had other family/caregiver setting at intake. Family/household income reported for 22 of 42 youth showed that 82 percent came from medium-income households, and 18 percent from low-income households.

Most youth were attending regular school at intake, 7 percent had dropped out, 4 percent were in court or alternative school, and 2 percent were attending home schooling. Most youth were in middle or high school: 5 percent in 6th grade, 19 percent in 7th grade, 10 percent in 8th grade, 38 percent in 9th grade, 10 percent in 10th grade, and 7 percent in 11th grade. In addition, 7 percent were not enrolled in grades K–12, and 5 percent were in an ungraded setting. Employment data indicate that most (95 percent) were unemployed at intake, 3 percent were employed part time, and 3 percent were on TANF work requirement. Ten percent of youth were receiving substance abuse treatment at intake, 83 percent were not, and the treatment status of 7 percent was unknown.

The number of Save Our Sisters clients for whom risk and resiliency factors were reported fell below our 50 percent threshold for reporting risk indicators. However, service providers assessed the juvenile justice involvement for all clients at intake, reporting that 67 percent had no prior involvement, 21 percent were on probation, 5 percent were not currently involved, 2 percent were preadjudicated with charges pending, 2 percent were committed to a correctional facility, and 2 percent had other justice/disposition status. Police data for the period up to August 2001 indicate that 29 percent of the 42 had been arrested prior to their first contact with SafeFutures; their average age of first arrest, regardless of whether that arrest occurred before or after SafeFutures, was 14 years.

The 42 youth served by Save Our Sisters participated in a wide range of services, including family strengthening (45 percent), mental health treatment (31 percent), skills development (12 percent), SafeFutures-supported probation (7 percent), case management (5 percent), and academic assistance (2 percent). Cumulatively, across all

---

68 Information on race/ethnicity was available for all 42 clients.
69 Family/caregiver setting was reported for 41 of 42 youth.
70 School enrollment status was reported for all 42 youth.
71 Grade level was reported for all 42 youth.
72 Family strengthening services likely involved youth clients, as well as other family members.
types of services, assistance to these clients reportedly consisted of as few as 1 and as many as 288 hours of staff time per client, though program duration varied by client; the average amount of contact time per client was 32.7 hours. Exhibit 33 presents the average number of contact hours received by youth who participated in specific Save Our Sisters activities. Also, the data indicate that none of the Save Our Sisters youth were referred for services provided by other SafeFutures partners.

Exhibit 33. Save Our Sisters: Average Number of Contact Hours of Service (N=42)

NOTE: In addition, five youth received an average of 17.6 hours of skills development, three youth received 3.3 hours of SafeFutures-supported probation, two youth received 4 hours of case management, and one youth received 5 hours of academic assistance.

Delinquency outcome data provided by Seattle was limited to youth whose SafeFutures intake preceded August 2001; of the 42 youth served by Save Our Sisters, juvenile justice data are available for all 42 youth. Exhibit 34 shows delinquency outcomes for these clients: 57 percent had no arrests; 7 percent were arrested before but not after enrolling in SafeFutures; 14 percent were arrested only after they were enrolled in the program; and 21 percent were arrested both before and after exposure to SafeFutures.  

It is important to note that criminological research consistently shows an increase in juvenile delinquency rates with age in adolescence through early adulthood. Thus, in any sample of juveniles, one expects to see an increase in the prevalence of arrest over time (a “maturation effect”).
Exhibit 34. Delinquency Outcomes of Save Our Sisters Clients (N=42)

- No arrest: 57.1%
- Arrest before not after: 7.1%
- Arrest after not before: 14.3%
- Arrest before and after: 21.4%

Of the 12 youth (29 percent) arrested prior to SafeFutures, their average age at intake was 15.4 years, and the average number of arrests they accumulated prior to intake was 2.3 arrests. Subsequent to SafeFutures, 75 percent of these youth accumulated a new arrest. Overall, the average number of arrests accumulated by these youth post-SafeFutures was 1.8 arrests. Of the 30 youth (71 percent) with no arrests prior to SafeFutures, their average age at intake was 14.1 years. Most (80 percent) of these youth maintained their arrest-free status subsequent to SafeFutures; overall, the average number of arrests accumulated by these youth post-SafeFutures was 0.3 arrests.

To further explore delinquency outcomes, we also examined the severity of offending by Save Our Sisters girls for the 18 clients (43 percent) who accumulated at least one arrest. Exhibit 35 shows the distribution of youth’s most serious arrest, depending on whether they occurred before (N=7) or after (N=11) SafeFutures. Because

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74 As noted previously, arrest figures reported here, especially data about prior arrests, must be interpreted with caution as several SafeFutures communities had multiple law enforcement agencies with overlapping jurisdictions, but were only able to access police data from one agency or from a limited number of police agencies.

75 The younger average age observed among youth with no prior court contacts accords with national trends showing a continuous increase in juvenile case rates with age across all offense types (OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book. Online. Available: http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/court/qa06202.asp?qaDate=20030811, August 11, 2003).
the SafeFutures initiative was designed to reduce violence among juveniles, we expected to observe fewer serious crimes subsequent to SafeFutures than we observed prior; however, this was not necessarily the case observed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibit 35. Most Serious Arrest for Save Our Sisters Clients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational outcomes for Save Our Sisters youth were assessed based on school data provided by Seattle. Exhibit 36 shows educational outcomes for Save Our Sisters youth before, during, and after SafeFutures contact. School attendance appeared to decline and the percentage of youth suspended increased throughout the study period; however, information on both of these outcomes was unknown for 50 percent or more of the youth served by Save Our Sisters. Differences could be caused by a maturation effect (an increase in the likelihood of deviant behavior with age in adolescence through early adulthood).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exhibit 36. Educational Outcomes of Save Our Sisters Clients (N=42)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PERCENT OF SCHOOL YEAR ATTENDED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance pre-SF: 74.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance during SF: 63.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance post-SF: 66.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| GRADE POINT AVERAGE                                              |
| Grade point average pre-SF: 1.7                                  |
| Grade point average during SF: 1.7                               |
| Grade point average post-SF: 1.8                                 |

| SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL                                           |
| Suspended pre-SF: 33.3%                                         |
| Suspended during SF: 69.2%                                      |
| Suspended post-SF: 100.0%                                       |

| NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS                                           |
| Number of suspensions pre-SF: 1.8                               |

AT-RISK AND DELINQUENT GIRLS PROGRAMMING IN THE SAFEFUTURES DEMONSTRATION


### Exhibit 36. Educational Outcomes of Save Our Sisters Clients (N=42)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of suspensions during SF</th>
<th>Number of suspensions post-SF</th>
<th>Number of youth expelled during or post-SF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valid N</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total N</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sister to Sister</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Sister to Sister was an after-school program designed to provide an array of skills development, prevention education, and other services, including mentoring for a subset of at-risk girls. Client indicator information covering the period from July 1998 through June 2001 shows that 192 youth were served by Sister to Sister; this is a conservative estimate that excludes any youth who were assessed or referred, but not served by the program.\(^{76}\) Based on these cases, we estimate youth ranged in age from 6 to 19 years old (average age at intake was 10.4 years); all (100 percent) were female; 76 percent were Black/African American; 9 percent were Asian/Pacific Islander; 3 percent were Hispanic/Latino; 3 percent were white (non-Hispanic); 3 percent were American Indian or Alaska Native; and 7 percent identified as other race/ethnicity, including multiracial.\(^{77}\)

Most youth (86 percent) and their parents/caregivers (86 percent) spoke only English, though 9 percent of youth and 9 percent of parents were multilingual including English. More than half (55 percent) of youth lived with a single mother, 31 percent in a two-parent household, 6 percent in kinship care with a relative or family friend, 4 percent with a single father, 2 percent in joint custody, 1 percent in foster care, and 2 percent in other settings, including incarceration.\(^{78}\) Family/household income reported for 144 of 192 youth showed that more than two-thirds (69 percent) came from low-income households, 15 percent from medium-income households, and 15 percent from high-income households.

Virtually all youth (99.5 percent) were attending regular school at intake, and one youth (0.5 percent) had been expelled.\(^{79}\) Most youth were in elementary or middle school: 4 percent in 1st grade, 12 percent in 2nd grade, 14 percent in 3rd grade, 19 percent in 4th grade, 16 percent in 5th grade, 11 percent in 6th grade, 10 percent in 7th grade, and 7 percent in 8th grade.\(^{80}\) In addition, 4 percent of youth were in 9th grade, and 0.5 percent each in 10th and 12th grade. Consistent with their young age, employment data indicate that nearly all (98 percent) were unemployed at intake, 2 percent were employed fulltime, and less than 1 percent was employed part time. No

---

\(^{76}\) In contrast, local evaluators report that Sister to Sister served 200 clients from July 1996 through June 30, 2000 (Doran & Doran 2001, 14).

\(^{77}\) Information on race/ethnicity was available for 184 of 192 clients.

\(^{78}\) Family/caregiver setting was reported for 190 of 192 youth.

\(^{79}\) School enrollment status was reported for 189 of 192 youth.

\(^{80}\) Grade level was reported for 186 of 192 youth.
youth were known to be receiving substance abuse treatment at intake; the treatment status of 10 percent was unknown.

The number of Sister to Sister clients for whom risk and resiliency factors were reported fell below our 50 percent threshold for reporting risk indicators. However, service providers assessed the juvenile justice involvement for all clients at intake, reporting that 100 percent had no prior delinquency history. Police data, on the other hand, for the period up to August 2001 indicate that 3 percent of the 192 had been arrested prior to their first contact with SafeFutures. The average age of first arrest for those arrested prior to SafeFutures was 12 years, while the average age for those arrested after exposure to SafeFutures was 13.

The 192 youth served by Sister to Sister participated in a wide range of services, including: skills development (59 percent), recreation (38 percent), prevention education (12 percent), mentoring (5 percent), and academic assistance (3 percent); additionally, 4 percent reportedly received services other than those specifically identified and defined within the database. Cumulatively, across all types of services, assistance to these clients reportedly consisted of as few as 8, and as many as 3,785, hours of staff time per client, though program duration varied by client; the average amount of contact time per client was 613 hours. Exhibit 37 presents the average number of contact hours received by youth who participated in specific Sister to Sister activities. Also, the data indicate that none of the Sister to Sister youth were referred for services provided by other SafeFutures partners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Average Contact Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prevention Education (n=23)</td>
<td>377.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Development (n=114)</td>
<td>523.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation (n=73)</td>
<td>641.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: In addition, nine youth received an average of 66.3 hours of mentoring, five youth received 1,401.8 hours of academic assistance, and seven youth received 3.6 hours of other services.
Delinquency outcome data provided by Seattle was limited to youth whose SafeFutures intake preceded August 2001; of the 192 youth served by Sister to Sister, juvenile justice data are available for all 192 youth. Exhibit 38 shows delinquency outcomes for these clients: 95 percent had no arrests; 2 percent were arrested before but not after enrolling in SafeFutures; 3 percent were arrested only after they were enrolled in the program; and 0.5 percent were arrested both before and after exposure to SafeFutures.  

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Exhibit 38. Delinquency Outcomes of Sister to Sister Clients (N=192)

- No arrest: 94.8%
- Arrest before n after: 2.1%
- Arrest after n before: 2.6%
- Arrest before and after: 0.5%

---

81 As noted previously, arrest figures reported here, especially data about prior arrests, must be interpreted with caution, as several SafeFutures communities had multiple law enforcement agencies with overlapping
Of the 5 youth (3 percent) arrested prior to SafeFutures, their average age at intake was 12.8 years, and the average number of arrests they accumulated prior to intake was 1.6 arrests. Subsequent to SafeFutures, only one (20 percent) of these youth accumulated a new arrest. Overall, the average number of arrests accumulated by these youth post-SafeFutures was 0.8 arrests. Of the 187 youth (97 percent) with no arrests prior to SafeFutures, their average age at intake was 10.4 years. Nearly all (97 percent) of these youth maintained their arrest-free status subsequent to SafeFutures; overall, the average number of arrests accumulated by these youth post-SafeFutures was 0.03 arrests.

To further explore delinquency outcomes, we also examined the severity of offending by Sister to Sister girls for the 10 clients (5 percent) who accumulated at least one arrest. Exhibit 39 shows the distribution of youth’s most serious arrest, depending on whether they occurred before (N=5) or after (N=5) SafeFutures. Because the SafeFutures initiative was designed to reduce violence among juveniles, we expected to observe fewer serious crimes subsequent to SafeFutures than we observed prior. Few youth were arrested at any time during the study period; of those who were, none committed violent crime after SafeFutures, although three youth had prior to SafeFutures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-SafeFutures</th>
<th>Post-SafeFutures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational outcomes for Sister to Sister youth were assessed based on school data provided by Seattle for the years prior, during, and subsequent to first involvement with a SafeFutures provider. Exhibit 40 shows educational outcomes for Sister to Sister youth before, during, and after SafeFutures contact. School attendance remained relatively high and constant across the study period. Although a higher percentage of youth was suspended during than after the year of SafeFutures participation, suspension data was

82 The younger average age observed among youth with no prior court contacts accords with national trends showing a continuous increase in juvenile case rates with age across all offense types (OJJDP Statistical Briefing Book. Online. Available: http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/court/qa06202.asp?qaDate=20030811, August 11, 2003).
unavailable for more than 80 percent of youth, rendering interpretation of this increase virtually impossible. Only one youth was expelled throughout the length of the initiative.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERCENT OF SCHOOL YEAR ATTENDED</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance pre-SF</td>
<td>85.5%</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance during SF</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance post-SF</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRADE POINT AVERAGE</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average pre-SF</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average during SF</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade point average post-SF</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUSPENDED FROM SCHOOL</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suspended pre-SF</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended during SF</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspended post-SF</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NUMBER OF SUSPENSIONS</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions pre-SF</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions during SF</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of suspensions post-SF</td>
<td>N/R</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPELLED</th>
<th>Valid N</th>
<th>Total N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of youth expelled during or post-SF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

83 Information described as N/R was unavailable for 90 percent or more clients and is for that reason not reported.
ST. LOUIS

Project Change

Project Change provided case management, informal counseling, and related services in alternative school settings, initially only for at-risk girls, but later for both genders. The data presented herein focuses exclusively on female clients served by the Project Change program. Client indicator data show that 42 girls were served by Project Change during the period from July 1998 through June 2000. All of the 31 clients for whom race/ethnicity was reported were African American. Client ages ranged from 12 to 18 years old, with an average age at intake of 15.4 years. All clients were reported as speaking English only and residing in a low-income family/household with parents/caregivers who also spoke English only.

Risk and resiliency data were extremely limited: data reported for 30 of 42 clients show that all were attached to prosocial adult role models. None of the Project Change clients were reported as having diagnosed mental health conditions or receiving mental health treatment at intake, and none were receiving substance abuse treatment at intake. Nearly half (48 percent) of these Project Change clients had appeared before the St. Louis Family Court on charges of delinquency prior to Safe Futures intake, and their average age at first contact was 14.1 years. In addition, 10 percent had appeared before the St. Louis Family Court regarding nondelinquency matters or family offenses, such as physical/sexual abuse, neglect, and permanency planning hearings.

The 42 Project Change girls participated in a fairly diverse set of activities, including mental health treatment (93 percent), vocational or entrepreneurial activities (62 percent), family strengthening (33 percent)\(^\text{84}\), prevention education (31 percent), skills development (19 percent), case management (19 percent), academic assistance (5 percent), and mentoring (5 percent). In addition, 2 percent reportedly received intermediate sanctions and 10 percent received services other than those specifically identified and defined within the database. Cumulatively, across all types of services, assistance to these clients reportedly consisted of as few as 0.5 and as many as 107 hours of staff time per client, though program duration varied by client; the average amount of contact time per client was 13.5 hours. Exhibit 41 presents the average number of contact hours received by youth who participated in specific Project Change activities. Project Change apparently made few referrals to other SafeFutures partners; only one of the 42 reported clients is shown as having been referred, and that referral was to Family Court.

---

\(^{84}\) Family strengthening services likely involved youth clients, as well as other family members.
Exhibit 41. Project Change: Average Number of Contact Hours of Service (N=42)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Type</th>
<th>Average Contact Hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health Treatment (n=39)</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational/Entrepreneurial (n=26)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Strengthening (n=14)</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention Education (n=13)</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOTE: In addition, eight youth received an average of 4.7 hours of skills development, eight youth received 6.1 hours of case management, four youth received 0.4 hours of other services, two youth received 0.4 hours of academic assistance, two youth received 1.5 hours of mentoring, and one youth received 2 hours of intermediate sanctions.

Delinquency outcomes among Project Change girls are based on court contact data provided by St. Louis for the period of time preceding June 2000. Nondelinquent and family offenses, such as physical/sexual abuse, neglect, and permanency planning hearing, were excluded. Delinquency outcome data provided by St. Louis was limited to youth whose SafeFutures intake preceded June 2000; of the 42 girls served by Project Change, juvenile justice data were available for all 42 youth. Exhibit 42 shows delinquency outcomes for these clients: 43 percent had no court contacts; 29 percent had court contact before but not after enrolling in SafeFutures; 10 percent had court contact only after they were enrolled in the program; and 19 percent had court contact both before and after exposure to SafeFutures.

Although St. Louis also provided police arrest data, the file contained information on less than 2 percent of the total SafeFutures client intake and was therefore deemed unusable.

Court contact figures reported here, especially data about prior contacts, must be interpreted with caution, as several SafeFutures communities had multiple law enforcement agencies with overlapping jurisdictions but were only able to access juvenile justice data from one agency or from a limited number of agencies.

---

85 Although St. Louis also provided police arrest data, the file contained information on less than 2 percent of the total SafeFutures client intake and was therefore deemed unusable.

86 Court contact figures reported here, especially data about prior contacts, must be interpreted with caution, as several SafeFutures communities had multiple law enforcement agencies with overlapping jurisdictions but were only able to access juvenile justice data from one agency or from a limited number of agencies.
Of the 20 youth (48 percent) with court contact prior to SafeFutures, their average age at intake was 15.5 years, and the average number of court contacts they accumulated prior to intake was 2.4 contacts. Subsequent to SafeFutures, 40 percent of these youth accumulated a new court contact. Overall, the average number of court contacts accumulated by these youth post-SafeFutures was 1 contact. Of the 22 youth (52 percent) with no court contacts prior to SafeFutures, their average age at intake was 15.4 years. Nearly all (82 percent) of these youth maintained their contact-free status subsequent to SafeFutures; overall, the average number of court contacts accumulated by these youth post-SafeFutures was 0.4 contacts.

To further explore delinquency outcomes, we also examined the severity of offending by Project Change girls for the 24 clients (57 percent) who accumulated at least one court contact. Exhibit 43 shows the distribution of youth’s most serious court contact, depending on whether they occurred before (N=16) or after (N=8) SafeFutures. Because the SafeFutures initiative was designed to reduce violence among juveniles, we expected to observe fewer serious crimes subsequent to SafeFutures than we observed.

prior. Accordingly, most youth had their most serious court contact occur prior to SafeFutures than did after. 88

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-SafeFutures</th>
<th>Post-SafeFutures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.3%</td>
<td>87.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

To assess educational outcomes among Project Change girls, information on school performance measures was to be obtained for the school years prior and subsequent to SafeFutures involvement. However, in St. Louis, no information on school attendance, grade point average, and suspensions was forthcoming. The only educational information provided was on school expulsion: none of the 29 Project Change girls for whom information was recorded was expelled during or after their participation in SafeFutures. Information on school expulsions prior to SafeFutures was not provided; thus, few if any conclusions can be reached regarding the success of Project Change at improving educational outcomes among youth.

**Parent Infant Interaction Program (PIIP)**

There was insufficient data (N=2 youth) in the Client Indicator Database provided by St. Louis on youth who participated in the Parent Infant Interaction Program (PIIP).

**CROSS-SITE COMPARISON OF PROGRAMS**

Exhibit 44 shows a cross-site comparison of the number of youth who participated in each program, the percent who received each type of service, and the average number of contact hours that staff spent with each client.

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88 This finding is at least partially driven by the varying lengths of time for which court contact data were available pre- and post-SafeFutures. For example, pre-SafeFutures court contact data for a 15-year old youth was available for 15 years prior to SafeFutures, while post-SafeFutures data was available only for the time period between the youth’s entry into SafeFutures and June 2000. No court contact data was available after June 2000.
# Exhibit 44. Percent of Clients Served and Average Contact Hours by Type of Service, by Provider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF SERVICE</th>
<th>BOSTON</th>
<th>CONTRA COSTA</th>
<th>SEATTLE</th>
<th>ST. LOUIS</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>N=40</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of clients served</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Average contact hours</td>
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<td>Sister to Sister</td>
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<td>Average contact hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Percent of clients served</td>
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### Exhibit 44. Percent of Clients Served and Average Contact Hours by Type of Service, by Provider

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<tr>
<th>TYPE OF SERVICE</th>
<th>BOSTON</th>
<th>CONTRA COSTA</th>
<th>SEATTLE</th>
<th>ST. LOUIS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At-Risk Girls</td>
<td>ReVision House</td>
<td>MIND Mentoring</td>
<td>Step Up and Lead</td>
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<tr>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>70.6</td>
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### Exhibit 44. Percent of Clients Served and Average Contact Hours by Type of Service, by Provider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF SERVICE</th>
<th>BOSTON</th>
<th>CONTRA COSTA</th>
<th>SEATTLE</th>
<th>ST. LOUIS</th>
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<td>ReVision House</td>
<td>MIND Mentoring</td>
<td>Step Up and Lead</td>
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<td>2.8%</td>
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<td>Percent of clients served</td>
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<td>7.1%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
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<td>Average contact hours</td>
<td>43.5</td>
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5. Cross-Site Discussion of Key Program Focus Areas

CASE MANAGEMENT

While the SafeFutures Demonstration Request For Proposals (RFP) indicated that a case management system should be implemented for at-risk and delinquent girls, it is not clear that case management was intended to be one of the elements of each ARDG program, whether a separate case management system was envisioned solely for this population, or if girls in these programs should simply be referred to existing case management services (through SafeFutures or elsewhere). It is also unclear whether OJJDP intended provision of “case management” in its fullest sense (including intake, service plan development, referral to services, follow-up, etc.), or whether more circumscribed aspects of case management, such as referral and follow-up, would suffice.

In Fort Belknap and Contra Costa, case management was not part of the ARDG programming, but it seems likely that a number of girls referred to some of these programs received case management from other sources. One of Fort Belknap’s ARDG programs involved talking circles (a traditional Native American practice similar to a support group) led by the SafeFutures family counselor, whose primary roles include counseling and case management. While it is not clear that all of the girls in the support groups were automatically placed on her caseload, it seems likely that many of them received at least some case management. Since the court counselor referred many girls to the talking circles, those girls were likely to be on her caseload for case management.

Since elementary school girls for Contra Costa’s MIND mentoring program were targeted for participation by SafeFutures resource specialists due to school or family problems, it is likely that the specialists were already providing case management services to them. Furthermore, a primary mission of the Youth Services Bureau (YSB)—the agency under which MIND was administered—was family strengthening, and the YSB counselor often met with the director of MIND to discuss the needs of the girls in the MIND program. The YSB counselor was available to broker services for the girls, as needed.

It is not clear how many of Boston’s ARDG programs provided case management. It is likely that at least some of the programs funded provided case management prior to receiving the SafeFutures grant, even though none of the enhancement activities appeared to include case management (which is not surprising, given the short time frame of the grants). The Klub included case management in its after-school program, for example, and Roxbury Youthworks provides support groups and counseling (which may include case management). Two of the programs provided transitional housing or emergency shelter for pregnant and parenting teens.
During the last round of site visits we asked program staff in all sites about what aspects of SafeFutures and their particular programs they would do differently if they knew all that they do today. Many responded that, in hindsight, there could have been more sharing of information about services available so that, at least, informal case management could have taken place. Cross-fertilization and simple knowledge about other existing SafeFutures programs could ensure that youth were getting the best services possible. However, some staff mentioned that coordinated service referrals, let alone case management, were particularly difficult to accomplish or implement because SafeFutures programs served different populations.

**CHILD CARE AND PARENTING**

Few programs provided childcare or parenting skills as part of their ARDG programs. The two primary exceptions were Fort Belknap and St. Louis, each of which provided in-school childcare for teen mothers, as well as parenting skills training. In St. Louis, these services were both provided as part of one program (PIIP). In Fort Belknap, girls whose children received childcare were referred to a separate, long-standing series of parenting skills classes, although it is not clear whether all of them attended these. These classes were not targeted to teen mothers per se, but were open to all parents on the reservation, and were commonly attended by adults referred to the classes by the family court. One of the family services counselor’s priorities was to arrange for additional parenting classes that would target teen mothers and pregnant teens. While none of the Boston programs specifically identified child care among their activities, the two programs providing housing for pregnant and parenting teens provided parenting skills training, and it’s possible that they provided at least some child care as well. In addition, the Crittenton Hastings House Alternative Education Services in Boston expanded its existing programming under SafeFutures by offering six specialized parenting classes and six healthy-behaviors workshops.

**BASIC EDUCATION, LIFE SKILLS**

Similarly, basic education was rarely provided as a specific ARDG activity. Although it is not entirely clear how extensive OJJDP intended the basic education element to be, it is interpreted here as including tutoring/homework assistance similar to that provided in after-school programs. At least four of the Boston small grant ARDG programs included such assistance. In some cases, Boston’s ARDG programs were enhancements to after-school or mentoring programs; thus the academic assistance elements associated with the former also were “counted” for ARDG. Similarly, Contra Costa’s MIND mentoring program, and the Big Sisters school buddy mentoring program in Seattle provided varying degrees of academic assistance (as previously discussed). HERS in Seattle included tutoring among its services. Two ARDG programs were linked to provision of more extensive basic education: the PIIP program in St. Louis, whose students attended regular classes in the high school affiliated with the program, and Big Sisters in Seattle, a school-based program that taught a range of basic educational skills.
Life skills and personal growth were addressed directly in a number of programs and also in the context of support groups or individual counseling. In a few instances, life skills were wrapped into larger programs that focused on employment. For instance, the PIIP program in St. Louis included a summer peer counselor/employment program that provided four weeks of training focused on parenting skills, child development, STD/HIV prevention, and substance abuse. After training, participants were assigned to assist summer school teachers with their classes (stipends were provided for both the training and employment components).

One of the ARDG programs in Fort Belknap focused on cultural life skills education, which was considered to promote girls’ sense of self-efficacy as a precursor for developing job skills, as well as teaching responsible communication and decisionmaking in a traditional context. Although originally intended to have somewhat of a talking circle/support group format and to involve female tribal elders (“grandmothers”), this format was not implemented during year one (perhaps due to some of the difficulties recruiting volunteers discussed in previous sections). However, cultural education for girls was transmitted by elders in conjunction with other activities, such as the Native American dance instruction and making dance regalia, which is felt to transmit such values as paying attention, respect for elders, discipline, planning and working toward goals, and sharing skills and material goods. Cultural education also is transmitted in presentations made as part of after-school programming, and during occasional “overnighters” for girls.

VOCATIONAL OR ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING

Although some ARDG programs included limited amounts of vocational or entrepreneurial training (e.g., workshops or voluntary computer classes), only the HERS program in Seattle made this type of training a central focus of its program. As discussed in Chapter 2, one intent of the program was to prevent girls from dropping out of school to seek employment, while at the same time promoting job market readiness upon program completion. The girls were assigned to work at Harborview Medical Center or at local nonprofit organizations. These assignments helped the youth learn basic employability skills.

Project Change in St. Louis, which targeted to girls in alternative schools, not surprisingly encouraged youths to participate in a variety of available programs provided at the school (not all of which are provided through SafeFutures), including weekly volunteer projects, vocational training, and job readiness training.

MENTORING

A number of programs were dedicated to providing adult mentors to at-risk or delinquent girls. These programs included MIND mentoring and Step Up and Lead in Contra Costa County, HERS and Big Sisters Mentoring, and the Sister to Sister Mentoring Project in Seattle. In particular, SafeFutures funding was central to the development of new mentoring programs in Contra Costa County. Step Up and Lead and MIND mentoring were created specifically for the
SafeFutures demonstration. In addition, SafeFutures emphasis on at-risk and delinquent girls spurred Big Sisters in Seattle to expand their mentoring program to reach high-risk girls. Historically, Big Sisters did not target high risk girls. In addition, Big Sisters mentoring was unique in that, although it was a mentoring program, the focus was on improving academic performance, and mentors in many ways resembled “tutors.”

The HERS program was not a formal mentoring program, but utilized Cambodian university students as group leaders to provide tutoring and mentoring roughly once a week. Group leaders were hired and compensated, rather than recruited as volunteers. Group leaders made site visits to girls’ workplaces, conducted home visits, took the girls to visit educational institutions, and met individually for recreational activities (e.g., going to the movies) with the girls.

During site visits, project staff of the various programs were asked if they utilized specific curriculum developed for mentoring programs. Almost all staff said they had done significant research on mentoring programs, but did not find that any formal curricula were freely available. However, Save Our Sisters in Seattle infused the principles of the Girls Incorporated curriculum into their mentoring practices.

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT

Only a few ARDG programs provided some type of mental health treatment. These programs included HERS and Save Our Sisters in Seattle, and Project Change in St. Louis. The HERS program in Seattle provided mental health treatment through support groups and one-on-one counseling. The program had a support group for 9th graders and one for younger, middle school-aged kids that was facilitated by a trained mental health therapist. Support groups were held weekly for 80 minutes with approximately 6 to 7 girls in each group. The meetings are confidential. There was no formal structure; the meetings were directed by the needs of youth. Both groups dealt with issues related to school (how to succeed, conflicts with teachers, how to choose classes) and friendships (conflicts, fights). Other issues that were addressed included: conflicts with parents (especially around rules and dating), drugs, teenage pregnancy, moods (e.g., depression), and eating disorders.

In addition to mental health counseling through support groups, the Director of Harborview Medical Center held individual counseling sessions. One of the intended goals was to reduce the stigma associated with mental health services. Major issues discussed in one-to-one counseling included abandonment, youth rage, longing for a mother, and having a mother involved in drugs. Staff indicated that the individual counseling sessions sought to address issues when the level of emotional distress for an individual went beyond what the group was prepared to deal with. The schedule was flexible and varied from client to client.

The Save Our Sisters program in Seattle also utilized support groups to discuss topics related to mental health. The support group was established before SafeFutures, and operated on a 13-week cycle (quarters). Topics discussed included health, self-esteem, cultural relations, death, and dying.
St. Louis’s Project Change provided mental health treatment through informal mental health counseling performed by a school-home liaison. The liaison operated the program and functioned as an informal counselor/case manager. The liaison provided one-on-one or group counseling as needed.

In Contra Costa County, SafeFutures emphasis on girls programming and mental health services helped provide the impetus for the development a residential treatment center for high-risk girls. Although the new center was not developed with SafeFutures funding, the SafeFutures model and the success of the boy’s residential program (The Summit Center) spurred the implementation process for the new girls center. The center, known as the Chris Adams Center, filled a huge gap in the provision of services to girls as part of a “continuum of care.” The new center, which opened in November 1999, was located next to the Summit Center. The Chris Adams Center is a collaborative between Probation, Mental Health, the County Office of Education, and the Animal Rescue Foundation (ARF) to provide residential treatment to at-risk girls. Girls between 13 and 17 years of age receive individual, group, and family counseling along with substance abuse education and treatment.

The Juvenile Systems Planning Advisory Committee (JSPAC) in Contra Costa County had previously identified countywide juvenile justice facility and program needs. The girls’ center was modeled after the Summit Center but incorporated a gender-relevant treatment model. Although we did not conduct regular interviews with staff of the Chris Adams Center, we learned that a key distinction between the two centers was that the Chris Adams Center focused on developing nurturing relationships through a partnership with ARF. ARF's Teaching Loving Care (TLC) program is designed to teach the girls important relationship skills. The girls give on-site dogs and cats companionship and training.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Very few programs specifically included family involvement in their ARDG programming, although at least some family contact was likely to have occurred in many, if not most, programs in the form of individual meetings or phone contact with parents, or periodic events involving parents (or entire families). Programs with more significant family involvement included Seattle’s HERS program, and Sisters in Common, which provided case management to parents as well as their daughters, and other services for parents (discussed under family strengthening). Sisters in Common also scheduled family activities (such as a picnic or ferry ride) twice monthly. In Imperial County, parents were invited to attend the Reality Edition meetings. Girls were encouraged to bring parents, and received extra “points” for doing so. However, relatively few parents attended (although the same small group apparently attended most meetings).

Sister to Sister in Seattle made great strides working to enlist parents in the program through volunteerism. The program created a parent board to solicit input from parents in the community to gain a better understanding of the parents’ perspective on the services provided to the kids. In addition, the program worked on building the father-daughter link, mostly through athletic
activities like basketball. Program staff believed through shared athletic activities, dads can learn to relate to their daughters on a one-to-one basis. Staff also felt that these activities helped shatter some cultural stereotypes—fathers would witness their daughters’ ability to play and compete.

The project director of MIND Mentoring in Contra Costa County conducted home visits—sometimes with the child and mentor and parent and sometimes just with the parent to keep parents “rejuvenated” about the program. Home visits were conducted sporadically, or as needed when a girl was not participating or a mother was not cooperating.

CROSS SITE SUMMARY

Client Recruitment and Characteristics

Although a few ARDG programs were preventive in nature (primarily some of Boston’s short-term programs and the cultural education programs in Fort Belknap), most programs targeted girls who were high risk due to teen motherhood, juvenile justice system involvement, academic difficulty, or other circumstances. Two programs, in Fort Belknap and St. Louis, focused on pregnant teens or teen mothers (as did two of Boston’s programs). Seattle’s HERS focused on immigrant/refugee girls. Priorities for participation in this program include gang- or juvenile justice—involvement; a relative killed by violence; family illiteracy; long-term welfare recipiency with low basic skills; and mental health disorders/post-traumatic stress. Sisters in Common focused on girls with justice system involvement. Seattle’s Big Sisters Mentoring targeted African-American elementary school-aged girls. Court staff referred many of the girls participating in Fort Belknap’s talking circles, and some of those participating in Reality Edition in Imperial County were justice system—referred. In St. Louis’ Project Change, girls were already attending an alternative school to which youth were typically sent for more severe behavioral problems in their home schools, such as fighting, weapons offenses, and drugs. Project Change staff estimated that about 75 percent of the girls were gang involved (based on their self-reported involvement or wearing of gang colors/clothes), as is about 90 percent of the alternative school’s student body.

Boston appears to have ended up serving a somewhat lower-risk population than originally intended, due to the restructuring of its approach to providing programming for at-risk and delinquent girls. The original intent for the single ARDG program (that was not implemented) was to emphasize status offenders and girls with some juvenile justice involvement. Girls with such backgrounds do not appear to have been particular targets of the 14 programs funded through the short-term enhancement grants, although, as noted above, some of these programs already targeted girls at high risk for other reasons (pregnancy, homelessness, teen motherhood). A few of the new or expanded programs funded through this grant also targeted girls with particular risk characteristics. For example, the My Sister program in the Roxbury Comprehensive Health Center primarily recruited girls from its pediatric clinic, including younger siblings of girls in its Adolescent Program (some of whom were pregnant or parenting teens), and girls already receiving counseling for behavioral/family issues. The Boys and Girls
Club targeted girls who had been in some kind of trouble, or who were referred by parents, club staff, or even the police, as being at risk. Mattapan-Dorchester Churches in Action targeted girls participating in its mentoring program for its ARDG program. Recruiting materials for the former sought youth experiencing academic or family problems.

In some cases, programs appear to serve a mixture of relatively high-risk girls and those with fewer risk factors. This appears to have come about because some programs served girls referred by the court or other law enforcement entities, or other SafeFutures partners, but also accepted girls who self-referred. Both the talking circles in Fort Belknap and Reality Edition in Imperial County drew their service population in this way. The latter primarily relied on advertising (using various media such as radio spots, newspapers, and fliers) to attract participants, although some girls were required to participate by their probation officers or were referred by partner agencies. Similarly, most talking circle participants appear to have been referred by court staff, but some girls voluntarily joined the groups, or joined because one of the SafeFutures staff recommended it. One lesson learned from this site was that combining court-referred and self-referred girls in the same group did not always work well. Court-involved girls apparently intimidated the lower-risk girls, causing attendance to fall off.

Similarly, the cultural education program at Fort Belknap can be considered to have served girls who were generally lower-risk than those in most other at-risk and delinquent girls programs (in terms of teen pregnancy, motherhood, or court involvement, for example). Cultural education was not a separate program for girls per se, but gender-specific issues were included in the cultural education aspects of the after-school programming. Thus, girls learning Native American women’s dances or learning to make dance regalia also learned a variety of other skills or behaviors (noted previously). Participants were those girls already attending the after-school programs where cultural education was provided. As discussed in the section on after-school programs, many of the participants in after-school programs appeared to self-refer, and the extent to which they could be considered representative of higher-risk youth is not clear.

Although this component clearly targeted girls, boys and young men participated in a small number of programs. As noted previously, males are allowed to participate in Reality Edition’s weekly meetings, except when the topic is considered sensitive. Similarly, young men who participate in various PIIP classes and live in the SafeFutures target area are eligible for individual counseling. This includes boys participating in PIIP’s manhood development program (a weekly class with an African American focus taught by a male psychologist), and those participating in a Productive Futures job training class (initiated in year two at the high school housing the PIIP program), which apparently includes male and female students. A new parenting skills component (taught by the SafeFutures facilitator) was incorporated in the Productive Futures class. One boy participated in Seattle’s HERS program.

Project Change in St. Louis had difficulty obtaining a sufficient number of girls to warrant continued provision of the program exclusively for girls. Although there were sufficient numbers of girls in the alternative school, St. Louis’ approach restricts the program to serving youth living in target area zip codes, and apparently there were insufficient numbers of girls from those areas
in the school. Project Change served boys and girls in year two (and after year two was no longer considered an ARDG program), although gender-specific programming was developed for the girls.

Most at-risk and delinquent girls programs obtained participants through a combination of referrals from other sources and self-referrals. In some cases (such as the two St. Louis ARDG programs and some of the Boston programs), the program was available to all girls participating in some other program (for example, the larger PIIP program and the alternative school in St. Louis or girls living in the emergency shelter in Boston). Only a few programs actively advertised or recruited participants for the ARDG program—Reality Edition and the Cambodian Girls Group. The latter program took an unusual approach to recruiting in that it advertised the program as a job training and employment opportunity, and provided “job descriptions” for the program to middle and high schools with large Cambodian student populations. Reality Edition, as noted previously, advertised through a variety of media. They also encouraged word-of-mouth recruiting, and gave girls “points” for bringing a friend to meetings.

Program Capacity

Most ARDG girls programs served relatively small numbers of SafeFutures youth, generally less than 30 at a time. The larger programs, Fort Belknap’s cultural education for girls, Reality Edition in Imperial County, and the PIIP program in St. Louis, served about twice that number.

It is difficult to sort out the number of SafeFutures girls served under the enhancement grants in Boston. Most of the programs receiving grants expanded the number of girls they were serving in addition to enhancing their services, usually adding 10 to 20 girls. It was estimated that between 240 and 320 girls were served by these programs. While the majority of these were girls who previously participated in these programs, staff estimated that the cumulative increase in girls served was at least 80. It also was anticipated that the programs would continue serving the additional girls after the grant ended.

There were a few programs reached capacity throughout the year and had to put girls on a waiting list for enrollment. The HERS program in Seattle limited the number of girls that could be enrolled to 18 each year because of the stipends that were given for employment. The program wanted to be able to guarantee one-year employment for all the girls that applied. The stipend averaged about $1,800 per girl per year. Although HERS did not use a waiting list, the program director retained the names of the girls who wanted to get into the program for future interviews. As spots came open, youth were called for an interview conducted by the mental health therapist. The project director would interview the girl’s parents. Together they would choose the girls they felt were most “in need” of services and who would be best suited for the

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89 These numbers do not reflect variations in the length of time over which service was provided. Some programs became operational much later than others, and a small number of programs were designed to operate on relatively short cycles, as previously discussed.
program. When the program was at capacity, girls who wanted to enter the program were offered drop-in services. The project director indicated that this was one way to determine which girls really wanted to be in the program.

Sister to Sister in Seattle often used a waiting list for its program. Mostly, capacity issues arose in the summer at the High Point Community Center. Program staff would ask the fire department to help them determine how to maximize space to accommodate the most girls but still be compliant with fire code regulations. The program also used facilities across the street when they were at capacity.

Revision House in Boston was limited to 22 young women, because the residential program only had 22 beds. They maintained a waiting list that usually contained 15 or 16 names.

**Frequency and Duration of Services**

There is considerable variation in the frequency and duration of services provided under the ARDG component, ranging from daily contact (of varying duration) to weekly contact. Since many programs provided such services as case management or counseling on an as-needed basis, and the amount of contact in such cases generally varied with the nature of the problem and degree of difficulty in resolving it, the frequency and duration of such services cannot readily be identified for those services. Most programs that provided case management also provided activities that occurred on a regular schedule. For example, most programs that provided support/discussion groups operated these groups on a weekly basis, generally for one to two hours.

The programs supported through Boston’s ARDG grants varied considerably in their frequency and duration of services. In some cases, the grants funded a limited number of special activities (as described above for CPSA’s conference planning). In others, SafeFutures funded regular (e.g., weekly or biweekly) workshops or presentations during the grant period that were additions to on-going programs that met or provided services on a regular basis. For example, the Klub after-school program in Mattapan, which meets four days per week, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., added preventive health care and life-skills development workshops for girls; ASWALOS House, which provides transition housing and a skill development program, added three monthly workshops to the two per month previously provided; the ReVision House shelter added a series of parenting workshops to its range of services; and Perkins Community Center added workshops on health issues to its Young Women in Transition project.

The two school-based St. Louis programs and Seattle’s Cambodian Girls Group appear to have the most contact with girls. The St. Louis programs had the potential for daily contact with girls enrolled in the PIIP program and Project Change, respectively, although it is not clear that daily contact always occurred. The duration of the contact on any given day would appear to vary based on needs or problems facing a girl at a given time, as well as the nature of other program activities scheduled for the day, which represent another form of contact. The Project Change school-home liaison, for example, noted she briefly sees girls before and after school,
and mingles with them during lunch periods (in addition to her participation in structured activities provided that day). She schedules meetings with girls a couple of days per week. Girls also may come to her office during classes for individual assistance, or because teachers send them there if they are having problems. The liaison also is available by telephone during evenings and weekends. The liaison, school counselor, social worker, and nurse meet with the girls to talk about preventing pregnancy and STDs, and also provide participants—some of whom are pregnant or already mothers—with information on clinics they can use.

While girls (or young men) in the PIIP program have the opportunity for daily contact with the social worker, it was not clear that this was the normal frequency of contact, although informal, casual contact may have occurred daily for some, or even most, youth. Since the social worker provided individual counseling to those with specific problems, the frequency and duration of contact varied by need. For example, the social worker may have seen a girl with a specific problem on a daily basis until that problem was resolved, then saw her less frequently. Some youth received one-time counseling related to a specific issue, while others may have been seen several times per week on an ongoing basis. Childcare and regular classes provided by PIIP (which pre-date SafeFutures) were available on a daily basis, however.

The HERS program involved a considerable amount of contact associated with the multiple services/activities involved. As noted previously, girls in this group were required to attend a weekly support group, participate in mandatory tutoring (three days per week), and fulfill their employment commitment (five to six hours weekly).

In some cases, ARDG programs, particularly support groups, operated on a cycle for a specified length of time, as opposed to operating on an ongoing or year-round basis. For example, Boston’s ARDG programs were funded for only a few months (although the overarching programs in which they were located operate on an ongoing basis). The Sisters in Common support group in Seattle operated on a 13-week cycle, although participants could repeat the cycle (and, reportedly, most participated in more than one cycle). The talking circles in Fort Belknap operated on a six- or eight-week cycle. In a similar vein, girls attending the St. Louis alternative school in which Project Change is located generally do so for a limited amount of time, perhaps a semester or part of a semester, before returning to a regular school. Thus, they receive fairly intensive services through Project Change, but for a relatively short period of time. It should be remembered, however, that girls in such programs may be referred to other SafeFutures programs, or other services in the community. Thus, those participating in relatively short-term ARDG girls programs may be receiving longer-term services from other sources.
6. Common Issues and Challenges

This chapter discusses some of the implementation issues or challenges that were common across the girls programming in the six sites. The discussion focuses on issues that relate specifically to the development and implementation of girls programs, as opposed to boys programs or mixed-gender programs. Although the ARDG programs varied widely by target population, program focus, and services provided, the issues that arose in serving girls and young women were surprisingly similar across the sites.

THE LACK OF NATIONAL AT-RISK GIRLS PROGRAM MODELS

A number of staff across a variety of programs expressed their frustration at the lack of formal program models targeting at-risk and delinquent girls. In particular, the SafeFutures directors from two sites explicitly stated there are no theoretically-based program models for at-risk girls. Almost all of the program staff interviewed stated they were conversant in the social work or delinquency prevention literature, but did not know of existing national models that had been deemed effective in working with at-risk girls. The one exception was the YMCA-based program Sister to Sister, which utilized the Girls, Incorporated program model. On a few occasions, Sister to Sister program staff stated that an overarching goal of the program was to move toward providing quality Girls, Incorporated programming. To this end, the project director trained staff using Girls, Incorporated materials and their criteria. The project director also attended out-of-state training on pregnancy prevention curriculum (i.e., the Preventing Adolescent Pregnancy component) and then trained the staff in Seattle upon return.

Similarly, staff of some programs felt that options for training were limited with regard to learning about girls’ needs and how to address those needs. The SafeFutures technical assistance coordinator provided sites the option of receiving assistance through on-site training in best practices for at-risk girls programming. At least two sites took advantage of this training, but staff indicated that more in-depth training (i.e., multiday workshops or classes) would have been beneficial.

On a related note, we heard a number of times during site visits that few, if any, gender-relevant programs existed (both at the national level and at the local level) that targeted girls for internships or jobs or helped encourage entrepreneurship. Some staff suggested that there is an inherent bias at the community level in how girls are taught to succeed—that girls are not taught to succeed in the job market or in science- and math-related endeavors. The director of the YMCA-based Sister to Sister mentoring project indicated that they believed the Girls Incorporated program model was helpful in breaking stereotypes. The Seattle program, following the Girls, Incorporated model, focused the mentoring on building pride and self-esteem and encouraging girls to become involved in science- and math-related programs.

LIMITED PROGRAM CAPACITY

As discussed in the preceding chapter, a number of programs quickly reached capacity early in the program year, and as a result, girls were put on waiting lists. The majority of programs discussed in this report had the capacity to serve roughly 30 clients or fewer each year. Staff often voiced their concern that need was so great, yet program slots were limited. A few staff across various programs suggested that girls typically did not receive the same amount of services as boys because girls are not viewed to be in high need and localities must prioritize in time of tight budgets. One program had to rearrange the facilities to allow larger number of girls to attend in the summertime (to be in compliance with the fire code).

With regard to mentoring programs, OJJDP used national norms to develop budget ranges for SafeFutures sites. Site staff often expressed frustration that they had a limited budget for mentoring high-risk girls. Staff found they had to be very creative in recruiting qualified mentors to mentor youth living in neighborhoods that were perceived as high crime or dangerous. In addition, one program indicated that girls often ran away, and mentors had to be matched with numerous girls before a match “held.” For numerous reasons, program costs per girl often averaged higher than expected, and as a result, programs had to limit the number of girls served.

THE DEPTH OF GIRLS’ NEEDS AS PERCEIVED BY PROGRAM STAFF

During site visits, we repeatedly heard how serious the needs of young girls are, and that the sites did not always have the appropriate services available. Staff mentioned that emotional abuse and sexual abuse were very prevalent among the girls served, particularly in the programs serving juvenile justice system–involved youth. In addition, staff often mentioned that, for programs that conducted home visits, the home visits would reveal an entire family in need of services. Staff of various programs indicated that girls participating in programs were often the oldest sibling in the house and had the responsibility to care for their younger siblings. Programs scrambled to develop activities where the younger siblings could participate.

Staff felt that girls’ issues were often the result of their situation at home; sites went to great lengths to provide appropriate services or refer out to needed services. However, not all SafeFutures sites developed their girls programming within a comprehensive service provision system, nor did many of the staff interviewed know about other SafeFutures programs and services that could be helpful to the girl or the girl’s family. This was often a function of staff turnover—new staff were not always aware of SafeFutures programming even when programming was available.

Even with other SafeFutures services available, program staff stated that appropriate services simply were not available and they had to scramble to develop new services or refer the girl to a service based far from her home. Over the course of the evaluation, we often heard from providers that mental health services targeted to girls were sorely lacking. In addition, staff mentioned that services as simple as basic recreation for girls were needed. SafeFutures providers were creative in developing recreational activities for girls. Some sites developed book
clubs, cheerleading squads, dance classes, and other after-school activities targeted to groups of girls. Volunteers often acted as leaders for these recreational activities. However, not all recreational efforts met with success. One mentoring program had a book club for a few months, but soon dropped it when staff realized that many of the girls did not want to participate because they did not feel comfortable reading out loud (i.e., were not reading at their grade level).

INTERVENTION FOCUS AT THE EXPENSE OF PREVENTION

Many SafeFutures programs for at-risk girls had to fight to receive continued funding for prevention programs such as mentoring or group recreation activities. Site staff at times expressed frustration about the pressure they felt they received from administrators to target delinquent girls or girls at the high end of the at-risk spectrum. Staff often stated that prevention was not valued as highly as intervention. Staff also indicated that with girls, it is important to remember that the prevalence of girls at the very high end of the spectrum—those that are violent or hardened criminals—is low. Some staff believed that more efforts providing gender-relevant prevention programs would yield higher returns when looking at outcomes such as arrests or incidence of crimes committed by girls.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Staff of various programs reported that it was often very difficult to get parent or caregiver buy-in for daughters’ participation. Some program staff suggested this may have occurred because some parents rely on their daughters to help support the entire family and parents were often reluctant to have their daughters participate in activities that would take them away from responsibilities in the home.

One project director of a mentoring program stated that it was often difficult to get parents or caregivers to approve matches because sometimes parents viewed the mentor relationship as a threat to the mother-daughter relationship. However, usually after the mother met the mentor, the mother was more open to the relationship. Over the course of the evaluation we heard little about efforts to get fathers involved in girls programming. However, as discussed earlier, the Sister to Sister mentoring project went to great lengths to get fathers involved in their program through group athletic activities.

Although most girls programs found that it was difficult to obtain steady commitment on the part of parents to participate in activities, all programs made creative and concerted efforts to increase and maintain parental involvement.
7. Recommendations for the Future

Although the at-risk girls programs in the sites dealt with a number of issues and challenges, the majority of programs learned from any missteps and took active steps to correct problems. On a larger level, there were issues and challenges that were not related to the particular programs, but to the national or local context of at-risk and delinquent girls programming. Issues that arose in one site usually arose in the others. Programs simply did not have the tools to address wide range of girls’ needs in a comprehensive manner. We outline a number of steps below that we believe can help move forward the dialog and practice regarding prevention and early intervention for at-risk and delinquent girls.

Policy and Practice Recommendations

**Raise National Awareness of Girls’ Special Needs**

Fortunately, progress is being made in increasing awareness about the special needs of girls and young women. As the number of arrests of girls has increased dramatically in the past decade, policymakers and practitioners have begun to develop programs that do not simply mirror programs for boys. The federal government continues to provide information and training to jurisdictions who receive demonstration funding. In 2004, OJJDP funded the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) to convene a “Girls Study Group.” The study group is an interdisciplinary group of scholars and practitioners that has been tasked with developing a comprehensive foundation for theory, research, and practice related to girls’ crime and delinquency. The study group will disseminate their findings widely in hope of facilitating the testing and adoption of effective programs and policies designed to meet the needs of girls.

In the meantime, more demonstration funding devoted to developing and testing girls programs would go far in creating the impression that girls programming is a priority. In addition, increased sharing of existing program guides or curricula would be beneficial to both new and existing programs.

Universities can also have a role in raising awareness by incorporating theories of female criminality in sociology and criminology courses and expanding students’ interest in and knowledge of the particular issues that girls face.

**Assess Service Provision Needs**

It is not enough for a community to simply develop types of programming where none existed; jurisdictions should assess service gaps and determine needs. A comprehensive assessment will ensure that duplication of services does not occur and that needs are prioritized. Levering of existing resources can assist in the development of new programs when budgets are tight. Because service provision needs will vary from community to community, it is important to also assess how local political, economic, and social context will impact program development and implementation. Simply because a program is needed does not mean that it will succeed in the community. In addition, community leaders knowledgeable about the needs of girls should
be actively involved in the assessment process. It is important for leaders to recognize whether current services are adequate to meet the special needs of girls and young women. For instance, ample recreation activities for boys and girls may seem adequate, but gender-specific recreation activities may attract very different types of girls.

**Start Services at Prevention**

Too often services are developed to respond to a problem after the problem has occurred. And too often, it is more difficult to resolve the problem after it occurs. Research has demonstrated that starting services at prevention can save communities money (Greenwood et al. 1996). Our review of the literature confirmed the statement that the majority of existing girls programs targeted girls who already had contact with the justice system. Research has suggested that services that reach girls before they initiate sexual activity, drug use, and gang involvement can reduce the likelihood that these behaviors will occur.

**Coordinate Existing and New Services**

Programs that operate in a vacuum may not be as successful as those that operate as part of system of comprehensive care. Case management services can facilitate coordination of available services. Case management, even when a wide range of services is not available, can help providers navigate an often unmanageable maze or programs with differing criteria. Contra Costa County SafeFutures was successful in utilizing a “continuum of care” model to develop a range of treatment options for juvenile justice-involved youth. The model was developed after an assessment of the juvenile justice system provided insight on gaps in services and duplication of services. The model also focused on how to make services gender relevant. The Juvenile Systems Planning Advisory Committee (JSPAC) was dedicated to implementing the continuum of care and stayed true to its focus throughout the duration of the SafeFutures demonstration. Through SafeFutures, JSPAC worked closely with the Policy Forum, which is responsible for making recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery systems for children and families. Essentially, SafeFutures was the vehicle for bringing policy planning boards together to comprehensively address the needs of youth—including the needs of girls.

Criminal justice agencies and community-based service providers can work together to create access to a range of services not generally found within the criminal justice system. Girls involved in the criminal justice system are likely to have also been involved in the mental health system, special education, child welfare, or dependency systems. Access to gender-specific services may require unique collaborative structures that span many systems.

**Identify Appropriate Health and Support Services**

Health and mental health services should be available to girls. It is important for program staff to attempt to remove the stigma often associated with the need for mental health services. As used in a few SafeFutures sites, support groups can be a tactic to ease girls into counseling.
Discussion of generic issues such as friendship and family networks can make girls comfortable talking about their lives. Communities that have determined that more intensive mental health treatment is necessary should ensure that mental health service provision is coordinated with other programs.

Encourage Parental Involvement

Parental involvement can help girls succeed in school and improve overall well being. Research has shown that parental involvement in the lives of children can increase a variety of positive school outcomes, including student morale, attitudes, and academic achievement (Hester 1989). Programs that encourage parental involvement can help increase the likelihood that gains made in the program will be translated to the home environment.

Research Recommendations

As we stated early in this report, basic research informing the issue of girls’ delinquency is lacking. Theories of female adolescent delinquency have only just begun to scratch the surface of comprehensive theoretical exploration. Future research should focus on framing explanations of girls’ involvement in the criminal justice system specifically in the context of girls’ experiences. Progress needs to be made with regard to basic research on the pathways girls take toward delinquency and crime. Continued research into the pathways of delinquent girls and the criminal careers of females will contribute to an expanding knowledge base of promising prevention and intervention responses.

In other words, as the literature on causal pathways grows, so too will the implications for policy and practice. However, even without basic theoretical research, progress can be made by tracking outcomes of existing programs. Furthermore, rigorous evaluation should be encouraged. Community-based partnerships that involve researchers can facilitate collection of best practices and sharing of knowledge on what works. Assessment and evaluation will move the field towards evidence-based practice. From evidence-based practice, the development of new curricula or programming guides will add substantive knowledge to an emerging field.
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