

**Harford County**  
**Comprehensive**  
**Delinquency Prevention Plan**  
**2006**

**Issued by**

**The Harford County Local Management Board, Inc.**  
**formerly known as The Harford County Partnership For Families, Inc.**

**Delinquency Prevention Policy Board (DPPB)**

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## **Executive Summary**

The Delinquency Prevention Policy Board (DPPB) was established in 2000 as a sub-committee of The Harford County Partnership For Families, Inc. The DPPB brings together government, law enforcement, education, human services, faith-based organizations, citizen coalitions, and youth committed to quality of life for the approximately 61,000 youth who live in Harford County. It stays aware of youth development issues through interaction with child serving agencies and by analyzing child and family data and county social systems supporting child well being. Monthly meetings further information sharing, collaboration, and accountability.

The 2006 Delinquency Prevention Plan offers revised baseline information and sets a local delinquency prevention course for the next three years. Collaboration and effective and promising approaches are outlined with recommendations for implementation, support, and oversight of its strategies. This plan identifies *child health and safety* and *family stability* as priority results for the well being of the children and youth who compose 28% of Harford County's population.

Revised analysis of protective and risk factors focused DPPB attention on four priorities for this plan: (1) *favorable attitudes toward drug use*, (2) *peer alcohol and drug use and delinquency*, (3) *child victimization and maltreatment*, and (4) *economic deprivation*. These priorities are reinforced by youth surveys identifying drugs and alcohol, fighting and gangs, boredom, peer pressure, and stress as the top challenges for youth in 2006.

The 2006 prevention strategy identifies effective strategies to ensure that Harford youth receive appropriate programs to enhance their resiliency. The DPPB invites Harford County child and youth serving organizations to: 1) select effective and promising approaches for youth such as those listed in this plan; 2) base their selections upon the information gathered in this plan; and 3) work in collaboration with the DPPB to ensure maximum support and impact for their work.

## **Impact of the 2003 DPPB Plan**

Substance abuse and family conflict were deemed the greatest threats to community life in Harford County in 2003, followed closely by early and persistent anti-social behavior and violence. These determinations were based on student reports of alcohol and drug abuse and local child abuse and domestic violence incident data.

Community program gaps prompted implementation of two programs documented to help children and youth, Across Ages and The Incredible Years. Across Ages pairs older adult mentors (55+) with adolescents in transition to middle school, decreasing substance abuse and increasing positive attitudes toward adults and school. The Incredible Years – BASIC Parent Training for parents of children ages 2-7 works to develop social skills while enhancing coping skills and also works to decrease negative and increase positive behaviors. Support was also secured for two programs already affecting violence reduction, family management, and school attendance for troubled youth: Bridges to Success and Project PrePARE. While programmatically successful, Project PrePARE was discontinued due to lack of funding effective with the close of the 2005-06 school year.

The work leading to the establishment of the DBBP and the 2003 DPPB Plan was instrumental in the successful Harford County Partnership For Families, Inc. bid for the multi-year Youth Strategies Initiative (YSI) grant from the Maryland Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention. YSI funding made possible the implementation of Across Ages and The Incredible Years and support for Bridges to Success. A summary of the impact of YSI is outlined under the heading “Community Assets, Resources, and Gaps.”

### **Children Served by Harford County Youth Strategies Programs**

Program	Male	Female	African American	Caucasian	Hispanic	Multi Racial	Other
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<i>Across Ages</i>	12	17	14	12	3	0	0
<i>The Incredible Years</i>	16	9	5	16	0	4	0
<i>Bridges to Success</i>	16	13	4	23	1	0	1

**Across Ages** (2005) established 29 one year pairings between children ages eight to eleven (17) and twelve to sixteen (12) with 26 mentors all over fifty-five. Mentors were male (9), female (17), African American (9), Caucasian (15), and Hispanic (2). The pairs met weekly for mentoring, family involvement, social skills and problem solving, and community service projects. Attendance at invitational family nights averaged 79%. Evaluation of the prototypical Across Ages demonstrated positive outcomes (LoScuito, Rajala, Townsend, & Taylor, 1996) and is an “effective and promising program” according to The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's requirements. While local outcomes were not available, the program was able to document process measures such as numbers served, attendance, etc.

**The Incredible Years** (2005) trained 25 families with children ages 0-4 (15) and ages 5-9 (10). The program documented improvements in problem behaviors. Parents reported: improvements in their children’s responses to situations and individuals, decreased conduct problems at school, increased problem solving, and more positive relationships with schools. Program facilitators called parents weekly to discuss progress, but families with mental health and transportation needs and absenteeism presented challenges.

<b>The Incredible Years</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Pretest</b>	<b>Posttest</b>	<b>Changes</b>
Year Average	Social skills	74	76	No considerable change
	Problem Behavior	78	70	Improvement

**Bridges To Success** (2005) served 29 families for an average of 111 days each. Bridges to Success demonstrated impact according to the University of Maryland at College Park evaluation project. Families with significant needs had access to a specialist 24 hours a day and received multiple intensive case management services.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>History of Problem</b>	<b>% Achievement</b>
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Absence of formal DJS involvement	1 with previous formal DJS involvement	86.3% did not have formal DJS involvement
Improved school attendance	13 with a history of truancy = 45%	5/29 improved school attendance = 17%; 5/13 with truancy history improved = 38%
Improved academic performance	Not available	13/29 demonstrated improvement or consistency in academic performance = 45%
Reduce incidence of running away	15 with a history of running away = 52%	14/29 displayed reduction in running away = 48%; 14/15 with runaway history improved = 93%

## **Prelude**

### **The Harford County Partnership For Families, Inc.**

Established in 1994 as a local management board, The Partnership is a 501(c)(3) quasi-public nonprofit organization governed by a board whose twenty-three members are appointed by the Harford County Executive. A collaborative process facilitates planning, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, fiscal management, and public awareness of needs and services for youth and families. Committees include Bylaws and Rules, Community Partnerships, Critical Incidents, Delinquency Prevention Policy Board, Education and Training, Executive, Finance, Nominations, Personnel, Program, Strategic Planning/Marketing, and Outreach.

The Partnership is committed to Maryland Results for Child Well-Being: (1) babies born healthy, (2) children entering school ready to learn, (3) children successful in school, (4) children completing school, (5) communities that support family life, (6) children safe in their families and communities, (7) stable and economically independent families, and (8) healthy children. Special emphasis is placed on the latter three: *health, safety, and family stability*.

For twelve years, The Partnership has developed and strengthened alliances with community stakeholders, assessed community assets, established new programs, and compiled and analyzed local data in order to improve outcomes for children, youth, and families. When a need to fine tune local focus on delinquency prevention and earlier intervention was recognized seven years ago, The Partnership established a Delinquency Prevention Policy Board (DPPB). As a standing committee of The Partnership, the DPPB expands stakeholder participation in goals for local children,

youth, and families. At the same time, the DPPB is an essential link to federal and state funding and technical assistance.

**Delinquency Prevention  
Policy Board**

**Mission Statement**

**Prevent and reduce  
delinquent behavior among  
juveniles in Harford  
County**

**Priorities**

**Planning**

**Oversight**

**Implementation**

**Committees**

**Disproportionate Minority  
Contact**

**Finance / Marketing**

**Nominating**

**Steering**

**Meetings**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesdays, 8 am**

**Harford County  
Government Building**

**Contact**

**Ken Coulson**

**The Harford County  
Partnership for Families,  
Inc.**

**410-638-3166**

**Harford County Delinquency Prevention Policy Board**

The Harford County Delinquency Prevention Policy Board was created in 2000 by The Harford County Partnership for Families, Inc. to study youth needs and activities and to ensure Harford County's eligibility for all possible funding sources including federal Title V delinquency prevention funds.

Over the past six years, the DPPB has met monthly under the consistent leadership of Major L. Jesse Bane (retired, Harford County Sheriff's Office). As a board member of The Partnership, Major Bane also provides a vital liaison role between the DPPB and The Partnership.

DPPB membership includes a cross section of public and private sector representatives and youth reflecting the racial, ethnic, and cultural composition of the community's population. The DPPB crafted the *Harford County Three Year Comprehensive Delinquency Prevention Plan* (April 2003) and continues to:

- 1) stay *informed of developments* in youth services and delinquency challenges in the county;
- 2) develop a *knowledge base and linkages* with youth services, the faith community, and other resources in

Harford County;

3) serve as the *county's Youth Strategies Initiative (YSI) Team*, ensuring oversight and

**Delinquency Prevention  
Policy Board Members  
2006**

Local Management Board  
Representatives

**Sheriff L. Jesse Bane**

HC Sheriff's Office

**Theodore M. Hart**

Juvenile Court Master

**Doe Ladd**

Private Citizen

**Tom Ryan**

Dept. of Juvenile Services

Other Representatives

**Kaity Ayuso**

Student Representative

**Jan Brewer**

Harford Community College

**Diana Brooks**

HC State's Attorney's Office

**Charletta Gallatin**

HC Health Dept

Outpatient Addictions

**Sharon Grose**

Harford County Public Schools

**Pastor Nathaniel Johnson**

Inner County Outreach

**Linda Koser**

accountability for programs funded by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention through The Partnership;

4) facilitate and incorporate the *work of Harford County's Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) consultant, Scot Whitesell*;

5) reach out to youth and grass roots *community leaders* around the county to ensure up-to-date understanding and evaluation of delinquency prevention risks, assets, and strategies; and

6) incorporate findings in this revised *2006 Comprehensive Three-Year Delinquency Prevention Plan for Harford County*.

To assist in accomplishing the objectives of the DPPB, the board operates according to by-laws. The bylaws, which cover the purpose, membership, leadership, authority, meeting procedures, and committee structures of the board, are available on The Partnership website: [www.partnershipforfamilies.org](http://www.partnershipforfamilies.org).

The DPPB also coordinates countywide efforts to pursue funding for programs that support a continuum of juvenile delinquency and prevention services. Tasks and roles come together as the DPPB monitors and assesses the quality, availability, and accessibility of community-based services for youth in the county that:

- Prevent and divert entry and reentry into the juvenile justice system;

- Provide an alternative to incarceration and institutions;
- Prevent and divert criminal behavior; and
- Identify unserved or underserved neighborhoods or communities with critical needs and large numbers of at-risk or delinquent youth.

### **Geographic Boundaries**

Harford County is nestled in northeastern Maryland, east of Baltimore County and west of Cecil County. The state line with Pennsylvania marks the northern border; the southern boundary is comprised of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Bush River, and the Chesapeake Bay. Interstate 95 traverses Harford for twenty-one miles between Baltimore and Wilmington. For more information, visit the Harford County Government website: [www.harfordcountymd.gov](http://www.harfordcountymd.gov).

## **Harford County, Maryland**

**Stages of Community Readiness**

**Stage 1 - Community Tolerance/No Knowledge**

Community tolerates or unintentionally encourages problem behavior.

**Stage 2 - Denial**

Community recognizes the behavior may be a problem but believes

nothing can or should

be done about it.

**Stage 3 - Vague Awareness**

Community reaches awareness that something ought to be done, but there is no leadership.

**Stage 4 - Pre-Planning**

Recognition of problem & need to do something. Leaders but no plan.

**Stage 5 - Preparation**

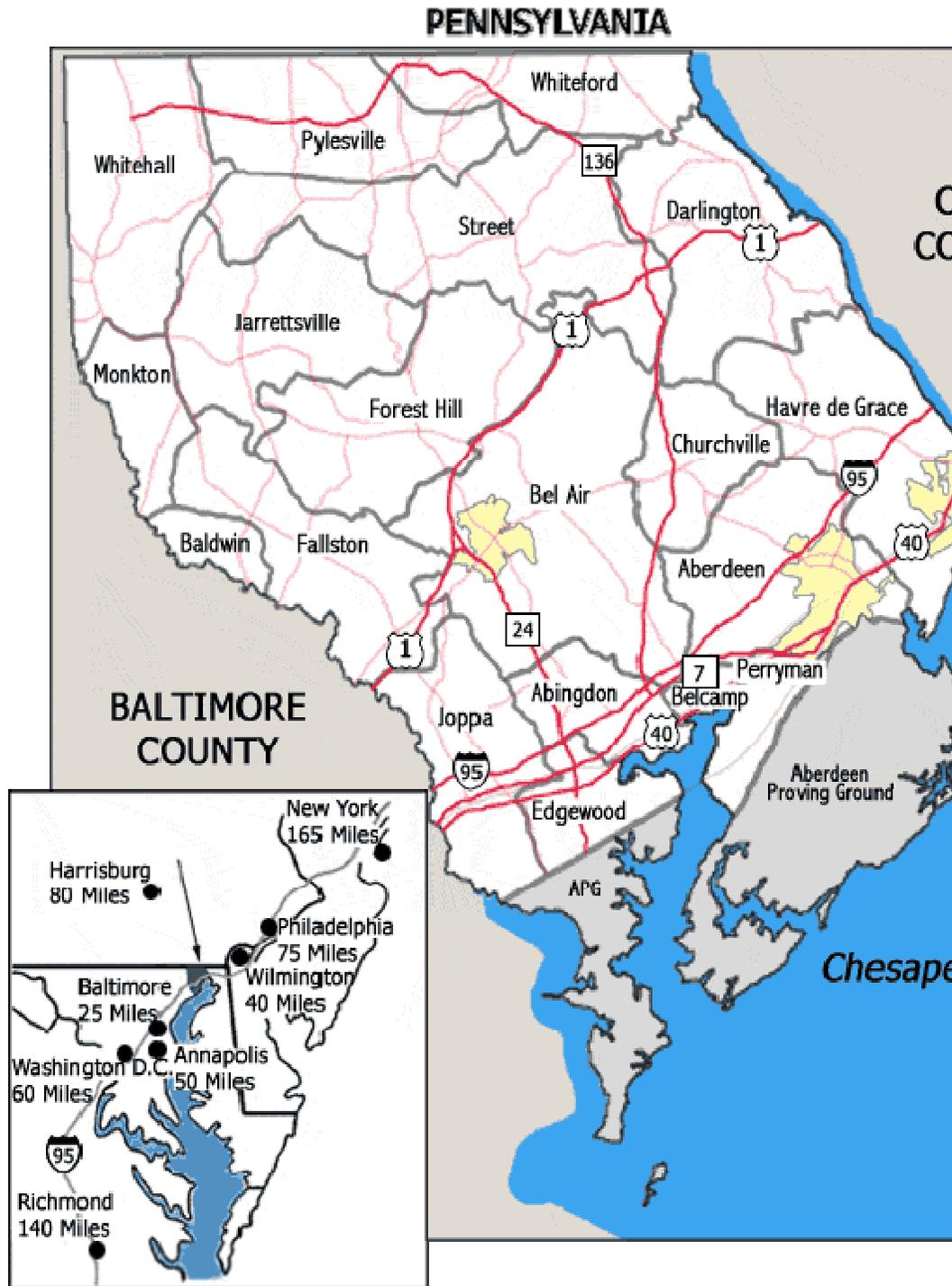
Practical community planning & strategies are analyzed. There is active leadership & some funds.

**Stage 6 - Initiation**

Program or community-wide initiative gets started. There is euphoria upon initial successes.

**Stage 7 -Institutionalization/ Stabilization**

Programs running but prevention at status quo; some resistance. Data tracking & funding steady.



**Community Readiness**

Support from the highest levels of community leadership is

demonstrated by commitment of the County Executive, who serves as appointing authority for The Partnership, and by the directors of state and county agencies in Harford County who appoint members to the DPPB. Membership commitment to youth success and delinquency prevention is evidenced by the commitment of DPPB members, their respect for the interagency process, and the impact on children and youth participating in DPPB developed programs.

Assessment of stakeholder readiness for community planning in 2001 drew on Oetting, et al's *Stages of Community Readiness*. The DPPB Steering Committee's initial perception was that Harford County was at stage 5 – Preparation, but the full DPPB agreed on Stage 4 – Pre-Planning. Discussions with Fallston and Whiteford-Cardiff Community Councils produced consensus for Stage 4; Edgewood and Darlington-Dublin Community Councils agreed on Stage 3. The self-assessment process used by the DBBP increased engagement and identified areas for greater communication.

As the DPPB assessed past accomplishments and worked to develop this *2006 Delinquency Prevention Plan for Harford County*, there was a general consensus by DPPB and community members that the county is still somewhere between Stage 4 Pre-Planning and Stage 5 Preparation. Some youth serving agencies provided self-assessments indicating they are operating at stages 5, 6, or 7, which is a strength for the county. Due to scheduling difficulties, community discussion was limited during the planning process; the DPPB engaged only one community council. The community readiness assessment process served as a reminder that outreach and communication strategies with community and youth organizations must be ongoing.

### **The Children of Harford County**

<b>Data on Harford County Children</b>	
<b>County population</b>	<b>218,590</b>
<b>Under age 18</b>	<b>60,965</b>
<b>Under 18 as Percent of Population</b>	<b>27.9</b>
<b>Children under 5 years</b>	<b>15,776</b>
<b>Children 5-9 years</b>	<b>17,476</b>
<b>Children 10-14 years</b>	<b>17,861</b>
<b>Children 15-17 years</b>	<b>9,852</b>
<b><u>Notable Changes From 1990-2000</u></b>	

Knowing who the children of Harford County are should be helpful to the reader in understanding the scope of the challenge addressed herein. It is this plan's intention to offer identifying characteristics and a frame of reference for some of the local, state, and national data collection efforts on behalf of children.

When the U.S. Census Bureau knocked on doors in Harford County in 2000, they identified 218,590 residents. Just under 61,000, or approximately 28% of the county's population, were under age 18. Of the 61,000 under age 18, 51.4% are male and 48.6% are female. The racial mixture is 83% white, 11% black, and 6% Indian, Asian, Pacific Islander, or a mixture of races. Approximately 2.5% of children are of Hispanic origin. Just over 6% of all children live in poverty (3,722) and just over 6% of children ages five to fifteen (2,466) have one or more disabilities. Mental disability is the challenge for 80% of those children.

Over 18% of children live in single-parent households and that number is on the rise. However, 77% of the children live with two parents (46,876), which is higher than the state average. And both parents are working for 66% of the children living with two parents (31,145). Median income for families with their own children varies widely depending upon the parent's marital status: married-couples with children under age 18 - \$72,032, single-mothers with children under age 18 - \$27,859, and single-fathers with children under age 18 - \$40,690.

The high school dropout rate decreased dramatically from

1990 to 2000. Still, almost 18% of 18-24 year olds were not high school graduates in 2000. More detail can be obtained from the KIDS COUNT Census Data Online, [www.aecf.org/kidscount/census](http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/census).

**Harford County Rankings on  
Maryland Results for  
Child Well-Being**

State standings for Maryland's 24 jurisdictions are divided into five categories: 1-4 Best, 5-9, 10-14, 15-19, 20-24 Worst

**Babies Born Healthy**

**\* Top 1-4 Best in MD \***

**Healthy Children**

2<sup>nd</sup> Tier 5-9

**Children Enter School Ready to  
Learn**

**\* Top 1-4 Best in MD \***

**Children Completing School**

2<sup>nd</sup> Tier 5-9

**Children Successful in School**

2<sup>nd</sup> Tier 5-9

**Stable and Economically  
Independent Families**

In addition to general information about the children of Harford County, the Maryland Children's Cabinet staffed by the Governor's Office for Children annually produces a report on the standing of each jurisdiction according to eight results for child well-being. For detailed information about the results or *goals that Maryland has established for its children* and the indicators or *information that demonstrates Maryland's progress toward meeting a result*, contact the Governor's Office for Children for a copy of the report, Maryland Results For Child Well-Being 2005. The report is available also on their website [www.goc.state.md.us](http://www.goc.state.md.us).

Harford County is faring among the best in Maryland for Babies Born Healthy and Children Entering School Ready to Learn. This means that rates of infant mortality, low birth weight, and births to adolescents are lower than other jurisdictions and kindergarten assessment scores are higher.

However, Harford County drops to the second tier of 5-9 jurisdictions in all other areas ranked. This information contributed to the decision by The Partnership to prioritize Healthy Children, Children Safe in their Families and Communities, and Stable and Economically Independent Families. Health indicators include injuries, deaths, and substance abuse. Safety indicators are abuse or neglect, deaths due to injury, juvenile violent offense arrests, and

non-violent offense arrests. Indicators of Family Stability and Economic Independence include child poverty, single parent households, out-of-home placements, and homeless adults and children.

<b>Risk Factors</b>
<b><u>INDIVIDUAL</u></b>
ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR
GUN POSSESSION
TEEN PARENTHOOD AND SEXUAL ACTIVITY
<i>* FAVORABLE ATTITUDES TOWARD DRUG USE</i>
EARLY ONSET OF VIOLENCE
EARLY ONSET OF ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE
COGNITIVE AND NEUROLOGICAL DEFICITS
<b><u>PEER</u></b>
GANG INVOLVEMENT
<i>* PEER ALCOHOL, DRUG USE, AND DELINQUENCY</i>
<b><u>FAMILY</u></b>
FAMILY HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM BEHAVIOR
FAMILY MANAGEMENT PROBLEMS

Data documenting these indicators and others for trends and local implications are found in the next section, *Risks and Protective Factors*.

## **Risk and Protective Factors**

### **Assessment of Community Risk and Protective Factors**

The Risk and Protective Factors Model developed by Development Services Group, Inc. (DSG) for the Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention provides the framework for this analysis and plan to prevent delinquency and to keep young people safe in Harford County. For more information, visit the DSG website: [www.dsgonline.com](http://www.dsgonline.com) click on Model Programs Guide and Data Base, and Search Programs.

Prior to development of the 2003 Delinquency Prevention Plan, the DPPB received extensive training from DSG which emphasized team building in the data collection process, the importance of collecting multiple years of data for trend analysis, comparison with state and national data for perspective, and the prioritization of risk factors to ensure a focused prevention effort.

Risk factors for delinquency are “individual or environmental hazards that increase an individual’s vulnerability to negative developmental outcomes (Small

and Luster, 1994).” To determine whether a particular factor is a local problem, data from community, school, family, individual, and peer spheres of influence are reviewed. The most compelling risk factors identified by the DPPB in 2006 are: favorable attitudes

<b>Protective Factors</b>
<b><u>INDIVIDUAL</u></b>
SOCIAL COMPETENCIES
POSITIVE TEMPERAMENT
COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY AND SCHOOL
SELF-ESTEEM
<b><u>PEER</u></b>
INVOLVEMENT WITH POSITIVE PEER GROUP ACTIVITIES AND NORMS
<b><u>FAMILY</u></b>
EFFECTIVE PARENTING
POSITIVE BONDING

towards drug use, peer alcohol and drug use and delinquency, child victimization and maltreatment, and economic deprivation.

Protective factors are those supports available to youth that promote healthy development and mitigate against risks and choices that lead to delinquency. The five spheres of influence are again considered in order to identify all possible strengths. It has proved to be more difficult to locate protective factor data because the concept is still fairly new to the human services field.

Data is often subjective or not collected, so new data collection strategies are needed. The DPPB lists protective factors here in order to offer the most up to date information about delinquency prevention and as a guide for understanding what is required to prevent or minimize the risks of delinquent behavior.

For the current plan, The Partnership hired a consultant to update and reformat data into graphical presentations. In particular, 2000 census data that was not available to be included in the first plan was reviewed and incorporated. DPPB members were responsible for updating data for their spheres of influence. An Internet search and contacts with local, state, and federal agencies enhanced the data collected by DPPB members. At the publication of this document, data including calendar year 2004 was available

for most agencies.

An Excel spreadsheet format, developed to provide easy access to the many

<b>Trend Data</b>
<b><u>Individual</u></b>
STUDENTS REPORTING MARIJUANA USE
STUDENTS REPORTING CRACK USE
STUDENTS REPORTING ALCOHOL USE
JUVENILE DRUG RELATED ARRESTS
JUVENILE ALCOHOL RELATED ARRESTS
BIRTHS TO ADOLESCENTS
<b><u>Peer</u></b>
YOUTH COMFORTABLE SAYING NO
JUVENILE INTAKES - HC

worksheets and charts created by the consultant ensures ease of modification as new data becomes available. A sampling of the most significant data is included in this plan under the heading “Comparative Trend Data for Priority Risk Factors.” The balance of the worksheets may be found on the website of The

Harford County Partnership For Families, Inc. at [www.partnershipforfamilies.org](http://www.partnershipforfamilies.org).

Data reviewed by workgroups focused on community, family, school, individual, and peer risk factors. Each workgroup presented the most compelling data and DPPB members engaged in a consensus process that produced the conclusions for the 2006 plan outlined in the next section.

Gang involvement, a peer sphere of influence risk factor, could not be examined and included as a priority risk factor. During plan preparation, local data was just beginning to be collected and comparable national and state data was not available. However, gang presence in Harford County is receiving attention and acknowledgement of the risk factor bears mention.

According to the local supervisor, the Department of Juvenile Services (DJS) is starting to have gang members on its caseload. DJS presently has a draft gang policy geared toward recording of information about youth identified as gang members and their management in DJS

facilities. In January 2005 the Harford County Sheriff's Office (HCSO) formed a Gang Suppression Unit (GSU). In its first year, the GSU identified 265 gang members and associates and 12 criminal gangs. The GSU has worked to develop relationships with the school system, community groups, and other law enforcement agencies.

To build on the HCSO Gang Suppression Unit, in June 2006 a planning grant proposal was submitted by the Sheriff's Office. The proposal seeks to establish a steering committee for all of Harford County to develop a strategic plan by November 2006. The plan will incorporate prevention, suppression, and intervention.

### **Comparative Trend Data for Priority Risk Factors**

Trend data analysis by the DPPB for the five spheres of influence in the life of a child yielded four risk factors deemed to be in need of urgent attention. They are listed in priority order:

**Favorable attitudes toward drug use (individual)**

**Peer alcohol, drug use, and delinquency (peer)**

**Child victimization and maltreatment (family)**

**Economic deprivation (community)**

Selected longitudinal data sets are included in this report to provide perspective on past and present impacts on the youth serving system and to share understanding about trends in youth development. It is a hopeful sign that in 2004 juvenile intakes were down, more child abuse investigations were unsubstantiated, fewer domestic violence reports and arrests were made, and teen births were declining.

The reasons for such changes in youth behavior are not known. It may be produced by focused education and intervention efforts like the work of the DPPB. Or there may be a statewide or national trend that is impacting on Harford County. For instance, public school student alcohol and drug use over the past ten years shows declines locally, across the state, and nationally. However, Harford students at 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades consistently report greater percentages of use than state or national reports. The state and national data can provide the big picture, but the DPPB is interested in the

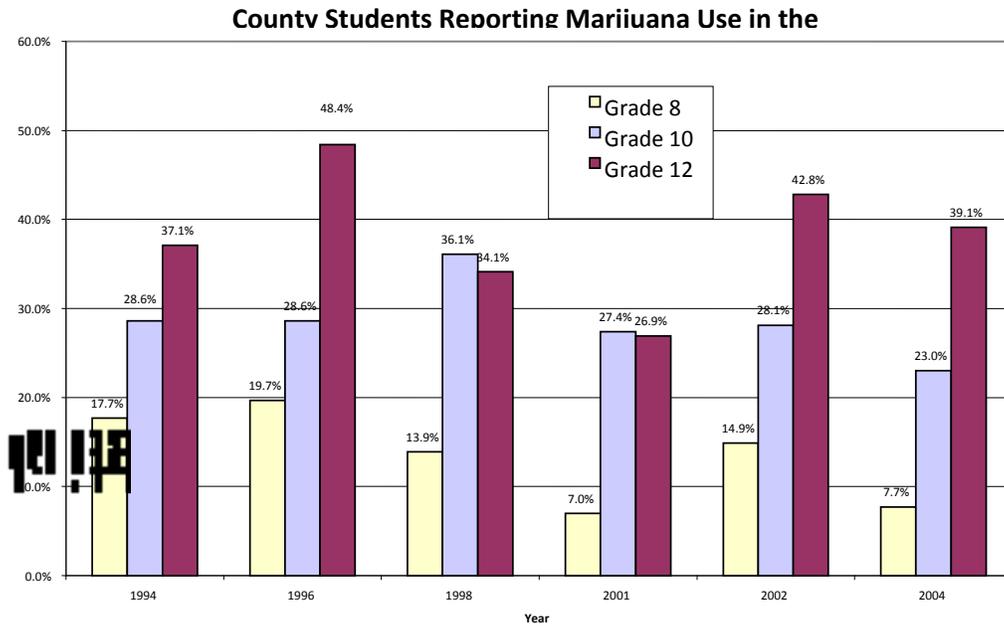
implications of the entire picture, especially local data, to ensure understanding of the implications for our community.

Even where trends are declining, it would be a mistake to presume that the decline will continue without sustained interest, education, and intervention efforts.

**Sphere of Influence: Individual**

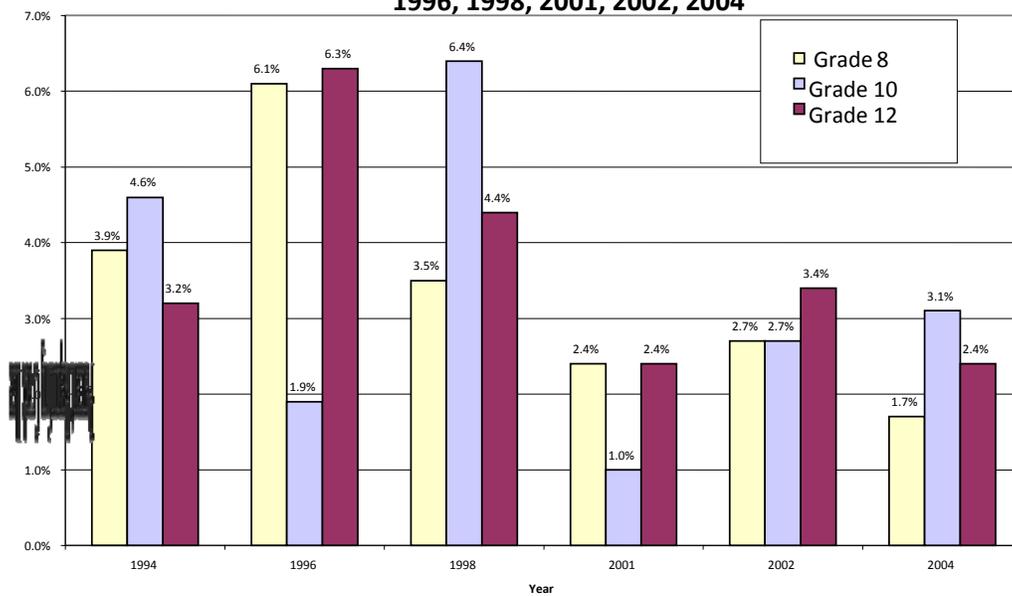
**Risk Factor: Favorable attitudes toward drug use**

**INDIVIDUAL – Chart 1 - Percentage of Harford**



Source: Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Adolescent Survey

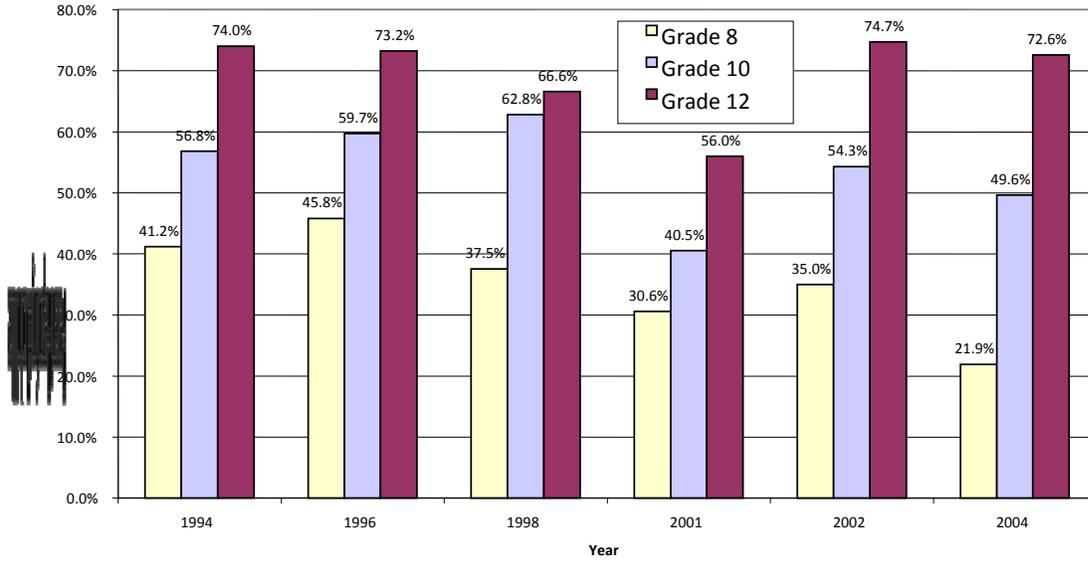
**INDIVIDUAL – Chart 2 - Percentage of Harford County Students Reporting Crack Use in the Past 12 Months 1994, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2002, 2004**



Source: Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Adolescent Survey

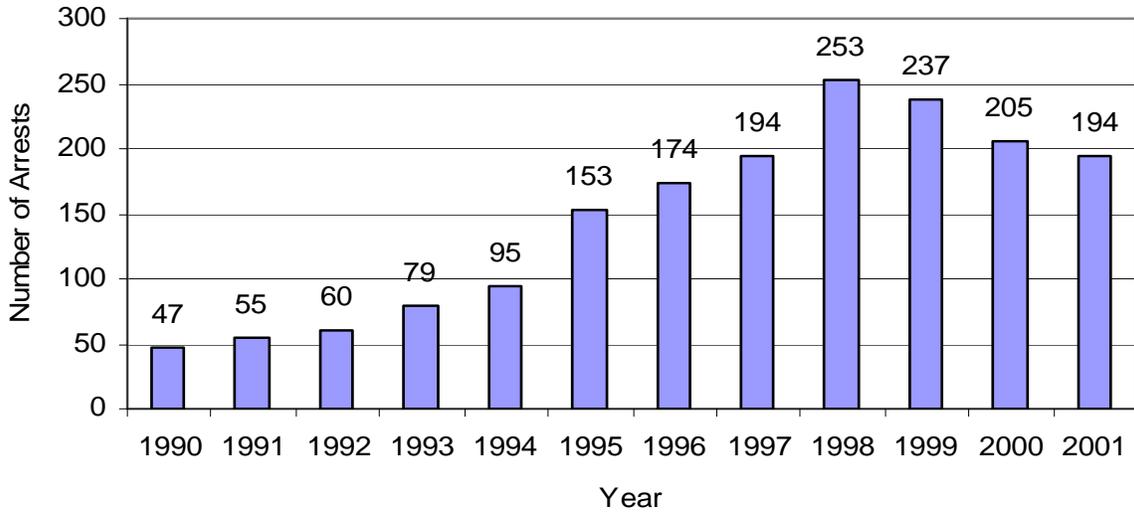
**INDIVIDUAL – Chart 3 - Percentage of Harford**

**County Students Reporting Alcohol Use in the**



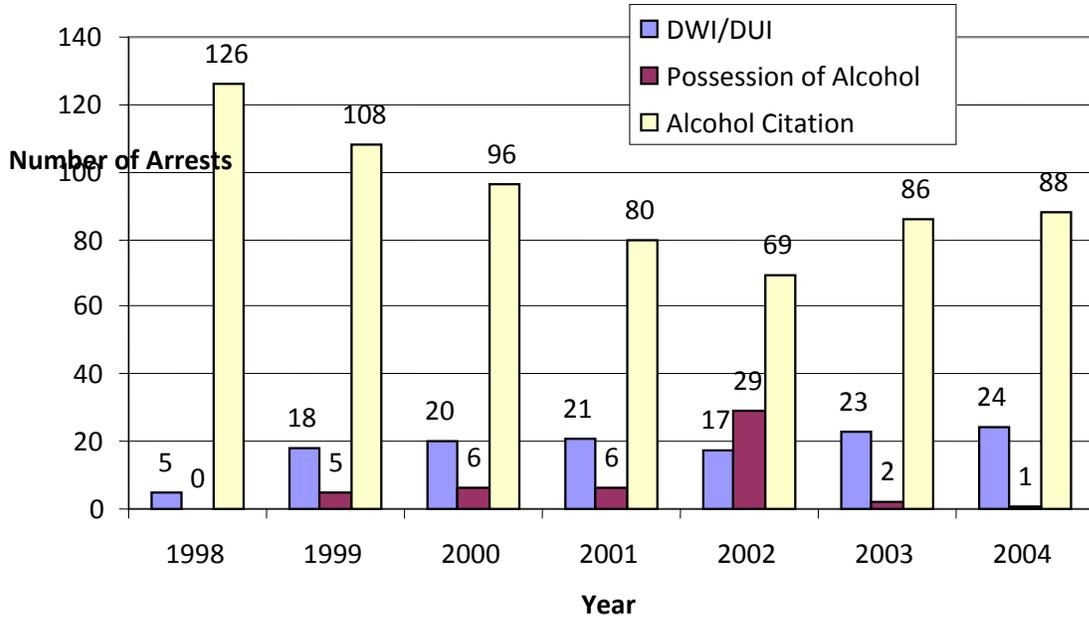
Source: Maryland State Department of Education, Maryland Adolescent Survey

**INDIVIDUAL - Chart 4 - Number of Juvenile Drug Related Arrests in Harford County 1990 through 2001**



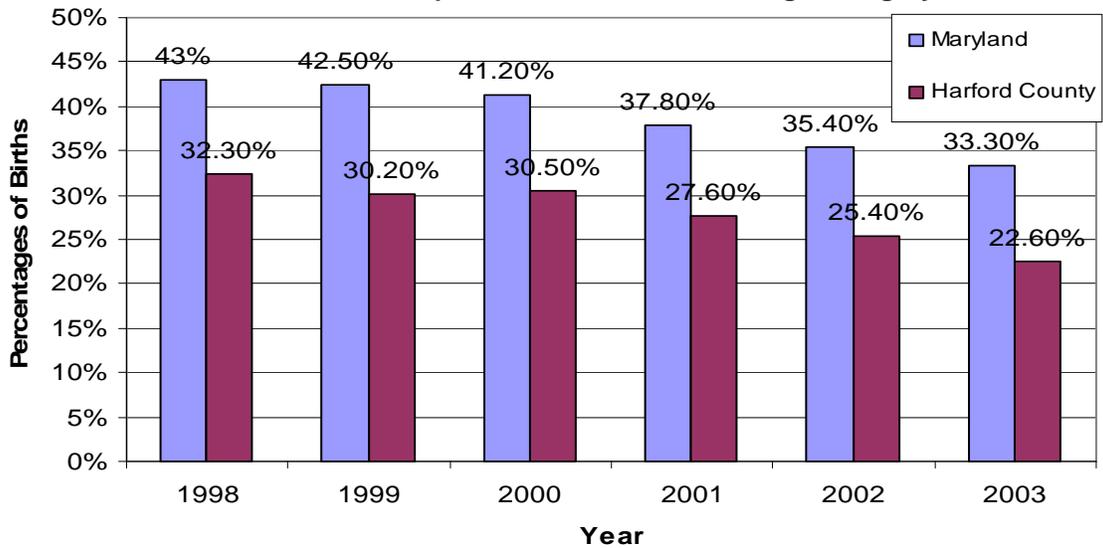
Source: Maryland State Police, Uniform Crime Report

**INDIVIDUAL - Chart 5 - Number of Juvenile Alcohol Related Arrests in Harford County 1998 through 2004**



Source: Department of Juvenile Services

**INDIVIDUAL - Chart 6 - Rate of Births to Adolescents, Maryland and Harford County**  
**Live Births per 1,000 Women in 15-19 Age Category**



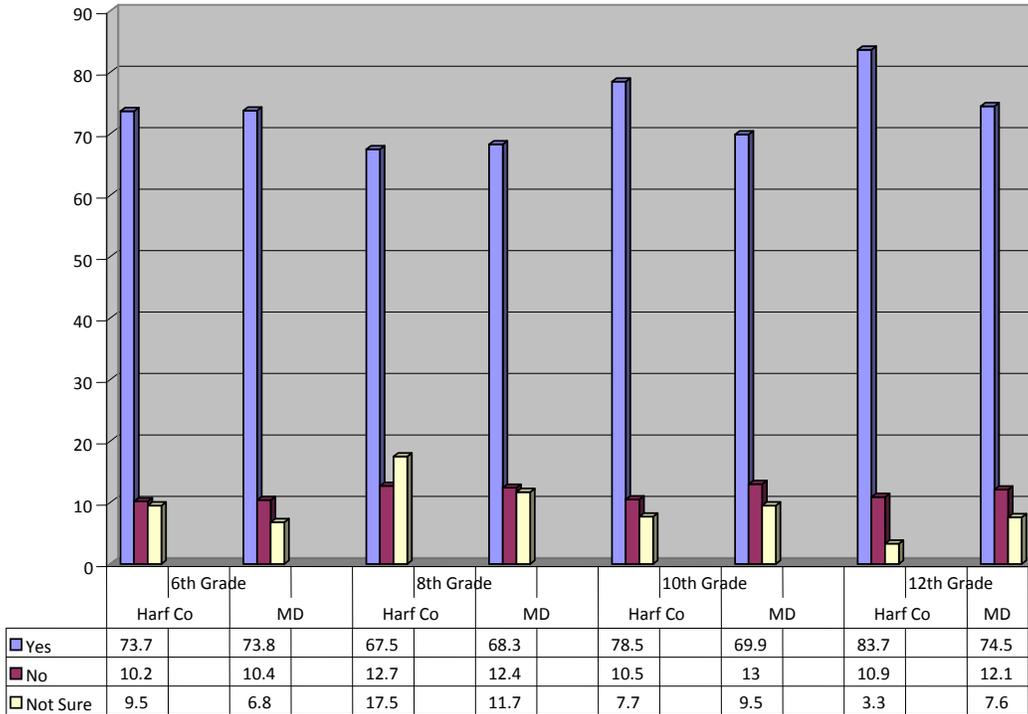
Source: Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Vital Statistics

**Sphere of Influence: Peer**

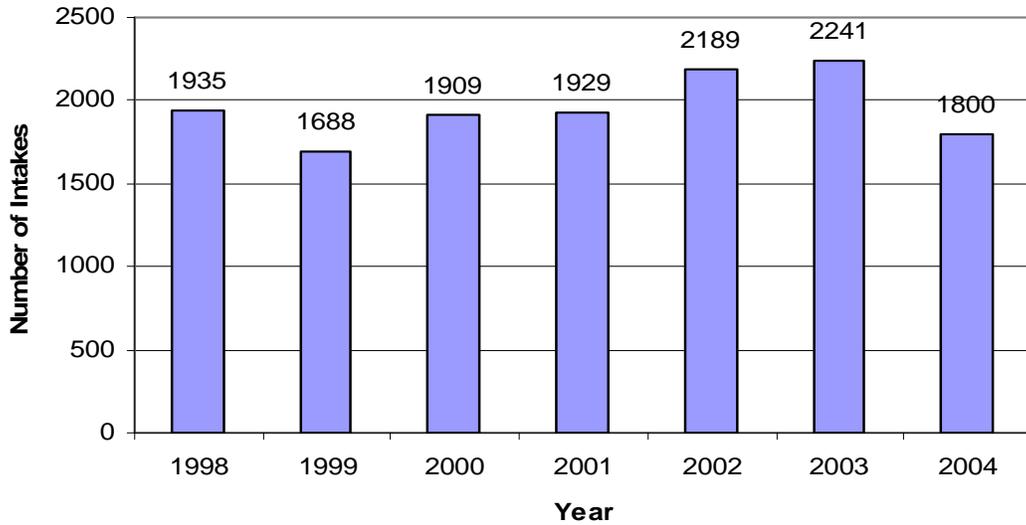
**Risk Factor: Peer alcohol, drug use, and delinquency**

**PEER – Chart 1 - Youth Comfortable Saying No to Others**

**Asking Them to Use Alcohol**



**PEER - Chart 2 - Number of Juvenile Intakes in Harford County for 1998 through 2004**

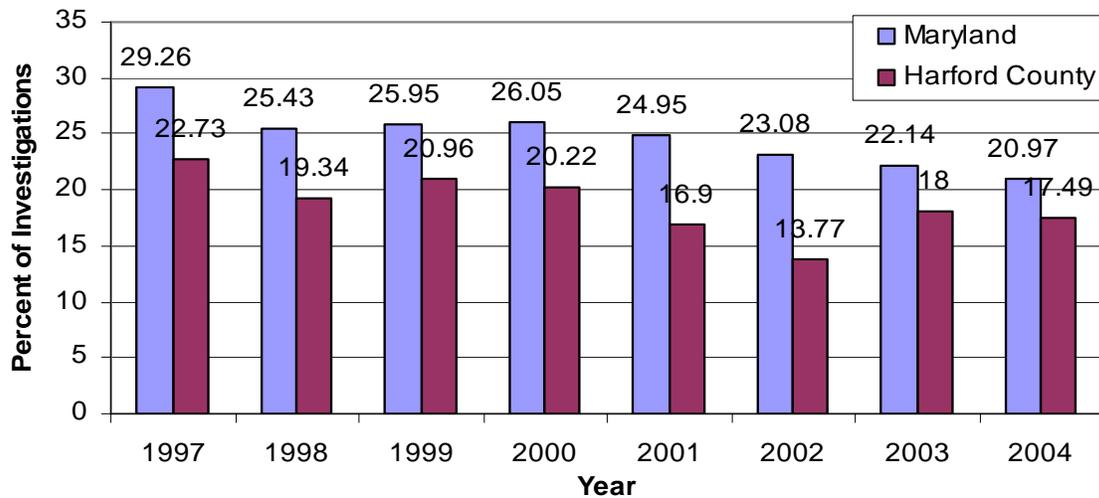


Source: Department of Juvenile Services

**Sphere of Influence: Family**

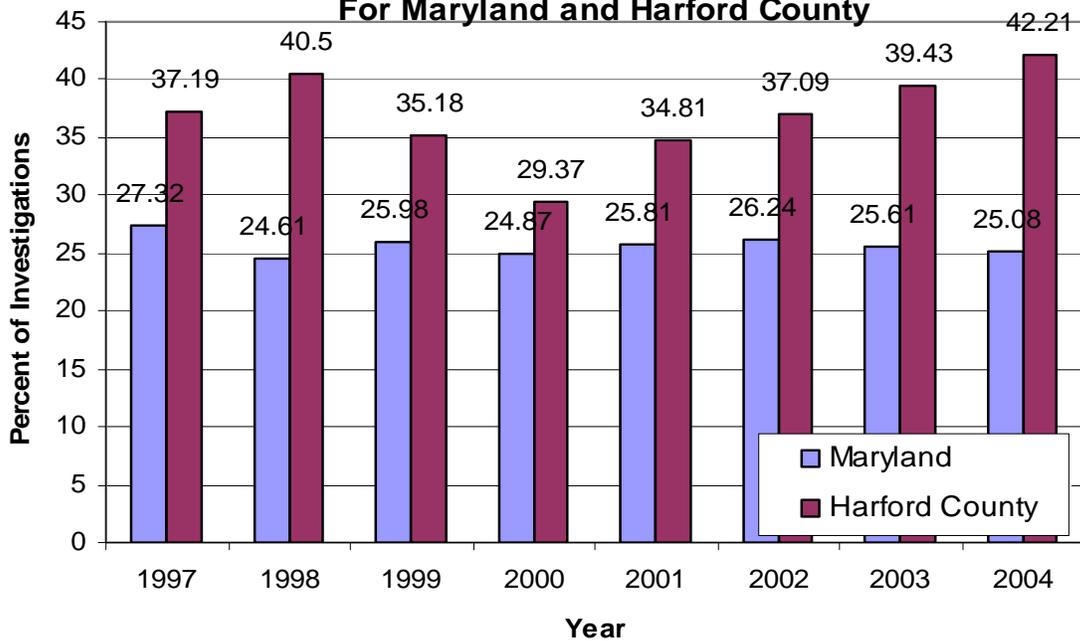
**Risk Factor: Child victimization and maltreatment**

**FAMILY - Chart 1 - The Percent of Investigations of Child Abuse or Neglect Ruled as Indicated For Maryland and Harford County**



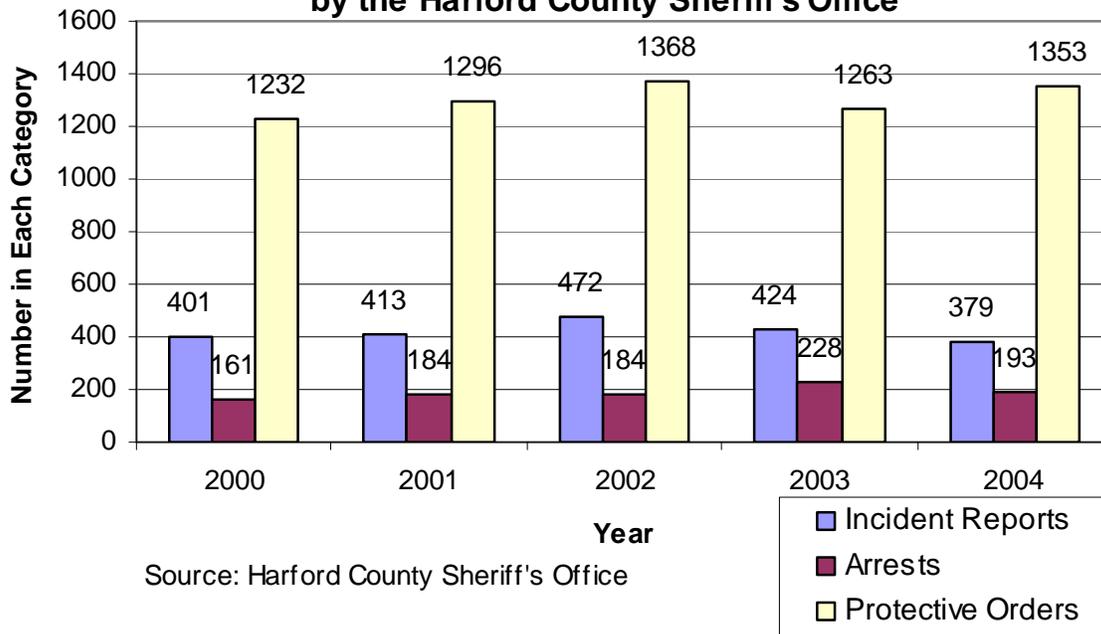
Source: State of Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR)  
Harford County Department of Social Services

**FAMILY - Chart 2 - The Percent of Investigations of Child Abuse or Neglect Ruled as Unsubstantiated For Maryland and Harford County**



Source: State of Maryland Department of Human Resources (DHR)  
Harford County Department of Social Services

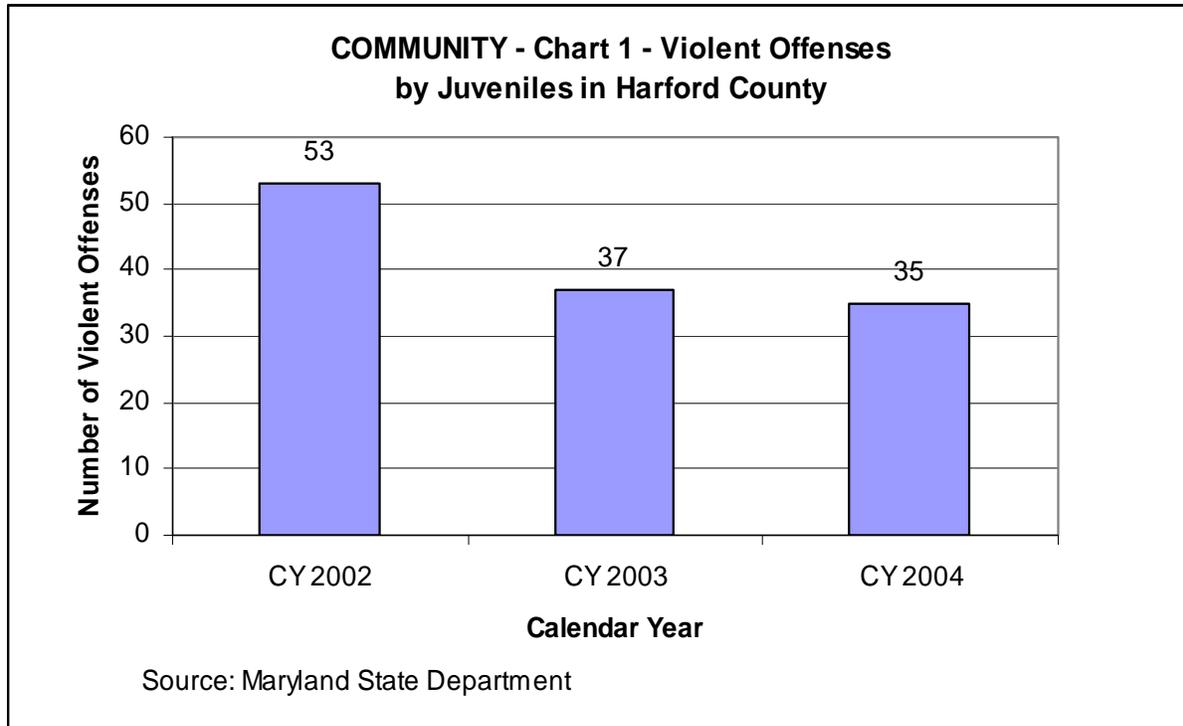
**FAMILY - Chart 3 - The Number of Domestic Violence Arrests, Incident Reports, Protective Orders by the Harford County Sheriff's Office**



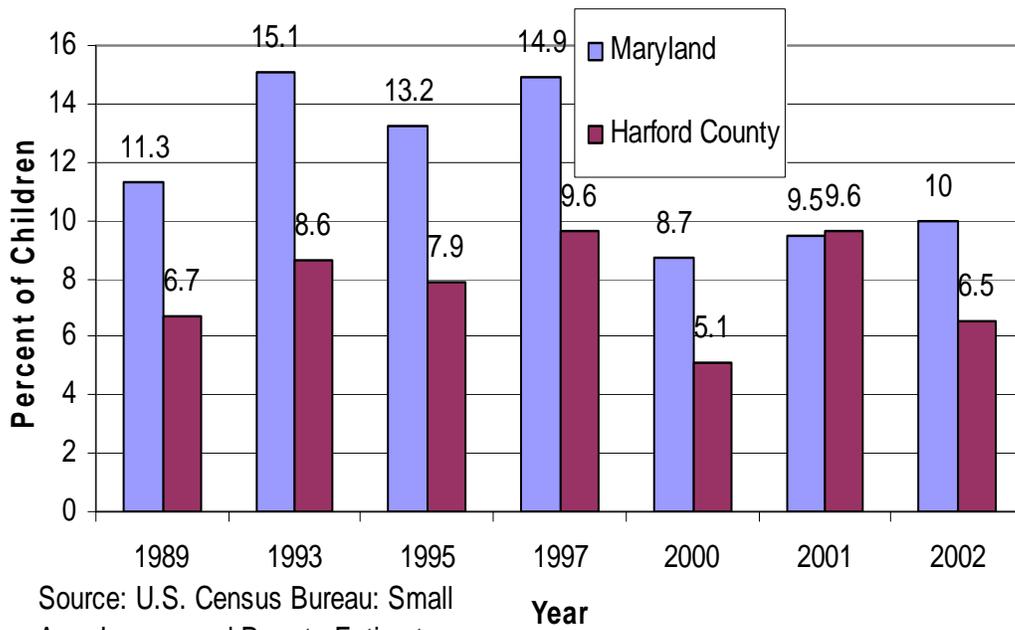
Source: Harford County Sheriff's Office

**Sphere of Influence: Community**

**Risk Factor: Economic Deprivation**



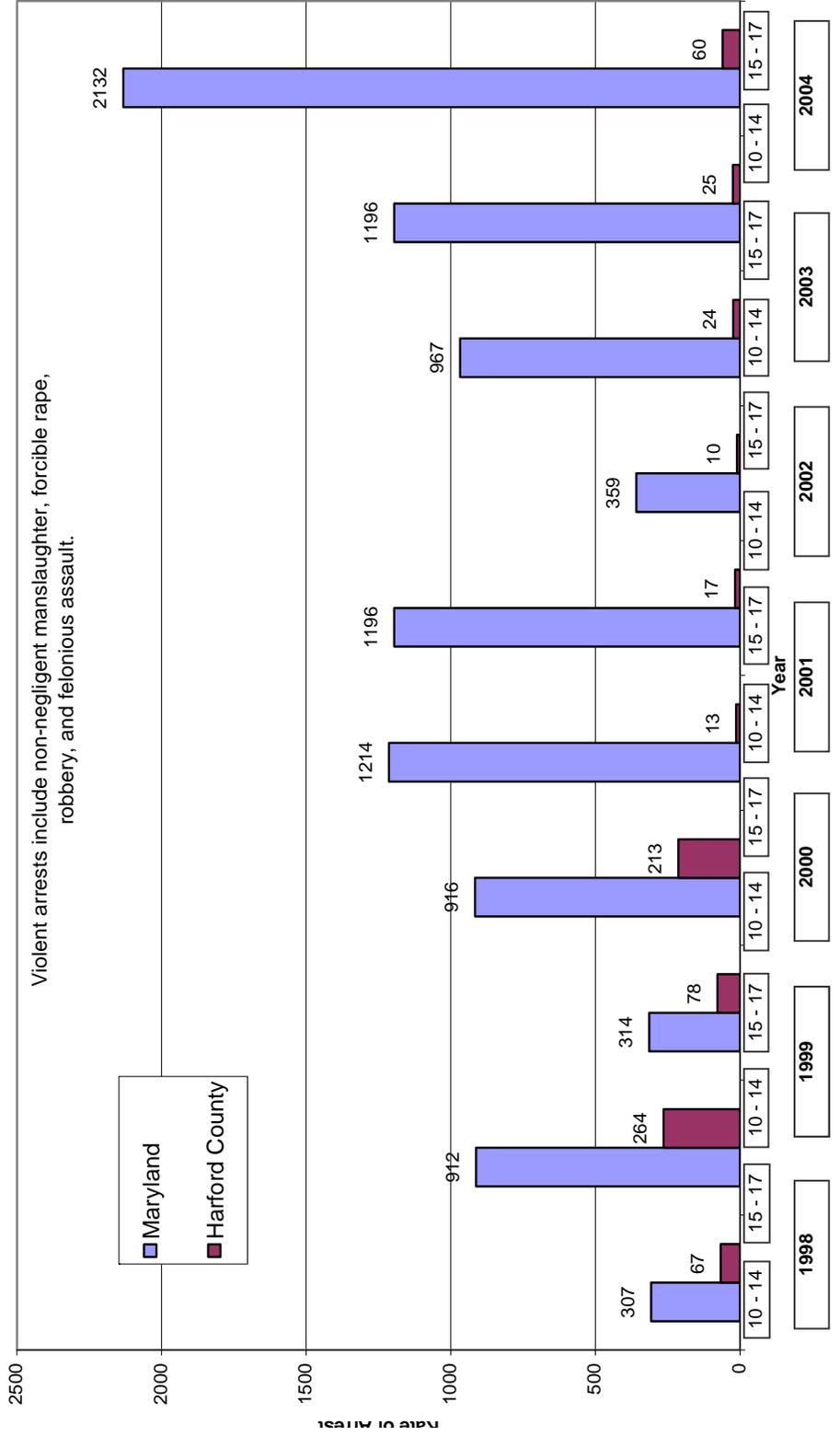
**COMMUNITY - Chart 2 - The Percent of Children Under 18 Whose Families Have Incomes Below the Poverty Level**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau: Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates

**Sphere of Influence: School**

**COMMUNITY - Chart 3 - The \*Rate of Arrests of Youth Ages 10-17 for Violent Offenses in Maryland and Harford County**



Source: Maryland State Police, Uniform Crime Reports

**Assets and Resources by Spheres of Influence**

**Individual**

LARGEST NUMBER

AFTER SCHOOL

COUNSELING

MENTORING PROGRAMS

BUT FEW ADDRESS FAVORABLE ATTITUDES TOWARD DRUG USE

**Peer**

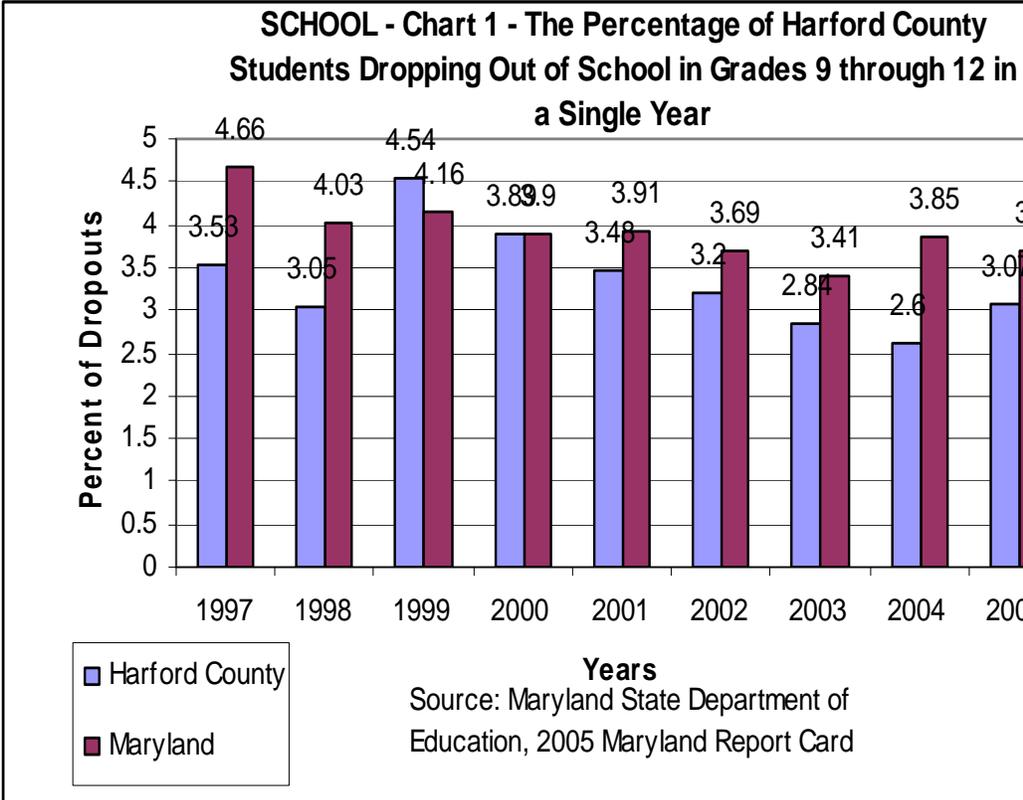
FOUR

PEER COUNSELING

PEER MEDIATION PROGRAMS

**Family**

MANY PROGRAMS BUT ONLY ONE FOUND TO BE HIGHLY PROMISING TO REDUCE CHILD MALTREATMENT



SCHOOL – Chart 2 – Comparative Dropout Rates Grades 9-12

Year	Harford Percent	Maryland Percent
2005	3.07	3.69
2004	2.60	3.85
2003	2.84	3.40
2002	3.20	3.68
2001	3.48	3.91

Source: Maryland State Department of Education

**Community Assets, Resources, and Gaps**

A Community Resource Assessment, undertaken at the outset of DPPB planning, continues to serve as a valuable guide to local programs addressing the spheres of influence. To better identify gaps in service, sphere of influence chairpersons reviewed existing county programs. Current community resources, gaps in service, priority risk factors, and proven or promising programs were compared.

In undertaking the review of resources, it was acknowledged that the Community Resource Assessment, which serves as an informal continuum of care, does not list every service available in the county, and needs heavily outweigh available programs. Any number of proven or promising programs could be selected to fill current gaps. While delinquency prevention is the priority, treatment and aftercare programs, which are essential to the continuum, are noticeably limited in Harford County.

The individual sphere of influence has the largest number of local programs providing protective factors: after school, counseling, delinquency prevention, mentoring, support groups, and therapy. However, few programs specifically address favorable attitudes toward drug use, an urgent need based on data analysis.

Four programs are available to address the peer sphere of influence. They are drug/alcohol prevention, peer counseling, and peer mediation. Only one addresses the risk factor peer alcohol, drug use, and delinquency.

The family sphere of influence has the second largest in number of programs (e.g., counseling, parent training, and group support). It offers one new highly promising parenting program, which would address the risk factor of child victimization and maltreatment.

Enhancements

**Youth Strategies Initiative**

ACROSS AGES

BRIDGES TO SUCCESS

THE INCREDIBLE YEARS

PROJECT PREPARE

**Disproportionate  
Minority Contact (DMC)  
Action Plan**

INSTITUTIONALIZE DMC

INCREASE

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

INCREASE

YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN  
SUPERVISED ACTIVITIES

PROVIDE CULTURALLY  
COMPETENT INTAKE AND  
DISPOSITION PLANNING

INCREASE

COLLABORATION AMONG  
CHILD SERVING AGENCIES

The Community Resource Assessment made it readily apparent that there are very few programs operating in the county that touch risk factors in the community sphere of influence. Only one program is listed which addresses community education. No programs address the priority risk factor of economic deprivation. This complex issue should possibly be addressed as a policy issue.

Comparative data did not raise school risk factors to a level of urgency. However, many proven programs take place in school settings, which would address risk in priority spheres of influence.

Community resources, or the “Continuum of Care” of prevention, early intervention, intervention and after care services for children and youth, have been enhanced in recent years by the collaborative efforts of the Harford County Partnership For Families, Inc. and the DPPB. Youth Strategies Initiative programs, Disproportionate Minority Contact, the focus on gangs by local law enforcement, the Harford County Resource Guide, and the Local Drug and Alcohol Advisory Council are all resource enhancements in Harford County.

The 2003 Delinquency Prevention Plan supported implementation of strategies targeting the risk factors family conflict and substance abuse in anticipation of the **Youth Strategies Initiative (YSI)** multi-year funding through the Governor’s Office of Crime Control and Prevention. Three

programs targeted to provide prevention and intervention services are still funded by

YSI: Across Ages, Bridges to Success, and the Incredible Years. Project PrePARE, supported by Villa Maria with matching funds from The Partnership in FY2006, will not be offered in FY2007 due to lack of funding.

Also in 2003, an advisory committee formed and a planning process began to reduce **Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC)** with child and youth serving agencies in Harford County. Funding for a consultant, available through FY2007, was awarded to the Harford Partnership by the Governor's Office of Crime Control and Prevention to study why minority contact is so high and to implement collaborative reduction strategies. The consultant worked closely with the DPPB to research the issue and develop seven action steps for Harford County:

- 1) Institutionalize the prioritization of the reduction of DMC;
- 2) Increase parental involvement at earliest stages of contact with child serving agencies;
- 3) Increase the number of minority youth across the county who are participating in supervised community-based activities;
- 4) Provide culturally competent intake and disposition planning at all decision points along the continuum of care;
- 5) Increase collaboration between child serving agencies for multi-agency involved families;
- 6) Streamline and integrate the collection, reporting, and analyzing of local data for the DMC Advisory Committee's ongoing monitoring and planning purposes; and
- 7) Identify and fully utilize all discretionary policy and practices to divert children and youth from movement deeper into the child-serving continuum.

A DMC Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed in FY2006 to secure buy-in and leadership at the executive level from a number of child serving agencies. The MOU is being shared with all partner agencies for consideration and obtaining local director signatures. DMC training sessions are being planned to incorporate DMC into the various child-serving agencies in Harford County and sustain the inter-cultural

understanding necessary to prevent further disproportionate representation of minority children in the child-serving continuum.

Close collaboration by the **Local Drug and Alcohol Advisory Council (LDAAC)** and the DPPB commenced in 2004 to avoid duplication and enhance service coordination. The LDAAC is an advisory council mandated by the State of Maryland. Along with their other responsibilities, is the development of a comprehensive plan for drug and alcohol prevention, intervention, and treatment services.

The Partnership is also engaged with the Harford County Public School System and other agency partners to develop additional collaboration around a **Community Schools** process approach ([www.communityschools.org](http://www.communityschools.org)) that can offer more potential resources and partnerships for schools. This proposed model is designed to improve conditions to support student learning and promote family involvement by utilizing the school as a hub in the community.

In 2004, representatives of the Harford County Sheriff's Office Special Investigations Division (see [www.harfordsheriff.org](http://www.harfordsheriff.org)) reported to the DPPB about the presence of gangs in Harford County. Negative peer influence of gangs has heightened monitoring efforts and coordination between agencies responding to gang behavior.

The **Harford County Resource Guide** is published as a community service by the Department of Community Services and the Commission for Women. While not targeted exclusively to at-risk youth and their families, this printed volume is an excellent resource for all Harford County families and the agencies that serve them. Indexed according to twenty-four topics, the 105-page guide offers information about more than 500 organizations in Harford County. The Resource Guide is a significant component in Harford County's Local Access Planning (LAP) for children and families.

Funding for FY2007 and FY2008 will target updated and complete resource information

<b>Youth Assessment Survey 2005</b>
<b>Who was surveyed?</b>
<b>243 Youth</b>
<b>Ages 4-30</b>
Those over 18 became parents as teenagers.
<b>92 Males</b>
<b>151 Females</b>
<b>105 African American</b>
<b>93 White</b>
<b>9 Hispanic</b>
<b>2Asian</b>
<b>1 Bi-racial</b>
<b>34 No response</b>
<b>20 Zip Codes:</b>
<b>21001 Aberdeen</b>
<b>21009 Abingdon</b>
<b>21010 Gunpowder</b>
<b>21014 Bel Air</b>
<b>21015 Bel Air</b>

for children and family programs and services. Advertising of the Resource Guide will be designed to be sensitive to Harford County's diverse cultures and accessible to the non-English speaking and low literacy population. It is available on the Harford County Government website ([www.harfordcountymd.gov](http://www.harfordcountymd.gov)).

### **Youth Assessment Survey**

Youth knowledge, perceptions, and concerns about risk factors that might impede successful development and quality of life is essential to delinquency prevention planning.

In 2001, 118 Harford County youth (100 males and 18 females ages 13-21) from Bel Air, Havre de Grace, Upper Crossroads, Edgewood, and Aberdeen were interviewed by The Office of Drug Control Policy and Harford County Health Department staff. Youth were part of a Department of Juvenile Services program. The most significant findings reported in the 2003 plan were:

- 1) Youth had varying degrees of knowledge about issues and where to report problems or get help.
- 2) A number had concerns based on first hand experiences.
- 3) Parents problems and family problems such as abandonment by parents, hateful stepparent relationships, and marital discord were numerous.
- 4) Peer pressure to participate in drug use before, during, and after school was significant.
- 5) Youth suggestions for solutions included assemblies, school based access to mentors, and community experts on many

topics including suicide and self-mutilation, abuse, youth rights, drugs, nutrition, anger management, and conflict resolution.

**Youth Assessment Survey  
2005  
Questions & Summary  
Responses**

**What are the challenges you  
face as a youth in Harford  
County?**

**DRUGS AND ALCOHOL  
FIGHTING AND GANGS  
BOREDOM  
PEER PRESSURE  
STRESS**

**What can adults do to help  
you make safe choices in the  
future?**

**GUIDE AND TEACH BY TALKING  
TO ME  
PROTECT AND TAKE ME AWAY  
FROM BAD THINGS  
RESPECT AND BELIEVE  
IN ME  
BE PRESENT FOR ME**

**What can you do to help  
you make safe choices in the  
future?**

**CONSIDER CONSEQUENCES  
BE AN EXAMPLE  
STAY FOCUSED BY  
GETTING INVOLVED  
LISTEN TO ADULTS**

For the 2006 plan, the DPPB used a broader, somewhat more formal approach. The process consisted of letters of invitation to youth-serving organizations, parental consent forms, and three focus group questions. In November 2005, seven groups of youth ranging in age from 4-30 participated in focus groups. Some adults over 18 participated because they became parents as teens. Youth participated at the following locations:

Offices of the Department of Juvenile Services/Harford County Juvenile Drug Court at two events - 17 youth;

Harford County Public Schools Youth Summit - 94 youth;

Aberdeen Family Support Center – 8 youth;

Aberdeen Bible Church at two events – 31 youth; and

Edgewood Baptist Church – 91 youth.

Professional staff facilitated the confidential focus groups. Demographic forms were provided to all youth participants. Facilitators had resource information available for youth and were available to follow up with participating organizations if needed. Three questions were asked:

(1) What challenges do you face as a youth in Harford County?

(2) What can adults do to help youth make safe choices in the future?

(3) What can youth do to help themselves make safe choices in the future?

A total of 243 youth participated who represented a mix of gender, race, and broad geographic reach. The youth were forthcoming and genuine in their identification of obstacles and frustrations with gaps in parental and community supports.

Youth Survey – 2005 Topics
abortion
physical/sexual abuse
<b>alcohol and drugs</b>
anger management
<b>bullying</b>
cruelty
cutting
dating
depression
detention
divorce
domestic violence
depression/anxiety
drug use by parents or peers
eating disorders
fear: home, school
<b>fighting</b>
<b>gangs</b>
guardianship
homosexuality
jobs
latch key
law enforcement

Responses to the question, “What challenges do you face as a youth growing up in Harford County?” revealed several clear areas of challenge. *The top two challenges in six of the seven groups were drugs (and alcohol) and fighting along with bullying, violence, and gangs.* Only teen parents identified poverty as an issue. Boredom or lack of social outlets was raised repeatedly in four groups and peer pressure and stress was raised frequently in three groups.

Responses to the question, “What can adults do to help you make safe choices in the future?” raised a perceptive and powerful plea from our community youth. Talk to us, care for us, honor us, and pay attention to us. They chose words like teach, guide, and mentor to describe a willingness to learn from their parents and other adults’ experiences. “Tell me so I won’t make wrong choices.” They chose words like protect and “Watch out for us” to request safe alternatives and care. And they asked to be believed in and challenged, not judged. They asked for more family time and for adults to pay attention to them. One youth said, “It’s not enough to tell us what’s wrong. How about showing us what’s right?”

In response to the question, “What can you do to help you make safe choices in the future?” youth were honest and forthcoming. They said “think before you act” by considering the consequences and the rewards for actions. They advocated being an example to others, by acknowledging mistakes, lending help to others, and being an encourager. They seemed to understand the importance of having enough knowledge to get involved and keep busy or follow through with something constructive.

Many youth recommended re-establishing trust in order to build and maintain good relationships with adults. They spoke of listening to others to improve communication with adults and peers. As to youth being comfortable saying no to their peers, one teen said, “Without this ability, the problems we have identified will not go away. It is the basis for everything. Kids not yet in the situation of having mistakes in their past, do NOT weigh consequences nearly as much as they learn from regret.”

## **Prevention Plan**

### **Effective and Promising Approaches**

Delinquency prevention experience has shown that approaches that combine efforts to extinguish negative behaviors, or risk factors, with strategies that enhance a young person’s resiliency, or ability to combat risk factors, are most effective. While a young person’s disposition, family dynamics, and social circumstances can work for or against him or her, programs that uplift their protective potential have the greatest impact in the present and for the future.

The *Effective and Promising Programs Guide*, developed by DSG for the Federal Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, summarizes an extensive review of *programs that have been scientifically proven to be successful at preventing delinquency*. Only programs that professionally evaluated on multiple occasions were considered for the guide. The programs selected have been determined to have impacts upon their target populations. They were reviewed and rated as effective, highly promising, or promising. The guide may be viewed at <http://www.dsgonline.com/mpg2.5/search.htm>.

Effective programs offer statistical significance of a deterrent effect. They make a difference and have been replicated in other communities. Highly promising programs have shown effect with control groups but they have not yet been randomized to other settings. And, promising programs have shown impact between pre- and post tests but have not yet met more rigorous evaluation.

The DPPB reviewed over 70 programs offered in the guide in order to identify service strategies that have demonstrated impact on the identified risk factors: (1) favorable attitudes toward drug use, and (2) alcohol, drug use, and delinquency. The programs listed below have been prioritized by the DPPB for support as funding becomes available because they appear to most closely address the greatest needs of youth and families in Harford County. The programs must be implemented precisely as they were developed in order to have a similar effect. Program managers and providers are encouraged to consider these programs for local implementation. They are listed in the following chart in priority order.

<b>Effective and Promising Programs</b>	<b>Ages</b>	<b>Setting</b>	<b>Intervention</b>	<b>Guide Reference</b>
Reconnecting Youth – Highly Promising – decreases deviant peer bonding, reduce drugs	15-18 at-risk	high school	Semester long elective class increases school performance, decreased drug involvement	2-44
Big Brothers Big Sisters Effective – 46% less likely to initiate drug use than peers	10-16	community	Mentoring to provide support with a caring adult 2-4 x month for a year.	5-9
National Youth & Anti-Drug Media Campaign Effective – 60% youth reported ads made them avoid drugs	Youth parents	community	Ad campaign to educate & enable youth to reject illegal drugs or stop using drugs	1-35
Parenting Wisely – Highly Promising – almost 50% youth previously deviant scored normal	Parents of 6-18	family	3 hour program self administered CD-ROM/ video for low literacy parents	3-39

Prevention Intervention – Highly Promising – higher grades, better attendance; long term fewer court records	12-15	junior high	2 year program targets juvenile cynicism & lack of confidence/skill to deal with problems	2-35
Gang Resistance Education (GREAT) – Highly Promising – More pro-social behaviors	13	grade 7	9 week curriculum taught by law enforcement officers – conflict resolution, negatives of gangs	4-20
Across Ages – Effective – increases resiliency, positive attitudes, self worth	10-13	community	Mentoring between youth transition from childhood with older adults (55+)	5-10
Adolescent Alcohol Prevention Trial – Effective – normative education reduced onset of alcohol, tobacco & marijuana	10	grade 5; boosters grade 7	Classroom program corrects erroneous perceptions about prevalence and acceptability	2-40
Seattle Social Development Project – Highly Promising – Increased school attachment, fewer antisocial peers	6-14 high risk	grade/middle school	Parents & teachers implement social competence training	2-29
Life Skills Training – Effective – can reduce alcohol, tobacco, marijuana use 75%	10-14	middle/junior high	Classroom based substance drug resistance skills, self management & social skills & booster sessions	2-39

### **Support and Funding**

There are no guarantees for funding new programs identified in the 2006 plan. Bridges to Success, The Incredible Years, Across Ages, and Project PrePARE were all funded by federal funds passed through to the State of Maryland and distributed through a competitive process. This funding has been declining recently.

As federal and state funding becomes more difficult to obtain, the DPPB's Finance and Marketing Committee is searching for new funding options in order to sustain current programs or start-up new programs. Identifying and seeking funds is a time consuming process. Nonetheless, the committee had modest success and was able to identify supplemental funding for Bridges to Success during the 2005-2006 year.

The Committee will continue to meet to search for both government and private funds to sustain current programs with measurable outcomes as well as to fund new programs. This process may involve encouraging agencies wishing to offer proven and promising programs to pursue grant opportunities with support from the DPPB. It undoubtedly will require the creation of new partnerships among public and private entities, possible civic organization or church sponsorships, fee structures, and insurance strategies.

### **Oversight and Evaluation**

The DPPB welcomes the opportunity to work with public and private organizations interested in the welfare of Harford County children and youth. The board's experience in strategy development, monitoring, and program evaluation is offered to individuals and organizations committed to responding to the challenges our children face. The partnerships and knowledge base are in place and a foundation of accountability and caring has been established.

The underpinnings of the 2006 Delinquency Prevention plan surely lie in the wisdom of our youth as identified in the findings of the youth assessment survey. The board's commitment is to expand capacity to reach its objective to protect our youth and encourage them to make better choices.