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Nebraska PACT Action Plan to Prevent Youth Violence

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Nebraska PACT Action Plan to Prevent Youth Violence

Sponsored by

Governor Ben Nelson

and

U.S. Attorney Thomas Monaghan

July 15, 1994

STATE OF NEBRASKA

EXECUTIVE SUITE

P.O. Box 94848
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July 15, 1994

E. Benjamin Nelson
Governor

Dear Nebraskans:

As Nebraskans, we are fortunate to have a sound, healthy environment in which to raise our children. Our schools are safe learning environments that produce among the best students in the nation. For the most part, our streets are free of the constant criminal activity that threatens youths in other areas of America. It is easy to say that we are living the good life, but certainly not the perfect life.

When compared to other states in the country, we have one of the lowest crime rates. However, we must keep in mind that even one child lost to crime and violence is one child too many. As a people, we must continue to strive for a quality of life that allows improving our state for future generations. These are the gifts we received from our parents. We must accept no less for our children.

In recent years, we have watched as the incidents of violence and crime grow among our youth population. We have looked on in disbelief as news coverage provides yet another story of violence among our youth. And though these incidents are not widespread, they are occurring, and they are occurring with increasing frequency. We must put an end to this.

Nebraska is honored to be one of the first four "Pulling America's Communities Together" (PACT) jurisdictions. In developing a strategic plan during the past few months, hundreds of people from all walks of life and all parts of our state have worked hard to address the root causes of youth violence and propose ways to work together at the community, state, and federal level. We appreciate their dedication to developing methods to prevent violence in our state.

Many of the strategies proposed can be implemented rather quickly, but many are long-term. However, the reasons for the trends in youth crime did not occur overnight, and our solutions will require commitment and diligence. Not all the solutions suggested can be accomplished by government. Some will be advanced by community organizations, churches, and parents.

Implementation of this plan is the responsibility of all of us. Let us work together to insure Nebraska children and families have our support for safe, happy, productive futures.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "E. Benjamin Nelson".

E. Benjamin Nelson
Governor



U.S. Department of Justice

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Fellow Nebraskans:

Recently, a remarkable coalition of Nebraskans came together to take a hard look at youth violence in our state.

They came from all sectors -- education, government, business and, even our youth. They brought no presumptions or prejudices to the table.

As part of a U. S. Government initiative called "Pulling America's Communities Together" (PACT), the diverse group discussed the causes and cures, the roots and the repairs of youth violence.

The strategy proposed by this group is not radical, but it has one central theme: prevention of violence among our youth is the job of every Nebraskan.

Certainly, law enforcement and the courts play key roles. But for too long, youth violence has been "that problem in the other neighborhood" for many of us.

No more.

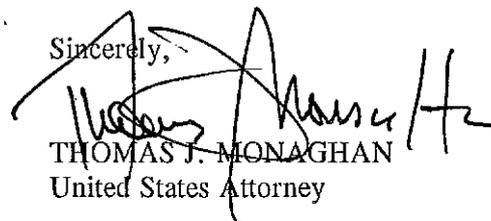
It's here -- today, on our doorsteps.

The newspaper stories and TV news broadcasts that tell of the steady growth in youth violence are the rallying cry for each of us to join in when and where we can.

It's your job and mine. This cause needs moms and dads, educators, law enforcement officers, social scientists, youth and health providers. It also needs farmers, auto mechanics, doctors and sales people. We need community organizations, churches, schools and sports clubs.

Just as the State of Nebraska offers each citizen a "good life," so too your state asks something in return. We, the people of Nebraska, owe our young people a safe, nurturing environment conducive to developing productive citizens -- by working together we can achieve this goal.

Sincerely,



THOMAS J. MONAGHAN
United States Attorney

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nebraska's Action Plan to Prevent Youth Violence would not have been possible without the involvement of many Nebraskans. Citizens with a wide variety of interests and expertise contributed their time and ideas for solving problems related to youth violence. Organizations and agencies across the state are to be commended for encouraging their employees to participate in the planning sessions.

A project of this magnitude requires professional guidance and organization. This assistance came from individuals in the Governor's office, Nebraska U.S. Attorney's Office, and the University of Nebraska at Omaha's College of Public Affairs and Community Service (departments of Criminal Justice, Public Administration, and the Center for Public Affairs Research).

The project design/organizational team included Nancy Thompson, Nebraska Governor's Office; Joe Jeanette, Nebraska U.S. Attorney's Office; and Vince Webb, B.J. Reed, Alice Schumaker, Nanette Graham, and Ethel Williams, University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO).

Jamie Lucchino and Melanie Hayes, UNO; Lavonna Evans, Nebraska Crime Commission; and Martha Glut, Nebraska U.S. Attorney's Office were instrumental in material preparation and logistics.

Facilitators included Willa Bruce, Jay White, and Ray Clark, UNO. Special thanks to Lt. Col. Buddy Smith and facilitators from the Nebraska National Guard. The League of Women Voters provided meeting support and clerical assistance.

Analysis of the survey was provided by Russell Smith, Jerome Deichert, David Fifer, and Bob Blair from UNO.

The final report was produced with the talents of Joyce Carson, layout and word processing; and Linda Ferring, editor.

We also wish to thank Chadron State College, the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and Northeast Community College in Norfolk for providing meeting facilities.

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Nebraska PACT Action Plan To Prevent Youth Violence

Introduction

Nebraska is one of four jurisdictions selected to participate in Project PACT (Pulling America's Communities Together). Nebraska PACT is a state - federal initiative to empower communities to reduce crime and violence. Through this program, the state and federal governments will assist communities as they build coalitions to develop broad-based, fully-coordinated initiatives to reduce violence by and against youth.

Nebraska was named a PACT jurisdiction site in the Fall of 1993 at the invitation of U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno. Other areas chosen were the cities of Washington, D.C.; Denver, Colorado; and Atlanta, Georgia. Support in this effort is being provided by several federal agencies which comprise the Federal Interdepartmental Violence Initiative: the U.S. Departments of Justice, Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development and the Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Major responsibilities for carrying out this effort belong to local communities. Each community is to play the lead role in developing and implementing coordinated efforts to foster violence prevention in their area. The PACT process requires that participants establish multidisciplinary as well as intergovernmental and interagency coalitions to address the problem. Other important themes to be incorporated into planning include sensitivity to multicultural and racial concerns, involving youth in decision-making, and recognizing the crucial role of the family and other significant adults in shaping the actions of young people. A product of cooperation, comprehensive thinking, and strategic planning, this plan will set Nebraska on the path to reducing violence, fear and hopelessness within its communities.

The following narrative describes the project setting, the need for Project PACT, and the process used in formulating the action plan.

The Setting

Nebraska is geographically and culturally diverse, with a mixed economic base which includes a substantial agricultural and agribusiness component. Although large in area (15th in the U.S.), Nebraska has just 1,600,524 people (1992 population estimates). Half of the population lives in six metropolitan counties and the other half in 87 nonmetropolitan counties. Nebraska's three largest cities and their estimated 1992 populations are Omaha (339,671), Lincoln (197,488), and Grand Island (40,036). The state has 534 incorporated places, of which 421 have fewer than 1,000 persons.

Nebraska's population is 93.8 percent White; 3.6 percent Black; 0.8 percent American Indian, Eskimo, or Aleut; 0.8 percent Asian or Pacific Islander; and 1.0 percent Other. Persons of Hispanic origin, who may be of any race, compose 2.3 percent of the population. Nearly all the state's Black residents (97 percent) live in the Omaha and Lincoln metropolitan areas.

The percentage of Nebraskans who are younger (27.2 percent under 18 years of age) and older (14.1 percent aged 65 and older) is higher than the percentage in the U.S. as a whole. Single parent families comprise 18.9 percent of the population compared to 23.9 percent nationally.

Agriculture is a major component of the state's economic base. According to the 1990 Census, 57,862 out of 772,813 employed Nebraskans (7.5 percent) worked in farming, forestry, or fishing occupations. Nationally, only 2.5 percent of employed persons worked in those occupations. Other major Nebraska industries include food processing, railroad transportation, and insurance.

Nebraska's median household income in 1989 was \$26,016, somewhat lower than the national average of \$30,056. At the same time, the poverty rate for Nebraska (11.1 percent) was also lower than for the nation (13.1 percent).

The Problem

Traditionally, Nebraska ranks lower in crime and violence than the nation and most other states in the North Central Region. In 1993, Uniform Crime Report data ranked Nebraska 36th among the 50 states for violent crimes per 100,000 population and 38th for property crimes.

Although Nebraska ranks low on most crimes, the state's crime rate has been increasing in recent years. Violent crimes have increased the most, especially aggravated assault, doubling since 1980. Forcible rape has increased. Meanwhile, the homicide rate remains at about the 1980 level and the robbery rate has declined.

Trends in youth violence in Nebraska are similar to trends in the rest of the nation. Overall, arrests of juveniles increased by 12.5 percent between 1989 and 1992 (Appendix 1). Among the largest increases in juvenile arrests were arrests for violent crimes. Arrests of juveniles for robbery increased by 57 percent during this period and arrests for felony assault increased by 32 percent. Arrests for misdemeanor assaults increased by 46 percent, and arrests for possession of weapons increased by nearly 20 percent.

While these data on arrests confirm an increase in youth violence, they also show that younger Nebraska youth are becoming involved in criminal behavior. Arrests of juveniles age 13 and 14 increased by 27 percent between 1989 and 1992. For 15-year-olds the increase was about 22 percent, whereas the increase for 16-year-olds was about 10 percent.

Juvenile court records also reveal the increasing involvement of Nebraska's youth in crime, especially violent crime. While the percentage of cases processed in Nebraska's juvenile courts for all major offenses increased by about 12 percent between 1989 and 1992, assault cases (1st, 2nd, and 3rd combined) increased by nearly 58 percent.

The 1993 Youth Risk Behavior Survey of over 3,000 Nebraska adolescents provides additional evidence concerning the prevalence of youth violence in Nebraska. Thirty-five percent of the youth who participated in the survey reported that they were in a physical fight during the past 30 days, and 21 percent reported that they carried a weapon during the past 30 days.

The Making of the Plan

Strategies that emphasize preventing the development of delinquent and criminal careers can most effectively achieve a long term reduction in youth violence. On this premise, the Nebraska PACT plan was developed.

To a large extent, the Nebraska PACT strategic planning process parallels the prevention component of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's comprehensive strategy for addressing the problem of serious youth violence. Prevention efforts focus on youth who are at risk of becoming involved in violence and at the same time strengthen the capacity of the juvenile and criminal justice systems to respond effectively to youth who come into contact with those systems. This risk-focused delinquency approach requires communities to identify those risk factors that make their youth susceptible to youth violence, and to develop and implement programs that emphasize protective factors capable of mitigating the effects of the risk factors.

In Nebraska's PACT strategic planning, Nebraskans identified key issues surrounding youth violence in meetings, teleconferences, and workshops. On this foundation, representatives from the University of Nebraska at Omaha (Departments of Criminal Justice, Public Administration, and the Center for Public Affairs Research), Governor Nelson's Office, and the Nebraska U.S. Attorney's Office designed the PACT project.

To increase the public input into the plan, 3,000 surveys were mailed to Nebraskans. The survey (Appendix 2) asked respondents to rank the importance of risk factors related to youth violence. These risk factors had been identified earlier in statewide meetings and through research on youth violence. Respondents were also asked to describe programs that represented "best practices" and identify the risk factors addressed by the programs. Criminal Justice faculty from UNO identified and ranked the most frequently identified risk factor categories (Appendix 3).

To gain maximum participation from people involved with the issue of youth violence, the process was bottom-up rather than top-down, and called for collecting data from large numbers of Nebraskans at meetings in April, 1994, in Chadron, Kearney, Omaha, and Norfolk, Nebraska. Participants represented a wide range of interests and expertise, including nonprofit agencies, state agencies, local youth programs, criminal justice, school and university programs, political leaders, and youth.

Participants identified strategies to address the survey's most frequently mentioned risk categories: parenting, environment, family violence, early behavior, adolescent behavior, and negative behavior. Environmental scan analysis linked risk factor categories to youth violence, and participants analyzed interrelationships between them. Issues were ranked, and problems and solutions identified, using facilitated small group discussion.

Technical working groups took the ideas of the broad-based group's strategies and formulated action steps. They also assessed the political, legal, financial, technological, human resource, and social/cultural feasibility of each action step. State department and other organizational representatives were also involved in the planning.

As Nebraskans begin to implement this plan, the technical working groups, state department personnel, and others involved in youth violence issues will meet periodically to review progress

on implementation and to adjust the plan. This will prevent the plan from becoming a static document, and will allow for changes as the environmental conditions change and as segments of the action plan are completed. Initial review will be conducted six months after implementation begins. Additional reviews will be conducted at least once a year after that date.

The Nebraska PACT Action Plan consists of goals, objectives, strategies, and actions to address the risk factors identified and prioritized by Nebraskans. The five goals of the plan are to:

- Ensure safe communities in Nebraska
- Build more effective communities
- Expand youth participation in community life
- Increase Nebraska's capacity to strengthen families
- Strengthen individual and community values

Improving the quality of parenting, increasing the effectiveness of the juvenile justice system, reducing and eliminating negative influences in the environment, increasing opportunities for youth to participate in the life of the community and economy, and promoting positive individual and community values are key strategies toward these goals.

Implementation is the most important part of any plan. Responsibilities for implementation accompany each action; however, no single agency or organization has been designated to lead. This will be decided as the implementation process unfolds and knowledge about existing programs is gathered. In some cases, it will be appropriate to have several organizations involved in leading different parts of the activity. Governor Nelson has designated the Governor's Commission for the Protection of Children as the lead organization in state government for coordinating planning and service delivery policy on protecting children and strengthening families. Project PACT will work with the commission to insure that the implementation of related or overlapping goals will be coordinated. This will allow state government to assist communities effectively and with an efficient use of available resources. In addition, success of this plan depends on continual involvement of people at the community level in the implementation process.

The Nebraska PACT Action Plan to Prevent Youth Violence is statewide, not local or regional. Ideally, the philosophies and general goals and strategies will guide local communities and neighborhoods in their planning. The strength of this document is its coordination of all Nebraska's resources to prevent and reduce youth violence in neighborhoods and communities throughout the state.

Goal One: Ensure safe communities in Nebraska.

Youth violence threatens the safety of any Nebraska community. Increased knowledge about the causes and risk factors related to youth violence as well as effective programs can successfully prevent youth violence. To have safe communities, Nebraska youth and their families must have better access to services, and the capacity of the criminal and juvenile justice systems to provide essential services must expand. Lessening the negative impacts of some media and entertainment industry programs while using the media to convey positive images of and for youth are critical steps in building safer Nebraska communities.

Objective One: Increase the capacity of law enforcement and social agencies to deal with family violence.

Strategy # 1 Develop means to eliminate barriers to deal more effectively with family violence.

Action # 1 Build interagency agreements that result in better information on family violence for criminal justice and social services agencies.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, Department of Social Services, Crime Commission, Court Administrator's Office, Nebraska Probation System, Department of Public Institutions.

Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Action #2 Evaluate existing regulations and legislation that are potential barriers to dealing effectively with family violence.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, Department of Social Services, Crime Commission, Department of Public Institutions, County and District Court Judges Associations, Juvenile Court Judges Association, Legislature, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension.

Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Strategy # 2 Assist individuals in their willingness and ability to refer abuse cases.

Action # 1 Support and expand existing information campaigns that educate the local child abuse service system about its role and responsibilities; educate media, schools, health care providers and others on the importance of reporting suspected cases of abuse and neglect.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, Department of Social Services, schools of journalism, County Attorneys Association, Judges Associations, Crime Commission, universities and colleges preparing health professionals.

Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Action # 2 Determine the feasibility of providing information to governmental and non-governmental organizations concerning the disposition of reported abuse cases.

Lead Responsibility: Juvenile Court System, County Attorneys Association, Department of Social Services, Court Administrator's Office, Department of Education.

Timeline: 18 to 24 months.

Objective Two: Develop comprehensive approaches to family education and support systems.

Strategy # 1 Develop joint programs focused on prevention of family violence.

Action # 1 Create incentive systems for youth care providers (day care, latch key, foster care, and group care) to receive conflict resolution training. Include parent training as an option.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Department of Education, Office of Dispute Resolution, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension.

Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Action # 2 Create positive reinforcements for avoiding substance abuse and negative peer pressure. Reduce mixed messages associated with alcohol abuse.

Support and expand, where appropriate, campaigns aimed at reducing illegal use of liquor, conveying the message that it is all right for individuals not to drink.

Support drug and alcohol resistance programs and peer resistance by schools and community and make them available to wider grade levels.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Health, Department of Public Institutions, local school districts, and law enforcement.

Timeline: 12 months.

Objective Three: Increase consistency in the way the juvenile justice system responds to youth by providing better information to that system.

Strategy # 1 Develop better information tools to aid understanding of factors affecting youth violence.

Action # 1 Develop a comprehensive data base on youth in the juvenile justice system. Identify existing management information systems and coordinate linkages and upgrades that provide information to criminal justice, school, and social service agencies about youth offenders that adhere to the need to protect privacy.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Department of Education, Nebraska Probation System, Court Administrator's Office, Office of Juvenile Services, Department of Public Institutions, Department of Health.

Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Action # 2 Identify current state and national information available on factors affecting youth violence.

Develop a state-wide data base that assesses and correlates factors associated with youth violence, including those associated with early childhood.

Identify, inform and educate media, state agencies and others on the actual relationships between early childhood factors and the development of youth violence.

Lead Responsibility: Office of Juvenile Services, Department of Social Services, Crime Commission, Department of Health, Department of Public Institutions, media associations, universities.

Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Action #3 Evaluate best practices and programs that appear to have potential for reducing or eliminating youth violence. Develop a “best practices” clearinghouse that will provide an exchange of data and program information among agencies so these “best practices” can be shared effectively.

Lead Responsibility: Nebraska Crime Commission, The University of Nebraska (Omaha, Medical Center, Lincoln, and Kearney campuses), Department of Social Services.

Timeline: 18 to 24 months.

Strategy # 2 Encourage education and treatment programs for all youthful substance abusing offenders.

Action # 1 Utilize and expand effective assessment processes and encourage substance abuse treatment for youth offenders.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Public Institutions, Nebraska Probation System, Department of Education, Department of Social Services.

Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Action # 2 Study the need for treatment programs for indigent alcoholic teens and expand services where needed.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Public Institutions, universities.

Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Objective Four: Expand access to youth and family services in the criminal justice system.

Strategy # 1 Increase consistency of outcomes for youth in the court system.

Action # 1 Develop a risk assessment process for appropriate placements in a case management system.

Lead Responsibility: Office of Juvenile Services, Nebraska Probation System, Department of Public Institutions.

Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Goal One, Objective Four (continued)

- Action # 2 Develop a broader continuum of care for adjudicated youth.
Lead Responsibility: Office of Juvenile Services, Nebraska Probation System.
Timeline: 12 to 36 months.
- Action # 3 Assist probation officers in providing more complete and accurate information to the courts on the behavior of individuals brought into the system.
Lead Responsibility: Court Administrator's Office, Nebraska District and County Judges Associations, Juvenile Court Judges Association, Office of Juvenile Services, Department of Correctional Services, Nebraska Probation System, Department of Social Services.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 4 Improve case management from intake to aftercare by making it more consistent and uniform throughout the state.
Lead Responsibility: Office of Juvenile Services, Court Administrator's Office, Nebraska Association of County Officials, Department of Social Services, Nebraska Probation System.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 5 Encourage the development of state-wide diversion programs for first time offenders. Include:
- a. Development of a directory of existing diversion programs.
 - b. Dissemination of information on existing programs and program models to local jurisdictions.
 - c. Provision of technical assistance to jurisdictions wishing to implement new diversion programs.
- Lead Responsibility: Nebraska Crime Commission, Nebraska Association of County Officials, Nebraska County Attorneys Association, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 6 Develop a volunteer state-wide youth advocacy program in connection with the court system for juvenile or criminal offenses. Focus efforts on youth who have been abused and neglected. Include:
- a. Program design.
 - b. Training of advocates and criminal justice system personnel.
- Lead Responsibility: County Judges Association, Juvenile Court Judges Association, Nebraska Crime Commission, Nebraska Probation System, Office of Juvenile Services.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Goal One, Objective Four (continued)

- Action # 7 Develop a model that encompasses youth and their families when the youth enter the juvenile justice system. This model should emphasize information sharing throughout the court system.
- Lead Responsibility: Office of Juvenile Services, Nebraska Probation System, Court Administrator's Office, County and District Court Judges Associations, Juvenile Court Judges Association.
- Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 8 Develop consistent approaches to case filing, case dispositions, and sentencing.
- Lead Responsibility: Court Administrator's Office, County and District Court Judges Associations, County Attorneys Association, Nebraska Probation System.
- Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 9 Study current probation system to determine and/or remove inconsistencies in the way youth are treated by evaluating reporting process and structure.
- Lead Responsibility: Court Administrator's Office, Nebraska Probation System Office, County Judges Association, Juvenile Court Judges Association, University of Nebraska Department of Criminal Justice.
- Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Objective Five: Lessen the negative effects of the mass media on youth and their communities.

Strategy # 1 Address impacts of mass media and entertainment industry on youth.

- Action # 1 Encourage and publicize research findings about entertainment media's effect on negative youthful behaviors.
- Lead Responsibility: Universities, Department of Public Institutions
- Timeline: 6 to 18 months.
- Action # 2 Educate parents on the effects of entertainment programming and encourage them to eliminate programming that promotes negative behavior.
- Lead Responsibility: Parents, churches, nonprofit organizations, parent-teacher organizations, libraries, health professionals.
- Timeline: 6 to 18 months.
- Action # 3 Support efforts at the national level to encourage evaluation, both internally and externally, of the impact of media violence.
- Lead Responsibility: Parents, cable and network television, health professionals.
- Timeline: 6 to 18 months.

Goal One, Objective Five (continued)

- Action # 4 Encourage media sources not to broadcast programs with inappropriate and violent content during time periods when children are likely to be viewing.
Lead Responsibility: Parents and community members, cable and network television.
Timeline: 6 to 24 months.

Strategy # 2 Assist media in developing positive coverage of youth and their communities.

- Action # 1 Encourage media to provide special features or series of on-going programs that focus on youth issues, positive youth, positive families, and youth programs. Features should be multicultural in scope.
- Action # 2 Encourage businesses and other sponsors to underwrite positive programming.
- Action # 3 Develop a clearinghouse to disseminate information to all media regarding events and youth programs and/or positive stories regarding local youth.
- Action # 4 Develop a consortium of community liaisons to report positive youth programs and activities to the media.
Lead Responsibility: Community and youth organizations, Chambers of Commerce.
Timeline: 6 to 24 months.

Objective Six: Increase community and individual accountability for attending school.

Strategy # 1 Increase compliance with Nebraska truancy laws.

- Action #1 Conduct a statewide study of school truancy in order to determine its prevalence, causes, and enforcement, and take appropriate action if necessary.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, University of Nebraska.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action #2 Conduct a statewide study of out-of-school truancy in order to determine its prevalence, causes, and enforcement, and take appropriate action, if necessary.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, Department of Social Services, Nebraska Probation System, law enforcement agencies, County Attorneys Association, University of Nebraska.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Goal Two: Build more effective communities.

More effective communities can reduce youth violence and its consequences across the state. Essential components must include comprehensive family education and support systems, coordinated community services, support for young crime victims, and improved access to agency services. We must develop systematic efforts to reduce family violence, care for youth who can no longer remain in the home, and increase the overall ability of communities to confront youth violence.

Objective One: Stimulate the creation and expansion of community partnerships.

Strategy # 1 Develop joint efforts to strengthen neighborhoods and communities in identifying and solving family violence problems.

Action # 1 Support Partners in Planning and other initiatives to assist communities and neighborhoods in developing their own locally-based action plans to address youth violence. Include:

- a. How to identify formal and informal organizations including those that represent different cultures.
- b. How to carry out needs assessment at the community level.
- c. How to develop action planning to address family violence issues.

Lead Responsibility: Crime Commission and other government and nonprofit agencies, Department of Health.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Action # 2 Expand leadership development programs to create, expand and renew leadership base at the community level.

Ensure leadership programs are located in organizations with sufficient resources to sustain them over time.

Provide leadership in promoting approaches that can be utilized in different community settings both rural and urban.

Develop models, methods and approaches to build organizational capacity at the community level to address family violence.

Encourage leadership programs to expand coverage on racism and diversity issues.

Encourage and expand minority-based leadership programs.

Lead Responsibility: Governor's office in conjunction with the Nebraska Association for Community Leadership Organizations and other nonprofit organizations, Department of Economic Development, Chambers of Commerce.

Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Goal Two, Objective One (continued)

- Action # 3 Develop pilot case coordination teams drawn from various agencies that focus on individual families to develop assistance strategies.
- Lead Responsibility: Nebraska Probation System, local school districts, Department of Social Services, Department of Public Institutions, Office of Juvenile Services and other state agencies.
- Timeline: 18 to 24 months.
- Action # 4 Develop model neighborhood-based prevention programs and test those models in several Nebraska communities (e.g., expanded neighborhood watch concepts, peer parent assistance programs).
- Lead Responsibility: University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, League of Nebraska Municipalities, Police Officers and Sheriffs Associations, Nebraska Crime Prevention Association, Department of Public Institutions.
- Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 5 Study ways to overcome loss of neighborhood-based focus that occurs with countervailing policies that are meeting other important needs, such as school desegregation.
- Lead Responsibility: Universities, Department of Economic Development (Nebraska Community Improvement Program), schools, churches, Nebraska College of Architecture.
- Timeline: 18 months.
- Action # 6 Develop plan to integrate all state-level planning efforts related to family violence and ensure broad community participation in this effort.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Office of Juvenile Services, Crime Commission, Court Administrator's Office, domestic violence coalitions, State Patrol, Police and Sheriffs Associations, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension.
- Timeline: 6 to 12 months.
- Action # 7 Identify cost factors associated with family violence and utilize them to educate the public, media, foundations and other possible funding sources, and other selected governmental and business organizations.
- Lead Responsibility: Crime Commission, domestic violence coalitions, Department of Economic Development, Nebraska State Data Center-University of Nebraska at Omaha.
- Timeline: 18 to 24 months.
- Action # 8 Encourage policy and administrative officials in agencies serving youth to gain an awareness of field operations.
- Lead Responsibility: State and local public policy decision makers.
- Timeline: 18 to 24 months.

Strategy # 2 Support and expand services to youth who are crime victims.

- Action # 1 Encourage use of telephone hotlines by youth to report their victimization and to use available victims' services.
Lead Responsibility: Crime Commission, Department of Public Institutions, community and nonprofit organizations.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 2 Identify jurisdictions without adequate victim services for youth and provide technical assistance in support of the development and expansion of such services.
Lead Responsibility: Crime Commission.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 3 Develop a statewide public education/media campaign that informs youth about the importance of reporting victimization and of using victim services.
Lead Responsibility: Crime Commission, Nebraska Crime Prevention Association.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months

Strategy # 3 Develop a comprehensive plan for linking community services

- Action # 1 Encourage local efforts to expand and build public/private coalitions directed at addressing family violence issues at the local level.
Lead Responsibility: Crime Commission, domestic violence coalitions.
Timeline: 18 to 24 months.
- Action # 2 Support the ongoing state level interagency team established to plan comprehensive efforts dealing with family preservation.
Lead Responsibility: Nebraska state agencies.
Timeline: Ongoing.

Strategy # 4 Educate and provide community support to all individuals working with families and children in youth violence issues.

- Action # 1 Develop short in-service training programs for all employees of schools, churches, new state employees of appropriate agencies and other service providers focused on family violence identification and referral.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 2 Develop innovative dissemination programs for information related to family violence. Include multilingual and multicultural components.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Crime Commission, Department of Public Institutions, Mexican American Commission, Indian Commission.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Goal Two, Objective One (continued)

- Action # 3 Expand and enhance training programs for youth that address family violence issues. Include violence prevention and mediation components.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Public Institutions, Department of Social Services, Department of Education, Nebraska Crime Prevention Association, local school districts.
- Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 4 Develop public relations programs which incorporate non-traditional approaches to reach and educate youth on family violence issues.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Department of Health.
- Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 5 Develop education programs directed at agencies and organizations about how to work with media to provide more coverage of the important job teachers and other providers perform and how critical they are to success in addressing family violence issues. Specifically, programs should be devoted to developing case stories with human interest which would be attractive to media.
- Lead Responsibility: Media associations, public relations organizations, journalism associations, Nebraska State Education Association, Nebraska Probation System, local school districts, advertising associations.
- Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Objective Two: Expand access to family services and programs.

Strategy # 1 Expand access to existing and alternative services for families and youth.

- Action # 1 Develop alternative models directed at rural areas that would improve and expand access to services. Include consideration of “minimum distance” requirements and technology applications in the model development.
- Lead Responsibility: Rural Development Commission, Department of Social Services, Department of Public Institutions, Nebraska Probation System Judges, Department of Education and local school districts, Office of Juvenile Services.
- Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 2 Develop a program to cross-train community members to provide support services/activities related to youth and family violence, and aimed at expanding the availability of professional services in underserved areas. Identification of abuse and methods to treat such abuse should be included.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Health, Department of Public Institutions, Department of Social Services, (University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center on Children, Families and the Law).
- Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Goal Two, Objective Two (continued)

- Action # 3 Study existing barriers to services and support for adolescents who may be prepared for independent living, including safe and affordable housing.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Governor's Children and Family Policy Office, Department of Public Institutions, Department of Economic Development.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 4 Conduct an analysis of the availability of access by adolescents of color to residential treatment facilities. Also include an analysis of therapeutic foster care, youth shelters and other treatment facilities, and the cultural sensitivity of service delivery.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Department of Public Institutions, community organizations.
Timeline: 18 to 24 months.
- Action # 5 Expand, and develop, if necessary, an inventory of services currently available for families and youth. Provide ready access to these inventories through use of technology including 800 service, Nebraska On-Line, and other means. Create a clearinghouse for information, technical assistance, organizational services, and resources focused on parenting, family/youth violence prevention and intervention.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Health, Department of Social Services, and other state agencies, Library Commission.
Timeline: 12 months.

Strategy # 2 Improve accessibility of agency services to families.

- Action # 1 Develop models that allow for satellite agency services to be located in or near schools. Considerations in developing the model include school design, programmatic design and the structure of program delivery.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, Crime Commission, Department of Health, Department of Public Institutions, Department of Social Services, local school districts.
Timeline: 18 to 24 months.

Objective Three: Build and restore cohesive communities.

Strategy # 1 Develop efforts to strengthen relations among all racial and ethnic groups.

- Action #1 Assess the availability of existing programs that foster an appreciation and understanding of different racial and ethnic groups.
Lead Responsibility: Community organizations, churches, government agencies.
Timeline: Ongoing.

Strategy # 2 Encourage and facilitate diverse representation in all levels of public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

Action # 1 Raise organizational decision-makers' awareness of the value of including diverse populations in all levels of their organizations.

Lead Responsibility: Community organizations, schools, universities, Chambers of Commerce, businesses, churches, government agencies.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Action # 2 Encourage organizational decision-makers to recruit, support, and promote diverse populations across all levels of their organization, especially levels where organizational decisions are made.

Lead Responsibility: Community organizations, schools universities, Chambers of Commerce, businesses, churches, government agencies.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Goal Three: Expand youth participation in community life.

Youth need greater involvement in the civic life of the community to know they are an essential part of the community and come to believe that they share responsibility for its well-being. Nebraska's youth are valued as part of community life, but the avenues for their participation in community life need to be expanded. We must provide a positive environment for youth in which they can provide service as well as learn life skills to equip them for adult responsibilities. Increasing interaction with adult mentors and role models will help to achieve this goal, as will involving youth in programs that develop self-esteem and teach civic responsibility.

Objective One: Provide a positive environment for youth development.

Strategy # 1 Develop and expand educational programs.

Action # 1 Promote service programs at the local level that emphasize mentoring, independent living skills, career education and peer-to-peer skill training.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, local school districts, School to Work, community nonprofit agencies, Nebraska Commission on Community Service, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension.

Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Action # 2 Expand and promote comprehensive health education programs for early childhood and grades K-12 and out-of-school youth. Address the impact of drugs, HIV/AIDS, teen pregnancy and other risk behaviors at appropriate developmental levels.

Lead Responsibility: Parents, churches, public schools, Department of Public Institutions, Department of Health, Department of Education, other

appropriate business and community organizations, nonprofit health organizations.

Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Strategy # 2 Provide access to programs with a positive environment.

Action # 1 Establish a clearinghouse in each community of all agencies and programs that educate youth (especially at-risk youth) in skills that prepare them for successful participation in the community. These services include, but are not limited to, teen centers, mentoring programs, business and community-based programs. The clearinghouse should describe the programs by eligibility, cost, and accessibility.

Lead Responsibility: University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, Library Commission, community-based coalitions.

Timeline: 6 to 12 months.

Action # 2 Support self-assessments by businesses, government, schools, nonprofit agencies, and other organizations which help them determine their level of support for a family friendly environment.

Lead Responsibility: Schools, social service, nonprofit and business organizations, Department of Economic Development/School to Work.

Timeline: 6 to 12 months.

Action # 3 Encourage employers to institute family-friendly policies and to allow employee community volunteer involvement serving youth at risk, such as mentoring programs.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Labor, Nebraska Probation System, Department of Economic Development/School to Work, Chambers of Commerce, state and local government agencies, community organizations.

Timeline: 6 to 12 months.

Objective Two: Expand opportunities for youth involvement in the community.

Strategy # 1 Provide alternative activities for youth.

Action # 1 Develop participatory programs in the arts for youth. Expand or strengthen existing programs if necessary.

Lead Responsibility: Organizations with arts programs aimed at youth, local parks and recreation programs.

Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Action # 2 Identify or establish community programs that provide opportunities for youth employment, especially during the summer. Where no programs exist, concerted efforts should be made to establish them, especially in rural areas.

Lead Responsibility: Business organizations, Department of Labor, Department of Economic Development/School to Work.

Timeline: 6 to 12 months.

Goal Three, Objective Two (continued)

- Action # 3 Identify and eliminate barriers to existing programs that serve youth at risk and youth offenders.
Perform a needs assessment to determine the resources needed to provide requisite services in areas where they are nonexistent, especially in rural areas.
Lead Responsibility: Office of Juvenile Services, Nebraska Probation System, Crime Commission, universities.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 4 Develop and encourage access to alternative education programs for youth.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, local school districts.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 5: Explore the availability and cost of daycare and latchkey programs for at risk youth. Remove existing barriers and educate parents on the effect and importance of constructive activities.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Health, Department of Education, Department of Social Services.
Timeline: 6 to 18 months.

Strategy # 2 Create voluntary and required community service programs for youth.

- Action # 1 Encourage public and private schools to include community service as a part of the secondary curriculum and a requirement for graduation.
Lead Responsibility: Local school boards, community and business organizations.
Timeline: 1995-96 academic year.

Objective Three: Increase adult-youth interaction.

Strategy # 1 Develop and expand mentoring programs with special emphasis on at-risk males.

- Action # 1 Encourage more mentoring relationships by volunteers.
Lead Responsibility: Community-based service organizations.
Timeline: Ongoing.
- Action # 2 Encourage more mentoring relationships by teachers, particularly male teachers.
Lead Responsibility: Local school districts, Department of Education, community based nonprofit agencies.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Goal Three, Objective Three (continued)

- Action # 3 Develop take-your-child-to-work day. Encourage individuals to take a son or daughter, niece or nephew, or neighbor to work to introduce the child to the work world.
- Youth without parents or sponsors should be “adopted” by other adults. Businesses should be encouraged to allow employees to “adopt” students recommended by the schools or courts.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, community-based nonprofit agencies, Department of Labor, Chambers of Commerce, parents.
- Timeline: 6 to 18 months.
- Action # 4 Develop conflict resolution and other programs that help males deal more effectively with anger, and that improve self images of males and females.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Public Institutions, Office of Dispute Resolution, Department of Education and local school districts, Department of Social Services.
- Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 5 Support and expand programs that focus on responsible male parenting, including non-custodial parents where it is appropriate.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, nonprofit agencies and community groups.
- Timeline: 12 months.

Strategy # 2 Encourage adult-youth interaction through community-based programs.

- Action # 1 Develop intergenerational programs that encourage mentoring relationships. Expand existing programs into areas where programs are nonexistent.
- Lead Responsibility: Department on Aging, Regional Councils on Aging, American Association of Retired Persons, Nebraska health care associations.
- Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 2: Involve youth in community organizations, committees and councils as policy advisors.
- Lead Responsibility: Nonprofit organizations, local government agencies, churches, community organizations.
- Timeline: 6 to 12 months.

Objective Four: Support programs which present positive images of youth.

Strategy # 1 Provide programs emphasizing a positive self-image and recognizing positive youth behaviors.

- Action # 1 Encourage agencies and organizations with existing programs to make concerted efforts to reach out to youth at risk.
- Encourage agencies with established programs to form partnerships with each other and local law enforcement agencies to provide weekend/evening programs.

Encourage agencies and organizations with existing programs to remove barriers, such as transportation, to participation.

Lead Responsibility: Social service agencies, nonprofit agencies, state wide law enforcement agencies.

Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Action # 2 Encourage local government units and the governor to develop a means of recognizing positive efforts by youth (especially those at risk) through various activities (e.g. student of the week, month, etc.).

Encourage the Unicameral to recognize one or more students each day when the legislature is in session. The names of youth are to be provided by schools, community organizations, and social service agencies.

Lead Responsibility: Governor's Office, League of Nebraska Municipalities, Nebraska Association of County Officials, Legislative Council/Unicameral, local news media, Unicameral, social service agencies.

Timeline: 6 to 12 months.

Strategy # 2 Expand youth leadership and skill development programs.

Action # 1 Encourage and expand the advice of youth (especially youth at risk) on anticipated and existing programs.

Lead Responsibility: Governor's Youth Advisory Council, State Community Leadership Development Association, Department of Public Institutions, Nebraska youth councils, Adolescent Health Advisory Council.

Timeline: 6 to 12 months.

Action # 2 Support and develop programs that would assist units of government, businesses and other organizations in providing work, volunteer, community service and other experiences for adolescents (especially those ages 13-15), to teach skills that are applicable in the work-force.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Labor, Private Industry Councils, Department of Economic Development/School to Work, Nebraska Association of County Officials, League of Nebraska Municipalities.

Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Action # 3 Give special recognition to organizations that provide work, volunteer, community service and other experiences to adolescents 13 to 15 years of age.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Labor, Private Industry Councils, Department of Economic Development/School to Work.

Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Action # 4 Develop programs to provide incentives to encourage youth to participate in marketable skills training.

Lead Responsibility: Nebraska Association of County Officials, Department of Labor, Department of Economic Development/School to Work.

Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Objective Five: Provide a positive environment for youth.

Strategy # 1 Develop and expand education programs for youth at risk.

- Action # 1 Develop and expand “life-skills” programs, beginning at the elementary level, that focus on career skills, healthy living, personal and daily living, decision-making and mediation skills.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Health, Crime Commission, Department of Education, local school districts.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 2 Expand preschool opportunities for youth at risk.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, local school districts, Good Beginnings, Head Start, Department of Social Services.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 3 Develop tutoring and mentoring programs to assist Head Start graduates through grade 12.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, local school districts.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 4 Develop a parent training model for divorcing couples to minimize negative impact of the divorce on children.
Lead Responsibility: Court Administrator’s Office, Department of Social Services, District Court Judges Association, Bar Association, Office of Dispute Resolution.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Objective Six: Develop employment opportunities for youth.

Strategy # 1 Educate youth about job and career opportunities.

- Action # 1 Identify and eliminate barriers to existing youth employment programs.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Labor, Department of Education.
Timeline: 6 to 18 months.
- Action # 2 Develop a coordinated approach to the dissemination of information regarding youth employment programs.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Labor, Department of Social Services, Department of Economic Development/School to Work, Department of Education, local school districts.
Timeline: 6 to 18 months.

- Action # 3 Redesign comprehensive job programs to make them more attractive and available to youth at risk by:
- a. involving youth, especially youth at risk, in the planning process.
 - b. educating youth on the value of job training to their future.
 - c. improving the quality of experiences for youth in existing programs through pre-employment and work maturity training, basic educational skills training, and job-specific skill training.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Labor, Department of Social Services, Department of Economic Development.
- Timeline: 6 to 18 months.

Strategy # 2 Increase partnerships between businesses and schools to increase job readiness for youth.

- Action # 1 Support and expand subsidized, low cost, or free community college educations for those youth who are economically disadvantaged and at risk.
- Lead Responsibility: Nebraska Association of Community Colleges, Department of Education, Department of Labor, foundations, Department of Economic Development/School to Work.
- Timeline: 18 to 24 months.
- Action # 2 Support businesses that create work opportunities, and provide scholarships for youth at risk.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Economic Development, business organizations.
- Timeline: 18 to 24 months.
- Action # 3 Develop or expand public-private efforts that support the Nebraska Education 2000 initiative which assures youth readiness for jobs.
- Lead Responsibility: Nebraska Association of Community Colleges, State Department of Education, Governor's Policy Research Office, State Chamber of Commerce, Department of Economic Development, Department of Labor, local school districts.
- Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 4 Support and expand partnerships between businesses and schools to provide mentors, and teach skills that are requisite to the work world.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, local school districts, Department of Labor, Department of Economic Development/School to Work, Nebraska Training Partnership, Chambers of Commerce.
- Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Goal Four: Increase Nebraska’s capacity to strengthen families.

Strengthening families is a fundamental goal to effectively address the problem of youth violence. Early intervention must assist families to identify and solve problems. Comprehensive programs must empower parents to address negative behaviors in the home. Schools, law enforcement and social service agencies must increase their capacity to respond to family violence. Additionally, we must provide the necessary means to help parents fulfill their responsibility to raise their children to be productive members of society.

Objective One: Develop comprehensive approaches to family education and support systems.

Strategy # 1 Develop joint efforts to identify and solve family violence problems.

Action # 1 Develop and provide access to information data bases that will provide court appointed caseworkers or case managers with comprehensive case information on individuals (youth and family members) who come in contact with the justice system.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Judges Associations, Nebraska Probation System, Office of Juvenile Services, Department of Public Institutions.

Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Action # 2 Expand and develop education and wellness programs as well as incentives to build private, employer-based involvement in addressing issues of youth violence.

Lead Responsibility: Business organizations, Department of Health, Department of Public Institutions, Wellness Council of the Midlands.

Timeline: 18 months.

Action # 3 Develop and expand respite support programs for families at risk.

Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Department of Public Institutions, Nebraska Commission on the Protection of Children, churches, other nonprofit organizations.

Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Objective Two: Increase the capacity of law enforcement and social agencies to handle family violence.

Strategy # 1 Increase the capacity to serve those in need.

Action # 1 Expand the statewide availability of law enforcement training on issues related to family violence, including the identification of signs of abuse.

Lead Responsibility: Crime Commission, Department of Social Services, and other law enforcement training agencies.

Timeline: Ongoing.

Goal Four, Objective Two (continued)

- Action # 2 Support and expand training for court appointed child guardians in areas related to family violence.
Lead Responsibility: Court Administrator's Office, Judges Associations, Department of Social Services, Foster Care Review Board, Permanency Planning Task Force.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 3 Study current out-of-home placements and develop a plan for alternative environments for youth who must be removed from the home.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Department of Public Institutions, County Judges' Association, Juvenile Court Judges Association, Nebraska Probation System.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action # 4 Decrease the frequency of multiple placements for youth in foster care, and other out-of-home placements.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Foster Care Review Board, Department of Public Institutions.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 5 Provide support for training and other programs that enhance foster parenting.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Public Institutions, Department of Social Services.
Timeline: Ongoing.
- Action # 6 Support and expand programs to provide parenting classes for individuals outside of the educational system and provide incentives for attendance.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Health, Nebraska Cooperative Extension, Department of Health, Department of Public Institutions, Department of Social Services, community action agencies, other nonprofit agencies, Good Beginnings, community colleges.
Timeline: 18 to 24 months.

Strategy # 2 Utilize schools to improve accessibility of agency services to families and provide coordinated delivery of services at the community level.

- Action # 1 Assist schools in becoming community resource centers for families. This initiative should include social service agencies, treatment programs, and police services.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, local boards of education, Crime Commission, Governor's Children and Family Policy Office, Department of Social Services, Department of Public Institutions, Department of Health.
Timeline: 18 to 24 months.

Goal Four, Objective Two (continued)

- Action # 2 Study the possibility of providing school-based services in rural communities, through regional service centers and circuit riding social service and health professionals and the use of technology.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, Department of Public Institutions, Department of Health, Department of Social Services.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.
- Action #3 Encourage existing school-based interagency teams to expand their scope to include youth violence prevention and intervention activities.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, local school boards, and other state and local agencies.
Timeline: 6 to 12 months.
- Action # 4 Expand the role of school-community liaisons to provide contact with parents, follow-up truancy, and provide other case management services among community, school and families.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, local school boards.
Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Objective Three: Develop approaches to reinforce parental responsibility for children.

Strategy # 1 Create or expand voluntary programs which encourage parental responsibility.

- Action # 1 Support and expand the “Good Beginnings” initiative that promotes community-based prenatal, infant and early childhood programs
Lead Responsibility: Department of Social Services, Department of Health, Department of Education, other state and community agencies.
Timeline: Ongoing.
- Action # 2 Develop a marketing strategy to promote parental responsibility.
Lead Responsibility: Community organizations, churches in conjunction with the media, Good Beginnings.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.
- Action # 3 Study access to programs and information that help parents of older children improve their understanding of teens and carry out their responsibilities.
Develop community models, test sites, and programs that support parents with teenaged youth.
Lead Responsibility: Community organizations, churches in conjunction with the media, Nebraska Family Resource Center, Community Colleges, Department of Social Services, University of Nebraska Cooperative Extension, Department of Health, association of health professionals.
Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

- Action # 4 Encourage and expand the development and use of programs that foster effective parent-teacher relationships.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, Nebraska State Education Association, public and private boards of education, parent-teacher organizations.
- Timeline: 12 to 18 months.

Objective Four: Strengthen parent resources.

Strategy # 1 Create and expand programs directed at connecting families to the economic vitality of the community.

- Action # 1 Support businesses and organizations that create jobs, enabling parents to support their children.
- Lead responsibility: Department of Economic Development, Department of Labor, businesses.
- Timeline: Ongoing.
- Action # 2 Encourage employers to offer comprehensive benefits and support for child care.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Economic Development, Department of Labor, businesses.
- Timeline: Ongoing.
- Action # 3 Encourage participation in literacy programs for parents, especially for those who speak English as a second language.
- Lead Responsibility: Department of Labor, Department of Education, nonprofit and community organizations.
- Timeline: Ongoing.

Goal Five: Strengthen individual and community values.

Nebraskans must recognize that government, business, education, the media, and the entertainment industries have a role in enhancing individual and community self-worth. Strong individual and community values, and programs which promote resiliency among youth, will help overcome problems associated with youth violence. Such programs should include efforts to develop character, respect for people and property, and the capacity to accept personal responsibility.

Objective One: Stress the value of community.

Strategy # 1 Expand governmental and non-governmental roles in supporting positive values affecting families.

- Action # 1 Counter the culture of violence by educating individuals about the value of community.
- Lead Responsibility: State leadership associations, Neighborhood Watch groups, Nebraska Crime Prevention Association.
- Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Objective Two: Emphasize and strengthen moral values.

Strategy # 1 Develop programs to emphasize respect for people and property.

- Action # 1 Encourage programs (which serve youth) that promote positive values such as fairness, honesty, respect for property, and respect for people of all racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.
- Lead Responsibility: Churches, nonprofit organizations, community organizations, schools and government agencies.
- Timeline: Ongoing.
- Action # 2 Develop programs that encourage parents to convey to their youth positive values such as respect for people of all racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.
- Lead Responsibility: Churches, nonprofit organizations, community organizations.
- Timeline: Ongoing.
- Action # 3 Support and encourage programs that develop self-worth and personal responsibility.
- Lead Responsibility: Churches, nonprofit organizations, community organizations, schools and government agencies.
- Timeline: Ongoing.

Objective Three: Examine media's approach to youth violence.

Strategy #1 Encourage media and entertainment industry to examine its approach to youth violence.

- Action #1 Encourage media to be sensitive to the issue of local violence and to focus on proactive people and/or programs dealing with violence in the community.
- Lead Responsibility: Local media, judges, probation officers, law enforcement officials, and attorneys.
- Timeline: 6 to 12 months.
- Action #2 Encourage the entertainment industry to decrease the number of violent acts presented.
- Lead Responsibility: Parents, parent organizations, and other consumers.
- Timeline: 12 to 24 months.

Strategy #2 Educate consumers on the influence of violent programming on youth.

- Action #1 Appoint a task force focusing on the issue of the influence of violent programming on youth.
Lead Responsibility: Statewide parents' organizations (PTA, etc.), church organizations, media organizations, universities.
Timeline: 6 to 12 months.
- Action #2 Disseminate findings from the task force to consumers and the media and entertainment industry.
Lead Responsibility: Office of Juvenile Services and other state and local agencies.
Timeline: After task force makes its decisions.

Objective Four: Support dispute resolution training.

Strategy # 1 Support and/or develop programs using alternative dispute resolution.

- Action # 1 Develop several (interagency or community partnerships) pilot projects to educate and structure violence intervention by using alternative dispute resolution techniques.
Lead Responsibility: Office of Dispute Resolution, Department of Justice.
Timeline: 6 to 12 months.
- Action # 2 Encourage the development of dispute resolution programs for teachers and students starting in the middle schools.
Lead Responsibility: Office of Dispute Resolution, Department of Education, Crime Commission, local school districts.
Timeline: 12 to 36 months.
- Action # 3 Increase the training of teachers in dispute resolution and classroom management techniques.
Lead Responsibility: Department of Education, colleges and universities, Office of Dispute Resolution, local school districts.

Appendixes

Appendix 1. Juvenile Arrests by Offense: 1989-1992

	1989	1990	1991	1992	Percent Change 1989-1992
Part I:					
Murder, manslaughter	9	5	8	6	-33.3
Death by negligence	1	2	2	0	-100.0
Forcible rape	44	31	24	34	-22.7
Robbery	72	65	71	113	56.9
Felony assault	94	100	123	124	31.9
Burglary	591	616	617	703	19.0
Larceny-theft	4,125	4,088	4,193	4,500	9.1
Motor vehicle theft	228	220	291	286	25.4
Arson	59	61	74	111	88.1
Total Part I	5,223	5,188	5,403	5,877	12.5
Part II:					
Misdemeanor assault	886	952	1,161	1,293	45.9
Forgery/counterfeiting	80	73	59	79	-1.3
Fraud/obtaining money by false pretense	100	64	94	84	-16.0
Embezzlement	5	5	8	4	-20.0
Stolen property	323	289	335	539	66.9
Vandalism	1,038	1,091	1,291	1,343	29.4
Weapons – carrying/possessing	223	217	189	266	19.3
Prostitution/commercial vice	9	9	3	4	-55.6
Sex offenses	74	84	132	131	77.0
Drug abuse violations	377	269	262	292	-22.5
Gambling	4	4	5	1	-75.0
Offenses against family/children	19	6	16	8	-57.9
Driving under the influence	252	293	256	223	-11.5
Liquor laws	2,506	2,582	2,364	2,272	-9.3
Disorderly conduct	572	534	612	584	2.1
Vagrancy	3	4	6	27	800.0
All other offenses	1,632	1,616	2,157	2,039	24.9
Curfew/loitering laws	512	491	668	473	-7.6
Runaways	372	521	500	452	21.5
Total Part II	8,987	9,104	10,118	10,114	12.5
Total	14,210	14,292	15,521	15,991	12.5

Source: *Juveniles and Violence in Nebraska*, September 1993, Nebraska Crime Commission.

Appendix 2. Juvenile Arrests by Age: 1989-1992

Age	1989	1990	1991	1992	Percent Change 1989-1992
Under 10	438	389	447	443	1.1
10-12	1,509	1,450	1,630	1,660	10.0
13-14	2,867	2,756	3,355	3,638	26.9
15	2,144	2,239	2,434	2,613	21.9
16	3,076	3,277	3,607	3,396	10.4
17	4,176	4,181	4,048	4,241	1.6
Total	14,210	14,292	15,521	15,991	12.5

Source: *Juveniles and Violence in Nebraska*, September 1993, Nebraska Crime Commission.

*Of the total change in arrests whites accounted for 67 percent, African Americans 19 percent, Native Americans 12 percent.

Appendix 3. Juvenile Court Cases* by Selected Characteristics: 1989-1992

	1989	1990	1991	1992
Total Cases	5,977	5,462	5,893	6,775
Offense Category:				
Major	3,557	3,207	3,494	3,992
Minor/status	1,427	1,253	1,236	1,336
Neglect/dependent	993	1,002	1,158	1,427
Sex of Defendant:				
Female	1,692	1,541	1,678	1,871
Male	4,285	3,921	4,215	4,884
Age of Defendant:				
Under 10	774	689	723	963
10-12	548	489	595	665
13-14	1,335	1,262	1,506	1,638
15	1,056	1,020	1,140	1,228
16	1,155	996	1,091	1,197
17 and over	1,109	1,006	838	1,064
Selected Offenses:†				
Assault - 1st/2nd degree	34	34	45	51
Assault - 3rd degree	306	321	382	485
Sexual assault - 1st degree	38	28	27	31
Sexual assault 2nd degree	24	33	40	64
Weapons offense - felony	11	13	12	13
Weapons offense - misdemeanor	31	45	34	49

Source: *Juveniles and Violence in Nebraska*, September 1993, Nebraska Crime Commission.

*Cases which have reached disposition after a petition has been filed.

†Numbers of cases for selected offenses only, not for total cases.

Youth Violence In Nebraska Questionnaire

*** If you have previously responded to this questionnaire, please discard ***

Please return the Youth Violence in Nebraska Questionnaire in the enclosed envelope to the Center for Public Affairs Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, Nebraska 68182 by March 21, 1994. Thank You.

First, please tell us a little about you.

ZIP CODE _____

COUNTY _____

RACE/ETHNICITY White _____

 African American/Black _____

 Asian (Oriental) _____

 Native American _____

 Hispanic _____

 Other _____

GENDER Male _____

 Female _____

PROFESSIONAL ROLE _____

This survey consists of two major parts. In part I, we are asking your assistance in rating various risk factors that have previously been identified as possible contributors to youth violence in Nebraska. Please rate the importance of each factor by using a 5 point rating scale where 1 is the lowest rating and 5 is the highest.

Part I

Key Risk Factors Affecting Youth Violence	Risk Factor Importance (please circle)				
	Least Important 1	2	3	4	Most Important 5
1. Economic disadvantages (youth)	1	2	3	4	5
2. High level of marital and family conflict and/or family violence	1	2	3	4	5
3. Parents with inadequate education	1	2	3	4	5
4. High unemployment or underemployment (youth)	1	2	3	4	5
5. Low self-esteem	1	2	3	4	5
6. Emotional problems	1	2	3	4	5

Key Risk Factors Affecting Youth Violence	Risk Factor Importance (please circle)				
	Least Important				Most Important
	1	2	3	4	5
7. Inadequate housing	1	2	3	4	5
8. Teenage pregnancy	1	2	3	4	5
9. Low educational levels/drop-outs (youth)	1	2	3	4	5
10. Lack of bonding to society	1	2	3	4	5
11. Early tobacco use and abuse	1	2	3	4	5
12. Early alcohol use and abuse	1	2	3	4	5
13. Illegal drug use and abuse	1	2	3	4	5
14. Sense of hopelessness	1	2	3	4	5
15. Resistance to authority	1	2	3	4	5
16. Parental abuse and neglect of children	1	2	3	4	5
17. Rebelliousness and nonconformity	1	2	3	4	5
18. Lack of values	1	2	3	4	5
19. Unemployed or underemployed parents	1	2	3	4	5
20. Lack of social skills	1	2	3	4	5
21. Parental absenteeism due to separation, divorce, or death	1	2	3	4	5
22. Lack of family religiosity	1	2	3	4	5
23. Rejection by school or peers	1	2	3	4	5
24. Lack of leisure time activities	1	2	3	4	5
25. Media glamorization and high advertisement of violence	1	2	3	4	5
26. Low achievement expectations from society	1	2	3	4	5
27. Lack of positive role models	1	2	3	4	5
28. Family history of alcohol and other drug use and abuse	1	2	3	4	5
29. Inconsistent discipline	1	2	3	4	5
30. Inadequate parenting skills	1	2	3	4	5
31. Low parent/child contact	1	2	3	4	5
32. Lack of clear rules, norms, culture	1	2	3	4	5
33. Inadequate counseling and treatment services in juvenile justice systems	1	2	3	4	5
34. Lack of coping, problem-solving, and refusal skills	1	2	3	4	5
35. Inadequate health and social services	1	2	3	4	5

Key Risk Factors Affecting Youth Violence	Risk Factor Importance (please circle)				
	Least Important				Most Important
	1	2	3	4	5
36. Easy availability, low costs (drugs)	1	2	3	4	5
37. Easy availability, low costs (firearms)	1	2	3	4	5
38. Lack of a positive community	1	2	3	4	5
39. Minority status involving:					
Cultural alienation	1	2	3	4	5
Cultural language barriers to getting adequate health care and other social services	1	2	3	4	5
40. System Factors:					
Overburdened juvenile justice system	1	2	3	4	5
Lack of transportation to programs and services	1	2	3	4	5
Distance to nearest available service	1	2	3	4	5
Not early enough identification of youth at risk	1	2	3	4	5
Inadequate law enforcement resources	1	2	3	4	5

Notation:

Please use the space provided below to identify any other factors not listed above that you feel will impact on youth violence in the future.

Part II

In this part of the survey we are asking you to help identify various programs or services that focus on the key risk factors you rated in Part I. Please list up to ten programs you believe successfully address youth violence and list the numbers from Part I that correspond with the risk factors these programs address.

Program Name	Contact Person	Address	Phone #	Risk Factors Addressed (#'s)

Notation:

Please use the space provided below to list the name and address of three other individuals you believe should be sent this survey. The individuals listed should be able to add information to our understanding of youth violence. In addition, we need your assistance in helping identify youth you feel should be invited to participate in the "PACT" meetings.

P.S. If you are interested in attending any of the "PACT" meetings addressed in your cover letter, please return the enclosed registration card.

Appendix 5. Youth Violence in Nebraska Survey, March 1994

Key Risk Factors Affecting Youth Violence, rated 1 to 5
(1 = least important, 5 = most important)

Mean	Standard Deviation	Number of Responses	Question
3.39	1.06	679	Q1 Economic disadvantages (youth)
4.45	0.79	685	Q2 High level of marital and family conflict and/or family violence
2.96	1.03	683	Q3 Parents with inadequate education
3.40	1.03	682	Q4 High unemployment or underemployment (youth)
3.99	0.97	680	Q5 Low self-esteem
3.87	0.95	684	Q6 Emotional problems
2.78	0.96	682	Q7 Inadequate housing
3.21	1.17	683	Q8 Teenage pregnancy
3.85	0.97	682	Q9 Low educational levels/drop-outs (youth)
3.93	1.03	674	Q10 Lack of bonding to society
2.75	1.17	684	Q11 Early tobacco use and abuse
3.99	0.94	686	Q12 Early alcohol use and abuse
4.19	0.93	684	Q13 Illegal drug use and abuse
3.96	0.99	684	Q14 Sense of hopelessness
3.99	0.99	684	Q15 Resistance to authority
4.29	0.86	685	Q16 Parental abuse and neglect of children
3.60	1.04	682	Q17 Rebelliousness and nonconformity
4.23	0.89	679	Q18 Lack of values
3.30	1.01	681	Q19 Unemployed or underemployed parents
3.50	0.97	683	Q20 Lack of social skills
3.77	1.02	685	Q21 Parental absenteeism due to separation, divorce, or death
3.38	1.16	681	Q22 Lack of family religiosity
3.48	1.00	682	Q23 Rejection by school or peers
2.99	1.16	681	Q24 Lack of leisure time activities
3.93	1.09	684	Q25 Media glamorization and high advertisement of violence
3.40	1.05	684	Q26 Low achievement expectations from society
3.82	1.02	684	Q27 Lack of positive role models
4.08	0.91	685	Q28 Family history of alcohol and other drug use and abuse
3.90	0.91	682	Q29 Inconsistent discipline
4.08	0.89	683	Q30 Inadequate parenting skills
4.01	0.90	684	Q31 Low parent/child contact
4.07	0.93	681	Q32 Lack of clear rules, norms, culture
3.56	1.13	677	Q33 Inadequate counseling and treatment services in juvenile justice systems
3.77	0.99	678	Q34 Lack of coping, problem-solving, and refusal skills
2.98	1.08	682	Q35 Inadequate health and social services
3.64	1.08	685	Q36 Easy availability, low costs (drugs)
3.59	1.26	681	Q37 Easy availability, low costs (firearms)
3.39	1.15	670	Q38 Lack of a positive community
3.15	1.13	672	Q39A Minority status involving: Cultural alienation
2.77	1.11	672	Q39B Minority status involving: Cultural language barriers to getting adequate health care and other social services
3.57	1.16	681	Q40A System factors: Overburdened juvenile justice system
2.89	1.18	676	Q40B System factors: Lack of transportation to programs and services
2.92	1.20	676	Q40C System factors: Distance to nearest available service
3.56	1.21	674	Q40D System factors: Not early enough identification of youth at risk
3.23	1.16	676	Q40E System factors: Inadequate law enforcement resources

