



Dear fellow citizen,

The Maricopa County Attorney’s office has a Gang Bureau that uses an arsenal of laws to ensure gang members are locked up and kept far away from our communities. Our specially trained, experienced attorneys work in partnership with law enforcement authorities to protect neighborhoods and communities by holding these criminals accountable for their actions.

Street gangs are not new to Arizona. But they have become more visible and more violent than in the past. Gangs today fight “turf wars” with guns more often than muscle.

Gang members are also involved in a range of other crimes that harm our communities, from graffiti and burglary to drug trafficking, assault, rape and even murder. Victims range from innocent children to the elderly.

Despite the legal and life threatening consequences of gang membership, far too many teens are still drawn to the perceived glamour of the gang lifestyle. For many young people, being in a gang offers a sense of identity and power. This brochure lists the warning signs of potential gang involvement by young people as well as resources for victims of gang related crime.

By working together as a community partners we can make a difference in reducing gang violence and making these crimes a thing of the past.

Sincerely,

Bill Montgomery

Bill Montgomery
Maricopa County Attorney

RESOURCES

Crime Stop

Report gang activity in your neighborhood
(602) 262-6151

Graffiti Busters Hotline

Assistance with graffiti removal
(602) 262-7327

Statewide Hotline

1(888) NO-GANGS (888-664-2647)

Chandler Police

480) 782-4540

Gilbert Police

(480) 503-6527

Glendale Police

(623) 930-4264

Mesa Police

(480) 644-GANG (4264)

Paradise Valley Police

(480) 948-7410

Phoenix Police

(602) 532-4264

Scottsdale Police

(480) 312-5000

Tempe Police

(480) 350-8501

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GANG VIOLENCE



- What is a Gang?
- Crimes Related to Gang Activity
- What To Do If You Are a Victim
- Warning Signs in Youth
- Where You Can Go For Help



BILL MONTGOMERY
Maricopa County Attorney

WHAT IS A GANG?

A gang is any group of individuals who unite for the purpose of engaging in criminal activity. Once considered an inner-city problem limited to low-income families, gangs are now found in suburban and rural communities as well. All race, gender, age, geographic, or socioeconomic groups are susceptible. The common misconception that gang members are poor kids from severely dysfunctional families has been exposed as a myth by today's gang members from affluent two-parent homes. All gangs share one common characteristic: they use intimidation, force, and fear to control our neighborhoods and communities.

CRIMES RELATED TO GANG ACTIVITY

Gang activity is increasingly connected with the violent crimes of murder, sexual assault, and drive-by shootings. However, gang activity can include a spectrum of crimes from simple vandalism and graffiti to burglary, thefts, armed robbery, kidnapping, and drug dealing.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE A VICTIM

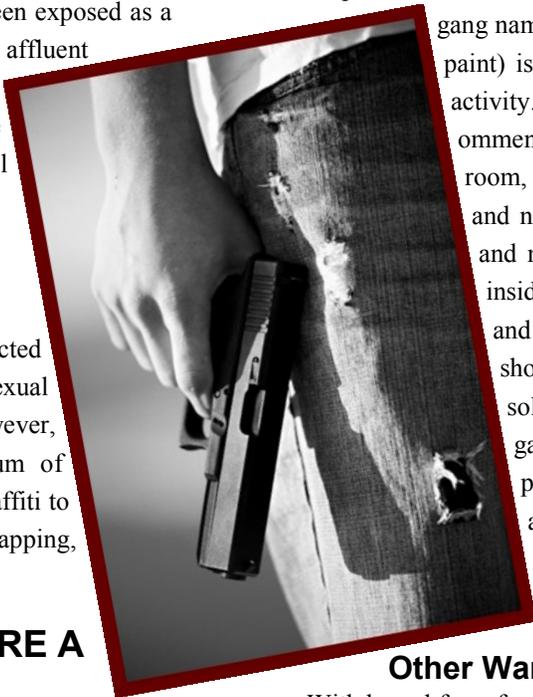
Cooperation with the police and prosecutor is essential in bringing gang members to justice. Legal intervention may prevent friends, family, and other community members from becoming victims of gang violence. If you or someone you know is a victim of gang violence:

- If you are in an emergency situation call 911;
- Get yourself to safety;
- Do not confront the person who has committed the crime against you; instead, notify the police immediately;

- Write down or take notice of the suspect's physical appearance and clothing; and
- If a vehicle is involved, note the model, color, and license number of the vehicle.

WARNING SIGNS IN YOUTH

Young people who become involved in gangs will often attempt to hide it from their parents. Graffiti (drawing gang names and symbols, often with spray paint) is the most common sign of gang activity. Law enforcement agencies recommend that you check your child's room, furniture, school books, papers, and notebooks for gang names, logos, and nicknames. Check their clothing, inside waist bands, necklines, cuffs, and sleeves. Also, check inside shoes, including the shoe tongue, sole, and sides. If your child has gang information written in these places, then he/she is very likely associating with gangs. Look for and deal with warning signs early and often.



Other Warning Signs:

- Withdrawal from family and normal activities;
- Staying out late at night or engaging in secretive activities;
- Sudden changes in personality and behavior;
- Selecting or wearing the same color and style of clothes every day;
- New friends that you don't approve of;
- Unexplained body markings, injuries, or tattoos;
- Unexplained gifts of jewelry, money, or expensive items;

- Possession of weapons;
- Use of body gestures and hand signs to communicate with friends.

WHERE YOU CAN GO FOR HELP

Victim Assistance

When a person is charged with a crime by the Maricopa County Attorney, victims are contacted by the Victim Services Division. Victim advocates provide victims' rights information, social service referrals, criminal justice system information, court escorts, transportation, and relocation assistance, if needed. For further information call (602) 506-8522.

Victim Compensation

If you are the victim of gang violence committed in Maricopa County, you may be eligible for victim compensation. The Victim Compensation Program is designed to assist you with crime-related expenses. You can apply for victim compensation to cover crime-related medical expenses, funeral expenses, mental health counseling, and lost wages. You may be eligible for victim compensation if you: report the crime and cooperate with law enforcement agencies and file an application with the Victim Compensation Bureau within two years of the date of the crime. To file a victim compensation claim, contact the Victim Compensation Bureau at (602) 506-4955.