

TOPIC as described in survey results:

Effectiveness of youth programming efforts and investments across departments in responding to youth violence; how to adapt our efforts to reach those at greatest risk.

A. Scope

This topic is too broad to be studied effectively and affordably. Trying to span all age groups is too broad a focus. The scope needs to be reduced to focus on one measurable and manageable subject area. Also, the youth age group needs to be identified.

The following are 3 options to consider:

1. **Program evaluation** – existing program such as Right Track, Sprockets, etc.
2. **Best practice review** – existing programs that are showing positive results for a certain age group
3. **Literature search and review of current effective strategies for addressing youth concerns** –
 - an age group will need to be identified. For example, what are experts saying are the most effective ways of preparing pre-K children to get ready to learn.
 - Are these theories practiced in St. Paul’s current pre-K programming?

B. Cost Estimate of Study

Unknown at this time. The more broadly the scope is constructed, the more the study will cost.

C. Ability to Effect Change

1. **Policy** –
 - Medium – Programs may be changed or eliminated as a result of evaluation. Program development efforts may become more effectively targeted.
 - This area is mostly ungoverned by local codes and state statutes, but they may involve grant program guidelines.
 - Policies and performance expectations are embedded in the city’s budget or grant programs.
 - More effective outcomes for youth would be key metric.
2. **Budget** –
 - Depends on results of study if programmatic changes are indicated.

D. Study Approach – see scope (above)

E. Key Challenges

1. **Effect of program versus environment or participant characteristics** –
 - Most youth programs try to prevent a young person from leading an unproductive and unhappy life. **Prevention** is difficult to identify and quantify. How many youths did a program successfully prevent from going in a bad direction? Did a program reach the ‘hard-to-reach’ and most at risk youth, or, did it only reach those who were easy to find

to join a program? Is it success if a program reached only one 'hard to reach' youth rather than 10 easy to reach?

2. **Performance measured according to varying goals –**

- Which expectations are the goals? At times, a neighborhood or community goal differs from what a government's goal is. Which goal should prevail? Reaching a consensus on program goals is needed before any audit or program evaluation can be done.

F. Next Steps

1. Define specific focus of project.
2. Identify the goals of the focus area.
3. Determine how success will be defined.
4. Research and analyze the focus area in terms of which goals are reached and which ones need improvement. (this step is done by the consultant)