

GRIT: Gang Response Intervention Team

- **What You Can Do to Help Prevent Gang Activity**

What is GRIT?

GRIT is a multi-agency, multi-discipline team charged with coordinating the suppression, intervention, prevention and overall reduction of street gang activity within Loudoun County. By utilizing the expertise of the associated agencies, the team will identify at risk youth, gang members, and gang activity. The GRIT coordinates, develops and supports services to at risk youth, their families and communities. The GRIT is actively involved with the Northern Virginia Gang Task Force's Prevention, Intervention and Education initiatives.

Loudoun County government agencies that are members of the team include the Commonwealth's Attorney, the Community Corrections Program, County Administrator's Office, Family Services, Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court Service Unit, Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Parks, Recreation and Community Services, Sheriff's Office, and Loudoun Youth Initiative. Other member agencies are the Leesburg Police Department, the Leesburg Department of Parks and Recreation, Loudoun Public Schools and the local Adult Probation and Parole District of the Virginia Department of Corrections.

The GRIT provides information on gang intervention and prevention programs and services. The GRIT is also the point of contact for community-based educational programming, gang awareness presentations, and seminars.

What You Can Do

Signs of Gang Activity

First, it's helpful to know the signs of gang membership and activity. They include:

- Common dress/colors within a group
- Graffiti and graffiti-type artwork in notebooks or on walls
- Common tattoos within a group
- Use of hand signs
- Refers to friends as "family"

What Community Members Can Do

- Refrain from the use of specific gang names, as it aids in gang recruitment
- Become involved in community organizations and coalitions that promote positive activities for youth
- Be a positive role model for youth
- Maintain a working relationship with community policing officers and aid in establishing programs such as Neighborhood Watch

What Parents Can Do

- Educate yourself on signs of activity
- Talk to your kids about gangs
- Be involved in their lives
- Get to know their friends and where they go
- Pay attention to behavioral changes such as the way they dress, change in grades, changes in school attendance and the company they keep

- Pay attention to the music they are listening to, the web sites/chat rooms they are visiting and the type of art/posters in their room

What the Business Community Can Do

- Remove graffiti as soon as possible so it is no longer visible
- Report any possible gang activity/graffiti to law enforcement
- Enforce "No Trespass/Barment" notices
- If you have a surveillance system, ensure that it functions properly and is recording
- Correct outside lighting problems
- Start and/or enforce a "no gang colors" policy in your establishment

For More Information

For more information about GRIT, contact:

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A GRIT brochure is also available online for you to download.

- [Gang Response and Intervention Team Brochure](#)

Information about how GRIT came to be formed is also online:

- [Background on GRIT](#)

GRIT Members

Loudoun County

- [Commonwealth's Attorney](#)
- [Community Corrections](#)
- [County Administration](#)
- [Family Services](#)
- [Fire Marshal](#)
- [Juvenile Court Services](#)
- [Mental Health/Mental Retardation/Substance Abuse Services](#)
- [Parks, Recreation and Community Services](#)
- [Public Schools](#)
- [Sheriff's Office](#)

Leesburg

- [Parks and Recreation](#)
- [Police Department](#)

Commonwealth of Virginia

- [Adult Probation & Parole](#)

Other Resources

- **Loudoun Youth Initiative**
- **National Crime Prevention Council**
- **National Gang Crime Research Center**
- **National Youth Gang Center**