



# Department of County Human Services



MULTNOMAH  
COUNTY

Safe, healthy, caring and diverse communities where hope, independence, learning and opportunity prevail for all.

# DEFENDING CHILDHOOD PROTECT HEAL THRIVE

Board of County Commissioners Briefing  
June 16, 2011

# Presentation Overview

- Information on the Defending Childhood Initiative
- Findings from local community assessment
- Plan for implementation over next three years

# Defending Childhood Initiative

- OJJDP grant to address epidemic of children's exposure to violence through prevention, intervention, public awareness
  - All forms of violence, birth-17
  - Direct victimization and witnessing
- National survey ([http://web.multco.us/sites/default/files/defending-childhood/documents/03-national\\_children\\_exposed\\_to\\_violence\\_survey.pdf](http://web.multco.us/sites/default/files/defending-childhood/documents/03-national_children_exposed_to_violence_survey.pdf))
  - 60% of children exposed to violence
  - 40% exposed to multiple forms of violence
    - Extreme risk of lifelong negative consequences

# Multnomah County Participation

- Chosen last fall as one of 8 demonstration sites for one-year planning grant
- DCHS led broad collaborative process involving multiple systems and agencies across the county
  - Court, law enforcement, school districts, non-profits, child welfare, service providers
  - Led by Commissioner Judy Shiprack

# National Research Findings

- Exposure to violence far more common than assumed, across all socio-economic strata
- Exposure to multiple forms of violence poses highest risk of trauma
- Untreated trauma in childhood linked to significant difficulties in adulthood

# Community Assessment: Key Findings

- Demographic Shifts
  - Growth areas of County have shifted East
  - Fastest growing population groups are communities of color, who now comprise about 26% of total population (45% of school-aged children)
- Poverty
  - Number of families living in poverty is increasing across the County; poverty is associated with childhood exposure to violence

# Most Prevalent Forms of Violence Locally

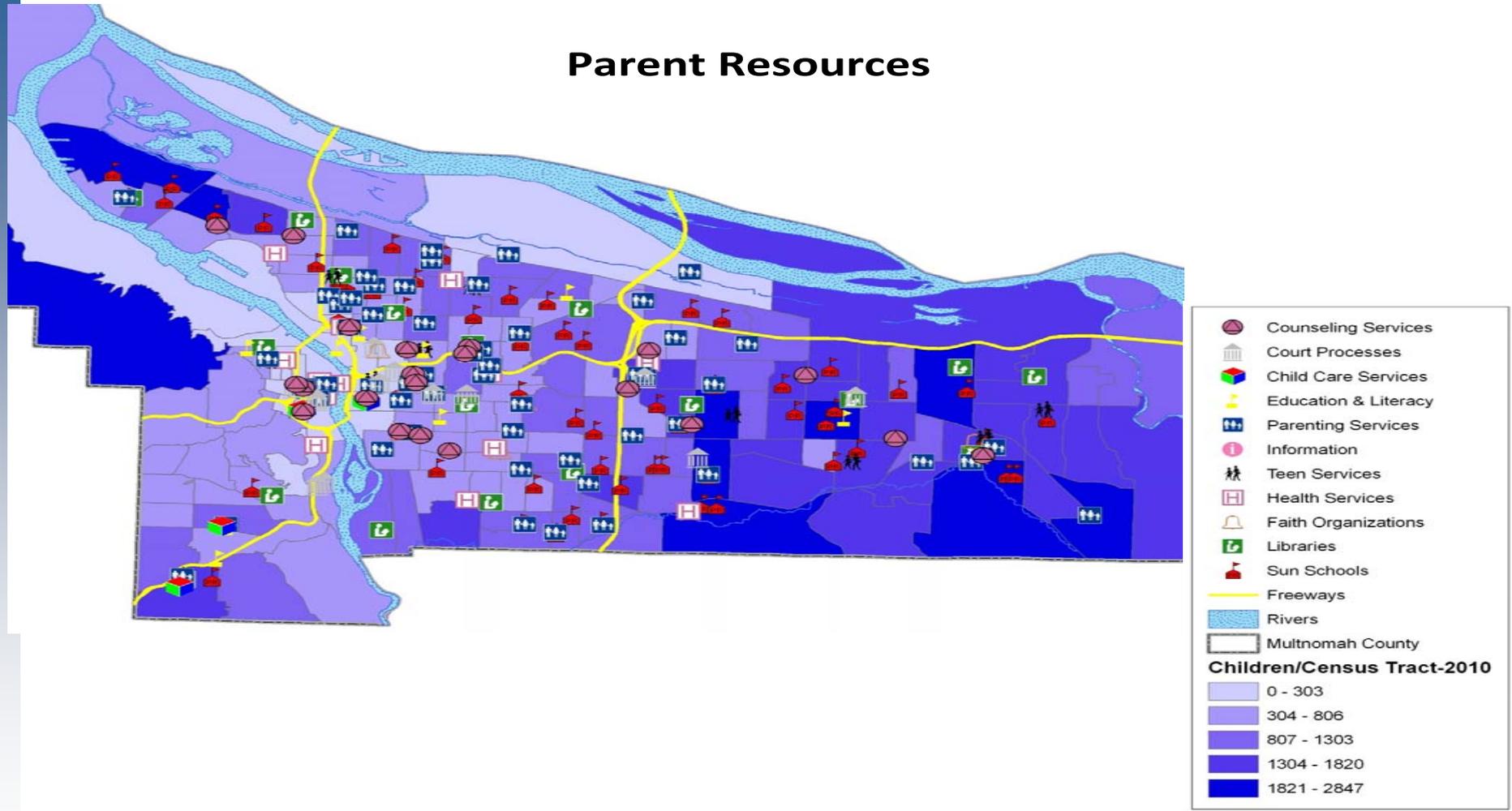
- Domestic violence
- Dating violence & sexual violence
- Bullying & peer violence
- Child maltreatment
- Gang violence

# Community Assessment: Gaps and Barriers

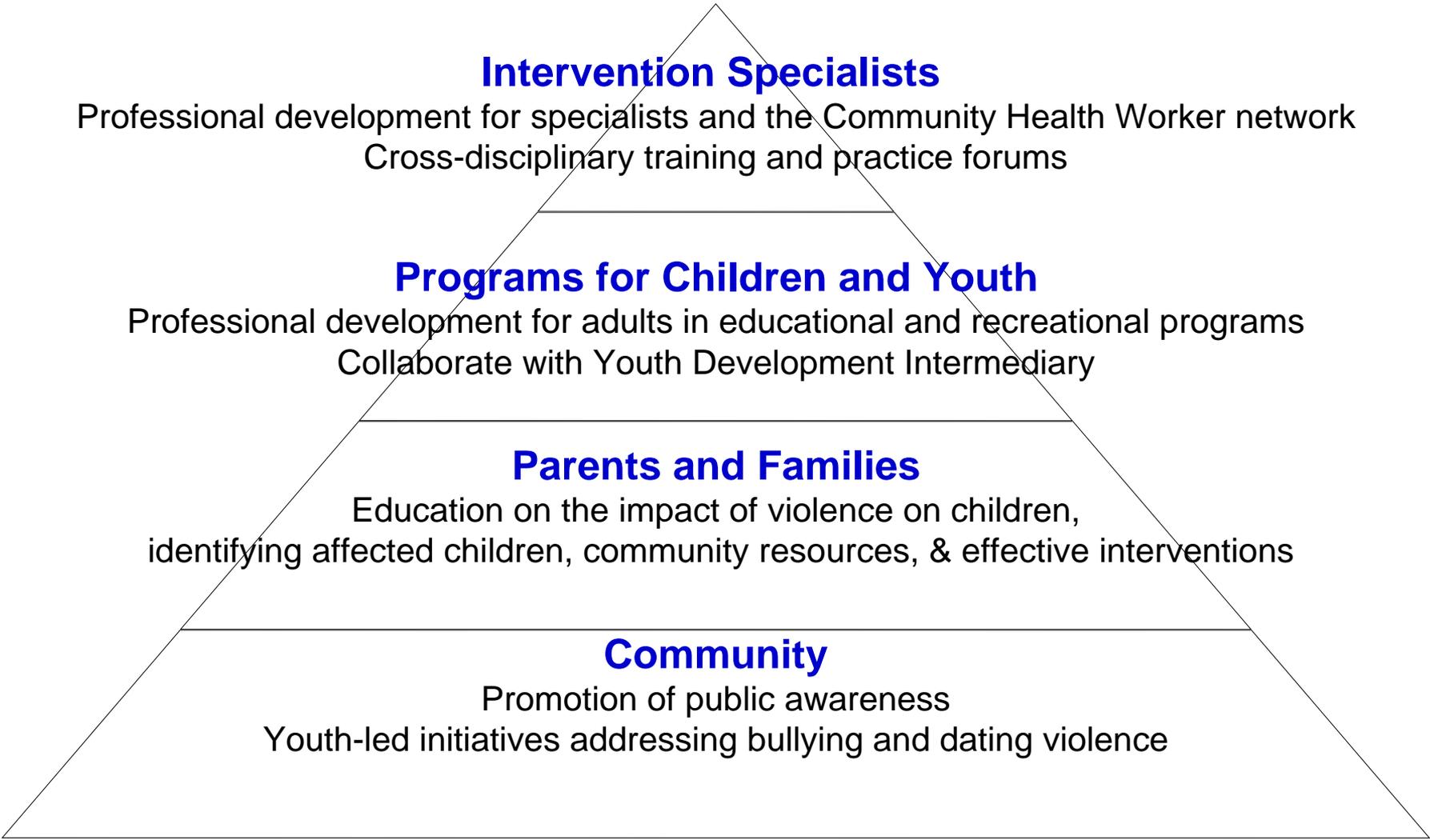
- Limited understanding across systems of the prevalence of violence exposure, its consequences for children, and appropriate responses
  - Professional silos limit identification and response
- Lack of prevention and early intervention services
- Systems and services have not kept up with demographic shifts
  - Families living in poverty in mid- and East County are under-served
  - Communities of color and immigrant communities are under-served

# Location of Resources vs. Population

## Parent Resources



# Focus on Training & Education



## **Intervention Specialists**

Professional development for specialists and the Community Health Worker network  
Cross-disciplinary training and practice forums

## **Programs for Children and Youth**

Professional development for adults in educational and recreational programs  
Collaborate with Youth Development Intermediary

## **Parents and Families**

Education on the impact of violence on children,  
identifying affected children, community resources, & effective interventions

## **Community**

Promotion of public awareness  
Youth-led initiatives addressing bullying and dating violence

Questions?

# Defending Childhood Initiative Contact Information

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