



Department of Justice

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(202) 514-2007
TTY (866) 544-5309

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT EXPANDS VIOLENCE REDUCTION NETWORK TO FIVE NEW SITES

DETROIT— Deputy Attorney General Sally Q. Yates and Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason of the Office of Justice Programs (OJP) today announced that five new cities will join the Violence Reduction Network (VRN), a comprehensive approach to reducing violent crime in communities around the country. The new partnering cities are Little Rock, Arkansas; West Memphis, Arkansas; Compton, California; Flint, Michigan and Newark, New Jersey. They join the inaugural sites of Detroit; Chicago; Camden, New Jersey; Wilmington, Delaware; and Oakland and Richmond, California.

“The Violence Reduction Network uses every tool in the Justice Department’s toolbox to help communities combat violent crime. And we deploy these resources in a targeted, strategic, data-driven way to get the most bang for our buck,” said Deputy Attorney General Sally Quillian Yates. “While we’re still early in this process with the five cities we announced last year, we’re encouraged by the progress we’ve made so far. And we’re looking forward to getting down to work in the five new cities we’re announcing today.”

Today’s announcement was made before an audience of U.S. Attorneys, police chiefs, sheriffs, mayors, local leaders from the ten sites and Department of Justice representatives at the second annual VRN Summit in Detroit. Through the VRN, the Justice Department enlists tactical and operational expertise available from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the United States Marshals Service (USMS), the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Executive Office of the United States Attorneys, the Community Oriented Policing Services Office and the Office on Violence Against Women.

Deputy Attorney General Yates cited the progress reported by the current VRN sites in their first year. In Camden, for example, the FBI assisted the local police display wanted felons’ information on digital billboards, resulting in the arrest of two felons. The ATF helped the Camden County Police Department acquire National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) equipment and training. NIBIN has allowed the county to initiate eTrace, an Internet-based firearms tracing and analysis tracking process to enhance criminal investigations.

In Chicago, police used closed-captioned television to post videos of sexual assault suspects on Facebook, leading to arrests. With the advice and technical support of the DOJ VRN partners, the Wilmington Police Department created a new homicide unit and the homicide

clearance rate rose from less than 10 percent to more than 50 percent on current-year cases. Detroit started to use sophisticated data analysis techniques to identify warning signals for domestic violence homicides to prevent these crimes and in August 2015 coordinated with the FBI in using the Digital Billboards Initiative to feature a homicide suspect.

Oakland and Richmond, California strengthened their relationships with the DOJ law enforcement partners in significant ways. The ATF embedded three full-time ATF special agents in the Richmond Police Department to assist with commercial armed robberies, shootings, and homicides. A national USMS task force operation in Contra Costa County resulted in the apprehension of over 130 people, including 12 homicide suspects.

The Oakland Police Department (OPD) continues to focus on ways to use analytics to enhance their crime prevention and violence reduction efforts. They have received two training sessions in social network analysis through the VRN. OPD is planning to conduct a full group audit to extract “on the ground” intelligence of known offenders and gangs through focus-group style working sessions with law enforcement and community organizations and will use this intelligence to build and support their social network analysis. The Oakland Police Department also participated in Crime Analysis for Executive Training and is now revamping their crime analysis unit.

This past summer, the FBI, DEA, and USMS participated in the Richmond’s Safe City Summer: Crime Prevention Public Safety Fair, a collaborative effort at Richmond City Hall to combat recent increases in violence and interacted with over 4,000 community members on their agency’s federal law enforcement role in assisting the police department with crime prevention efforts.

The DEA, through their El Paso Intelligence Center (EPIC), is providing all the VRN sites with the opportunity to work collaboratively to enhance their investigations and operations that target criminal activities.

In addition to announcing the five new VRN sites, Deputy Attorney General Yates announced Smart Policing grant awards totaling over \$2 million to law enforcement agencies to develop innovative, data-driven approaches to crime.

For more VRN information visit www.bja.gov/Programs/VRN.html.

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