



Department of Justice



Office of Justice Programs

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ATTORNEY GENERAL LYNCH ADDRESSES FOURTH ANNUAL NATIONAL SUMMIT ON PREVENTING YOUTH VIOLENCE

WASHINGTON – Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch delivered remarks to more than 350 people, including teams of mayors, police chiefs and youth from 40 localities across the country, at the Justice Department’s Fourth Annual National Summit on Preventing Youth Violence.

“It is a distressing reality that not just a sizable minority, but a significant majority of America’s children – more than 60 percent – have been exposed to crime, violence and abuse, either as victims or as witnesses,” said Attorney General Lynch. “Summits like this one are vital because they make an unprecedented commitment to rally local stakeholders to improve law enforcement, increase support for violence prevention efforts and expand access to family and social services to address these critical issues.”

The summit is the annual gathering of cities participating in the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, launched in 2010 at the direction of President Obama. The forum is a network of federal agencies, localities and private partners that support local efforts to prevent and reduce youth violence. These communities use prevention, intervention, enforcement and reentry strategies to stop violence and spur progress. Many of the forum’s cities have reported drops in homicides and juvenile violent crime during 2014 – and some cities even reported changes in quality-of-life measures like increased school retention and better police practices.

The forum’s newest cities—Baltimore; Cleveland; Long Beach, California; Louisville, Kentucky; and Seattle—publicly announced for the first time today their comprehensive strategies to prevent youth violence and reduce gang activity. Mayors from Camden, New Jersey; Minneapolis; Oakland, California; and Salinas, California, participated in a panel discussion on the challenges and strategies leaders face when prioritizing youth violence prevention efforts in their cities. In addition to the panel discussions, the cities participated in roundtables and breakout sessions on topics related to youth violence prevention, including faith-based programs, street outreach and neighborhood-based service delivery, engaging boys and young men of color, community partnerships, correctional education, and reentry. Twenty youth from the forum’s cities actively participated in their cities’ strategic discussions throughout the three-day summit.

The forum cities are Baltimore; Boston; Camden; Chicago; Cleveland; Detroit; Memphis, Tennessee; Long Beach; Louisville; Minneapolis; New Orleans; Philadelphia; Salinas; San Jose, California; and Seattle.

During her remarks, Attorney General Lynch highlighted a recently released \$14 million solicitation from the department's Office for Victims of Crime focused on supporting male survivors of violence and their families, as part of the broader effort to reach more than 100,000 children who are victims of human trafficking each year.

The forum's success is complemented by the Community-Based Violence Prevention Program, a program that currently operates in 16 cities nationwide, targeting youth gang and gun violence by building partnerships among law enforcement, service providers, concerned residents, and community- and faith-based organizations. After implementing the evidenced-based deterrence and public health practices recommended by the Community-Based Violence Prevention Program, cities reported reductions in gun violence and increases in community engagement.

Beyond these efforts, the department is supporting evidence-based interventions for children, expanding the base of knowledge about children's exposure to violence, and developing comprehensive strategies under the Defending Childhood Initiative, led by the Office of Justice Programs and its Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Additionally, President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative is rallying a coalition of government and private sector leaders to create and expand opportunities for youth across the nation to help them reach their full potential. Representatives from My Brother's Keeper, Defending Childhood, and the Community-Based Violence Prevention Program joined forum participants at the summit.

The forum's participating cities were selected on the basis of need, geographic diversity and willingness and capacity to explore new strategies. The department's federal partners include the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Labor; the Corporation for National and Community Service; and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy. For more information on the cities' plans and progress, please visit www.findyouthinfo.gov/youthviolence.

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