

REMARKS

OF

THE HONORABLE KAROL V. MASON
ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL
OFFICE OF JUSTICE PROGRAMS

AT THE

VIOLENCE REDUCTION NETWORK SUMMIT

ON

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2016
LITTLE ROCK, AR

Thank you, Kristie [Brackens]. I'm delighted to be here in Little Rock, joining the Attorney General, U.S. Attorney Thyer, and Chief Buckner, as well as all my distinguished Justice Department colleagues and so many local leaders for this third Violence Reduction Network Summit.

I want to first of all thank U.S. Attorney Thyer and his team for all their help and support in organizing and hosting this event. You've all been wonderful partners. I'd like to extend a special welcome to our other U.S. Attorneys. We're delighted to have you all here today and glad to have you as part of the Violence Reduction Network. I want to welcome all our special guests – police chiefs, prosecutors, and our partners from federal law enforcement. We are very happy to have you with us today, and we're grateful for your partnership. And finally, I want to acknowledge our fabulous VRN team – led by OJP's Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Beth McGarry; Kristen Mahoney, Deputy Director of our Bureau of Justice Assistance; and Kristie Brackens of BJA and Sarah Steffick from the DEA, who direct the day-to-day activities of VRN.

I'm excited about this summit – excited about the opportunity it gives us to learn from one another, to hear about one another's challenges and successes, and to build on the progress that so many of you have already begun to make in your communities. I'm also excited because it gives those of us from Washington the opportunity to make good on our commitment to deliver the resources you and your counterparts across the country need to reduce violence. It gives me great pleasure to announce three sets of grant awards to support violence reduction efforts across the country.

First, I'm pleased that we are awarding more than \$2.6 million to support innovative technology solutions to address precipitous crime increases in six sites. These grants will allow jurisdictions to use state-of-the-art tools to enhance data-sharing efforts and design strategies to fight their most acute violence challenges. Agencies in two of our VRN sites – Wilmington, Delaware, and St. Louis, Missouri – are among the recipients.

One of the hallmarks of the Violence Reduction Network is its focus on reducing gun crimes. Today, in partnership with our friends at the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, we are awarding \$3 million to three jurisdictions to set up Crime Gun Intelligence Centers. These centers will help sites produce timely and actionable information aimed at identifying gun perpetrators and stopping illegal gun activity. I'm pleased that one of the awards is going to a VRN site, specifically the Milwaukee Police Department.

And finally, because the viability and sustainability of crime reduction efforts depend on robust community engagement, we are awarding more than \$8 million under our Byrne Criminal Justice Innovation program to support place-based public safety and neighborhood revitalization efforts. Ten jurisdictions will use these funds to develop cross-sector partnerships and data-driven approaches aimed at addressing crime hot spots

as part of a comprehensive revitalization strategy. The Milwaukee Police Department is receiving one of these awards, as well.

I'm also pleased to tell you about an opportunity being made available by our partners at the Office on Violence Against Women. An award made recently to the University of Northern Arizona's National Domestic Violence Fatality Review Initiative will support VRN sites by providing specialized training and technical assistance on domestic violence fatality reviews. We know from our site in Detroit that these reviews are effective in both solving cases and building bridges between criminal justice agencies and community stakeholders. The new grant will offer training and assistance – possibly through a summit and on-site support – to VRN sites interested in this approach.

These resources are just part of our commitment to supporting local violence reduction efforts. I know the Attorney General will have even more good news to share.

Of course, we recognize that federal funding is only part of the solution. Success in reducing violence ultimately depends on our ability to work together, to marshal existing resources, and to engage all stakeholders in the work of protecting communities. I'm proud of what we've been able to accomplish so far, and I'm excited about the progress I know we'll make in the months ahead. Keep up the great work and make the most out of your time here in Little Rock.

It's now my honor to introduce this morning's keynote speaker.

Throughout her career as a prosecutor, Loretta Lynch has fought hard to keep violence down in the communities she serves, including some of the toughest neighborhoods in New York. She has won a well-deserved reputation as both a successful crime-fighter and a leader who is trusted by the people.

As Attorney General, she continues to build bridges by appealing to common interests and to a single goal shared by all of us – the safety and health of our communities. She is both an admirer and champion of America's law enforcement officers, and she will do whatever it takes to see that they get the help and support they deserve.

We are fortunate to have her leading the Justice Department's violence reduction work. Please welcome the Attorney General of the United States, the Honorable Loretta Lynch.

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