



Department of Justice

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DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE LAUNCHES NATIONAL VIOLENCE REDUCTION NETWORK

Attorney General Eric Holder and Assistant Attorney General Karol V. Mason for the Office of Justice Programs today launched the Violence Reduction Network (VRN), a national comprehensive approach to reduce violent crime in communities around the country. The Justice Department's ability to provide intensive training and cutting-edge technical assistance will give local officials and law enforcement executives in each of the partner communities the support they need to advance anti-violence strategies.

"This new 'all-hands' approach to curbing endemic violence is founded on the recognition that our efforts are most effective when all criminal justice leaders stand united," said Attorney General Holder. "It's predicated on the notion that – although violent crime is in some ways a fundamentally local problem – it is not one that any community can meet in isolation."

The Violence Reduction Network will help localities access a broad spectrum of Justice Department resources – empowering the federal government to strengthen partnerships and collaboratively tackle persistent challenges caused by violent crime. The partnering cities announced today are Camden, New Jersey; Chicago, Illinois; Detroit, Michigan; Oakland/Richmond, California; and Wilmington, Delaware.

The VRN summit's agenda is dedicated to collaborative working sessions analyzing each city's violence challenges and discussing the variety of department resources available to address the issues. Following the summit, the department will work with police chiefs and city leaders, along with leading criminal justice researchers and practitioners, to develop effective approaches to accomplishing each city's violence reduction strategies.

"Through our partnerships with local leaders and practitioners and the wide range of resources we have available to address America's public safety challenges, the Department of Justice is putting its full support behind violence reduction efforts in these five cities," said Assistant Attorney General Mason. "I am eager to begin working with each of the sites and to help define a way forward to safer, healthier communities."

Even with reports of national violent crime decreasing, in too many communities, crime rates have remained unacceptably high, particularly in areas where social ills like poverty, unemployment, and a lack of opportunity lead to tragic circumstances in which systemic violence can easily take root.

The launch of VRN is a result of the Obama administration's continuing efforts to address violence in communities across the country. Nearly a year ago, President Obama convened a meeting at the White House with 18 mayors to discuss strategies for reducing youth violence. Following that meeting, Attorney General Holder sat down with mayors and police chiefs to talk about how the federal government can better support local efforts.

Representatives from VRN partner federal agencies include the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the United States Marshals Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Executive Office of the United States Attorneys, the Community Oriented Policing Services Office, the Office on Violence Against Women and the Office of Justice Programs.

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

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