

NATIONAL FORUM on YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION



FORWARD TOGETHER

Youth violence is a serious problem in the U.S.

The Centers for Disease Control estimates that 5,048 youth between the ages of 10 and 24 were victims of homicide in 2009— that’s an average of 14 young people murdered every day.¹ Homicide is the second leading cause of death for children and young people in the U.S., and the leading cause for young African Americans.¹

Beyond the trauma it inflicts on victims and their families, violence exacts painful burdens on entire communities: it creates fear that causes people to withdraw from community life, can increase a community’s health care costs, decrease property values, and disrupt social services.²

Youth violence is preventable. A problem as complicated as youth violence, however, requires comprehensive solutions. A growing body of research indicates that evidence-based practices can reduce youth and gang violence and improve outcomes for our kids.³

The Forum is a vibrant national network of federal and local stakeholders who, through the use of multidisciplinary partnerships, balanced approaches that combine prevention, intervention, enforcement, and reentry, and data-driven strategies, strengthen communities to better prevent violence and promote the safety, health, and development of our nation’s youth.

The National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention

is a network of communities and federal agencies that work together, share information and build local capacity to prevent and reduce youth violence. Established at the direction of President Obama in 2010, the Forum brings together people from diverse professions and perspectives to learn from each other about the crisis of youth and gang violence in the U.S. and to build comprehensive solutions on the local and national levels.

Participating Federal agencies include the Departments of Justice, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Labor, and the Office on National Drug Control Policy. The Forum’s first set of participating communities includes Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Memphis, Salinas, and San Jose, with more to be added soon.

Other participants include faith- and community-based organizations, youth and family groups, and business and philanthropic leaders.

The Forum operates on three key principles:

1) Multidisciplinary partnerships are key to tackling this complex issue – police, educators, public health and other service providers, faith and community leaders, parents, and kids, must all be at the table.

2) Communities must balance and coordinate their prevention, intervention, enforcement and reentry strategies.

3) Data and evidence-driven strategies must inform efforts to reduce youth violence in our country. These three principles are critical to directing and leveraging limited resources in order to make a long-standing impact.



From left to right, seated, Mayor Dennis Donohue, Salinas, The Honorable Vice Admiral Regina M. Benjamin, U.S. Surgeon General, Barbara Ferrer, Executive Director, Boston Public Health Commission, and other Forum attendees discuss their youth violence prevention efforts.

FORUM GOALS

Elevate youth and gang violence as an issue of national significance.

Enhance the capacity of participating localities, as well as others across the country, to more effectively prevent youth and gang violence.

Sustain progress and systems change through engagement, alignment, and assessment.

“Our children are counting on us. Our communities are counting on us. And we cannot—and will not—let them down.”

— Attorney General
Eric Holder

Forum Spotlight: Memphis

With support from the Forum, cities around the U.S. are changing the way they do business and bringing people together to prevent youth violence. The City of Memphis and Shelby County, Tennessee are prime examples of this spirit of collaboration. Together, they have interwoven three different violence prevention plans— Operation: Safe Community, which focuses on reducing crime; the Memphis Youth Violence Prevention Plan, which strives to prevent youth violence; and the Defending Childhood Initiative, which seeks to minimize children and youth's exposure to violence.

By aligning the efforts and leadership of these three initiatives, Memphis and Shelby County have limited redundancy, maximized results, involved the highest levels of government and law enforcement, and shared data to make smart decisions. Thanks to the strong foundation of Operation: Safe Community, Memphis has moved itself off the top of the list of cities with the highest crime rate and improved its climate for economic growth. Additionally, from January 1 to July 31, 2011, major violent crime was down 26.8 percent. Memphis' continuing commitment to collaboration, data sharing and the safety of its youth is a promising indicator that Forum cities, working together with federal partners, will play strong roles in building a better future for youth in our country.

References:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2012). Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [Data file]. Available from: http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/leading_causes_death.html
2. Mercy J, Butchart A, Farrington D, Cerdá M. Youth violence. In: Krug E, Dahlberg LL, Mercy JA, Zwi AB, Lozano R, editors. *The World Report on Violence and Health*. Geneva (Switzerland): World Health Organization; 2002. p. 25–56.
3. Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence. *Blueprints for Violence Prevention*. Available from: <http://www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints/>.

Target launches partnership with the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention:

In 2010, one of the nation's largest corporations joined forces with the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention. Committed to giving back to communities and improving opportunities for young people, Target has proven itself a model for corporate involvement in the Forum. In 2012, Target awarded grants of \$10,000 to each of the six Forum sites, which will allow each site to hire and provide a stipend for a "Connecting Youth" Youth Director in their community. The Youth Directors will assemble youth governance boards in their cities, ensuring that youth are included as hands-on partners in their city's violence prevention efforts. Additionally, in the Fall of 2012, Target will host a convening for leaders from all six Forum cities to meet with executives and leaders from Target and other corporations in order to engage Target, its local affiliates, and other corporate partners with Forum activities in their communities.

Casey Family Programs Partners to Enhance Forum Capacity and Expertise:

Casey Family Programs, a Seattle-based national foundation which focuses on foster care and child welfare, has become an integral partner in the Forum's work. Through Casey Family Fellows, a program in which senior level Casey Family Program staff are deployed to various federal agencies, Casey has been able to provide the Forum with a full-time staff person who provides expertise in child welfare systems, engaging youth and families in our work, and partnering with private and philanthropic organizations. In addition to enhancing the Forum's capacity through Fellows, Casey has also made financial donations in order to provide further opportunities for youth engagement with the Forum. For example, at the 2012 Annual Summit on Preventing Youth Violence, Casey sponsored activities for youth representatives and participants, including an off-site youth leadership workshop and lunch, as well as a night-time tour of DC.

Join Us In Preventing Youth Violence

The Forum is strengthened by the diverse perspectives, skills, and expertise of our partners, so we are continually looking for ways to expand our efforts. If you are interested in partnering with us or learning more about youth violence, here are several ways to reach out:

To learn more about the Forum and to access some of its tools, visit our website at FindYouthInfo.gov/YouthViolence

Need Help? Want to build a youth violence prevention plan? Access the Forum Toolkit at FindYouthInfo.gov/YouthViolence/toolkit

If you are interested in partnering with the Forum, would like your city to get involved, or have questions, email us FindYouthInfo@air.org.



Jack Calhoun, Director of the California Cities Gang Prevention Network, moderates a panel featuring Carmen Ortiz, U.S. Attorney for the District of Massachusetts, former Deputy Mayor Saul Green of Detroit, and Mario Maciel, Superintendent, Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, San Jose.

"We know that if children aren't safe, then they can't learn. We all have a stake in public safety and a responsibility to keep our children out of harm's way."

— Secretary of Education
Arne Duncan