



## YOUTH VIOLENCE IS PREVENTABLE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated that 4,481 youths between ages 10 and 24 were victims of homicide in 2013—that's an average of 12 young people murdered every day. Nearly one in four serious violent crime victims known to law enforcement is a juvenile.<sup>2</sup>

Youth violence is a serious problem that can have lasting harmful effects on victims and their families, friends, and communities. It creates fear that causes people to withdraw from community life. It can increase a community's healthcare costs, decrease property values, and disrupt social services.

**Youth violence is preventable, but comprehensive solutions are needed.** A growing body of research indicates evidence-based practices can reduce youth and gang violence and improve outcomes for our kids.

### References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). *Web-Based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System*. Atlanta, Ga.: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, CDC. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>

2. Melissa Sickmund and Charles Puzzanchera (eds.). 2014. *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2014 National Report*. Pittsburgh, Pa.: National Center for Juvenile Justice.

The Forum is a vibrant national network of federal and local stakeholders. Through cross-system partnerships, data-driven strategies, and balanced approaches combining prevention, intervention, enforcement, and reentry, the Forum strives to prevent violence and promote the safety, health, and development of our nation's youth and their families.

**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 one another about the crisis of youth and gang violence in the United States and build comprehensive solutions at the local and national levels.

Participating federal agencies include the Departments of Justice, Education, Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, and Labor and the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy.



*Youth attendees participate in a roundtable discussion at 2015 Summit.*

The Forum's 15 participating cities are Baltimore, Md.; Boston, Mass.; Camden, N.J.; Chicago, Ill.; Cleveland, Ohio; Detroit, Mich.; Long Beach, Calif.; Louisville, Ky.; Memphis, Tenn.; Minneapolis, Minn.; New Orleans, La.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Salinas, Calif.; Seattle, Wash.; and San Jose, Calif.

Led by federal and city officials, these sites develop comprehensive youth violence prevention plans together with chiefs of police, public health commissioners, school superintendents, community-based organizations, youth and family groups, and business and philanthropic leaders.

### The Forum operates on three key principles:

**1) Multidisciplinary partnerships** are key in tackling this complex issue. Police, educators, public health and other service providers, faith and community leaders, parents, and youths must all be at the table.

**2) Balance and coordination** of prevention, intervention, enforcement, and strategies between and among communities.

**3) Data and evidence-driven strategies** must inform efforts to reduce youth violence in our country. These three principles are critical for directing and leveraging limited resources to have a lasting impact.

## FORUM GOALS

**Elevate** youth and gang violence as a public health problem to 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.





## A LESSON IN PREVENTION

Prevention is the foundation of the public health approach. Ultimately, the best way forward is to stop the violence before it starts.

Much can be done to move youth violence prevention strategies forward. A growing set of individual and program- and policy-level strategies has proven to lower the risk and occurrence of violence:

- School-based programs that promote positive social skills for youth and build skills in solving problems nonviolently
- Family approaches that help caregivers set developmentally appropriate rules and effectively monitor youth activities and relationships
- Community, economic, environmental, educational, and other policies that enhance safety and increase opportunities for positive social interaction

All of us in the Forum must rely on data and information about best practices based on research. Using the science that drives the public health approach to violence prevention will provide the best results.

While we must continue to guide young people involved in violence toward better, brighter paths, continue to police our communities through thoughtful and effective means, and recognize that offenders returning to the community must be given every chance to break the cycle of offending, it is prevention that promises to stem the tide of youth violence.

## SEATTLE AND NEW ORLEANS SHARE LESSONS LEARNED

Promising approaches from one community can be adapted for use in another locality when local context is taken into consideration. In early March, a three-person delegation from the Seattle National Forum site traveled to Louisiana to participate in the New Orleans Health Department's Youth Violence Prevention Summit and engage in peer-to-peer training. As a city just 3 years into adopting a community-wide approach to addressing youth violence, NOLA wanted to hear from a site that had more experience. Noting the differences between New Orleans and Seattle, one Summit attendee asked, "What about your work is applicable in our community?" The answer: A great deal. Though our cities differ in many ways, the challenges faced by our most vulnerable communities are similar.

## BOSTON YOUTH VOTE FOR CHANGE

Boston youth were directly involved in decisions to fund seven projects, including several park renovations, community art walls, and Chromebooks for three Boston high schools.

At 26, Shari Davis is one of the youngest city department heads in Boston and a fierce supporter of involving young people in local government. She helped Boston lead its first Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP) dedicated entirely to youth, where teens and young adults decided how to spend \$1 million of the city's capital funds. While in its pilot phase, PBP galvanized youths from all parts of Boston. They mulled over the city's needs and generated about 500 bright ideas that were later organized by category. Five months later, they were voting on 14 of the best submissions, with residents as young as 12 at the poll.

## IN THIS EFFORT

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

To learn more about the Forum and access *Preventing Youth Violence: Opportunities for Action*, visit our Web site at <http://tinyurl.com/oebbzyz>

**Need help?** Want to build a youth violence prevention plan? Access the Forum Toolkit at [http://youth.gov/docs/NFYVP\\_Toolkit\\_LKP.pdf](http://youth.gov/docs/NFYVP_Toolkit_LKP.pdf)

If you are interested in partnering with the Forum, would like to get your city involved, or have questions, email [bzanjani@dsgonline.com](mailto:bzanjani@dsgonline.com)



Attorney General Loretta Lynch delivers plenary speech at Youth Violence Prevention Summit.

"When a child opens fire on another child, there's a hole in that child's heart that government can't fill, only community and parents and teachers and clergy can fill that hole.... And so that means that this is not just a gun issue, it's also an issue of the kinds of communities we are building—and in that, we all share a responsibility." —President Barack Obama