

The California Cities Gang Prevention Network

Welcome to the 19th bulletin of the California Cities Gang Prevention Network. In this bulletin, we will give a brief overview of the Network's annual conference and its highlights, and discuss future opportunities presented at the conference.

4th Annual All-city Teams Meeting

The fourth annual meeting of the California Cities Gang Prevention Network took place May 10–11 in Sacramento. Team members from each city represented entities critical to the success of comprehensive planning, including law enforcement, the mayors' offices, school districts, and public health agencies, as well as a variety of community and faith based organizations. Panels covered topics such as strengthening public health connections, engaging law enforcement in prevention, state and local reentry policies, and employment.

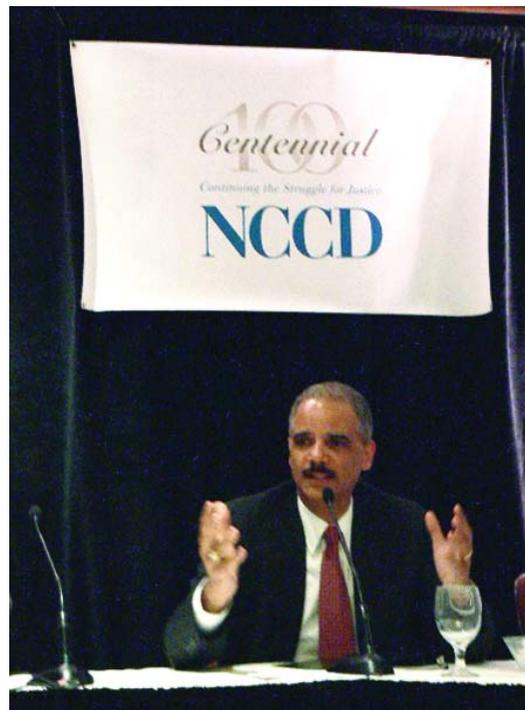
The conference attracted a number of other notable figures including Eric Holder, US Attorney General; Matthew Cate, Secretary of California's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; Paul Seave, Director of the Governor's Office of Gang and Youth Violence Policy; and Phelan Wyrick, Senior Advisor to the Office of Justice Programs.

Most participating cities have completed and implemented strategic plans, underscoring the necessity of launching a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach to reducing youth and gang violence in each

city. With the encouragement of the Network, cities are increasingly intent on incorporating the prevention aspect into their work. Each year, the conference demonstrates how far cities have grown in their work; many attribute this growth to the connections and relationships the Network has helped them establish. The annual conference facilitates these relationships in a cordial and productive atmosphere while reuniting partners, introducing new team members, and spurring cross-city peer technical assistance.

This year's keynote address was given by US Attorney General Eric Holder.

The Attorney General's appearance manifested his appreciation of the Network's efforts. Most importantly, his keynote address stressed that the Network's work was influencing national youth violence prevention policy.



Keynote address by US Attorney General Eric Holder

Keynote From U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder

“To succeed in protecting the safety and potential of our children, we need a variety of perspectives; we need to test multiple strategies; and, above all, we need a comprehensive, collaborative approach.”—Attorney General Eric Holder

The keynote address by U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder touched on the widespread problem of youth exposed to violence and the importance of families and communities in improving outcomes for youth. He



Four CA Mayors - Oxnard, Sacramento, Salinas, and San Bernardino

praised the Network for its diverse partnerships and collaborative efforts, emphasizing that the innovative work done at the local levels has provided those in the Department of Justice with valuable insight and inspiration. Further emphasizing the need for collaboration and comprehensive work, the Attorney General stated that law enforcement cannot do the work alone. Referring to the conference participants as “partners,” Attorney General Holder stressed that the organizations and cities represented in the room will find a willing partner in both the White House and the Department of Justice. His address affirmed not only an understanding of the complex nature of youth and gang violence but also a firm belief that solutions are within reach. The Attorney General concluded his visit by taking questions from Network members, many of whom touched on the need for flexibility in funding.

Though there were no promises of increased funding, the Attorney General did say that the White House is open to listening to proposals on how to improve access to funding.

Reentry

The second day of the conference consisted of a number of panels that revolved around the theme of reentry. As a result of the state budget crisis, many Network cities are experiencing an increase in parolees returning home. The day’s first panel, led by NCCD’s Dr. Angela Wolf, focused on state reentry policies. Panelists included Kent Paxton, Director of San Bernardino’s Mayor’s Office of Community Safety and Violence Prevention, who discussed the impact of reentry on local communities; Matthew Cate, Secretary of Corrections and Rehabilitation; J.J. Anderson of San Diego’s Reentry Roundtable; and Dr. Barry Krisberg



NCCD’s Dr. Angela Wolf leads a panel on reentry

of Berkeley’s Center for Criminal Justice and NCCD Distinguished Fellow. Secretary Cate expressed the state’s position clearly: “We never have and never will have all the necessary resources to meet all the needs of the reentry population.” Secretary Cate promised to work more closely with cities so that the appropriate stakeholders are aware of who is returning to their community. City-state collaboration will be key in addressing the needs of this vulnerable population. San Bernardino’s proactive efforts have included the CREST

(Community Reentry Education/Employment Service and Training) Center. CREST is an evidence-based collaboration of different agencies and organizations that provide services to the reentry population. The CREST initiative also makes economic sense; CREST costs half the amount of reincarceration.

Recognizing the essential role of jobs and employment opportunities in a comprehensive effort to reduce gang violence in the community, another panel, led by Andrew Moore, Senior Fellow with the NLC, discussed different organizations that help marginalized populations find stable employment. Panelists included David Gruber of Growth Sector, Andi Liebenbaum of the Sacramento Regional Conservation Corps, and Paul Seave, Director of the Governor's Office of Gang and Youth Violence Policy. Sacramento and Los Angeles, two Network cities, are also home to the two largest Corps in California. The Corps is a nonprofit organization that provides education and workforce development to those who would otherwise encounter chronic difficulty succeeding in traditional settings. Other opportunities for the reentry population include employment with organizations like Growth Sector, which provides training for specific industries. These alternative programs provide great opportunities to reintegrate former offenders back into society, and partnerships may increase leveraging opportunities for state funding.

Throughout the course of the day, cities expressed an interest in expanding the Network's focus to also include representatives from the reentry field. Many cities, including San Francisco and San Diego, have formed reentry councils (or variations of such), or city/county-wide collaboration of different stakeholders in reentry (e.g., police, probation, DA, public defender, parole, community organizations, housing authority, child welfare, public health, mental health, workforce development). Including representatives from reentry councils on city teams could help to expand the Network's reach in the field and improve upon peer learning.

Conferences play an invaluable role in providing networking opportunities, allowing teams to meet with

experts in the field and others doing the same work. Team leaders have continually made use of Network sponsorship to invite new and relevant stakeholders who have not previously participated. In this way, the conference allows cities to network within their own communities as well. Written evaluations show that participants found the panels incredibly useful, and in addition, many have been able to build on relationships formed at conferences; many have set up appointments with other city teams or with invited guests such as Phelan Wyrick from the U.S. Department of Justice.

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The California Endowment is a private, statewide health foundation created in 1996 with a mission to expand access to affordable, quality health care for underserved individuals and communities, and to promote fundamental improvements in the health status of all Californians.

Created in 1992 as an independent, private foundation, TCWF's mission is to improve the health of the people of California by making grants for health promotion, wellness education, and disease prevention.

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