

# U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL'S SUMMIT ON VIOLENT CRIME

Summary of Key Factors, Promising Strategies, and Additional Steps



**COPS**  
Community Oriented Policing Services  
U.S. Department of Justice



  
POLICE EXECUTIVE  
RESEARCH FORUM

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# CONTENTS

Letter from the Attorney General . . . . .	v
Introduction . . . . .	1
Violent Crime Trends: National Context . . . . .	3
About the Violent Crime Summit. . . . .	5
What May Be Behind the Increases in Violent Crime? A Look at Some Key Factors. . . . .	7
Illegal gun possession . . . . .	7
Weaker gun laws . . . . .	7
Inconsistent gun laws. . . . .	8
Weak background checks . . . . .	8
Inexperienced gun users. . . . .	9
Prevalence of guns . . . . .	9
Low priority of gun cases . . . . .	9
Unfinished receivers . . . . .	10
Criminal gangs . . . . .	10
Changes in gang organization. . . . .	10
Social media . . . . .	11
Retaliation. . . . .	11
Cybercrime . . . . .	11
Illegal drugs . . . . .	12
Opioid abuse . . . . .	12
Disruption of markets . . . . .	12
Psychoactive drugs . . . . .	13
Legalization of marijuana . . . . .	13
Reduction in proactive policing . . . . .	14
Difficulty of measuring any YouTube effect. . . . .	15
Officer anxiety . . . . .	15
Other factors . . . . .	16

What Are Some Promising Strategies to Combat Violent Crime? . . . . . 17

    Crime Gun Intelligence Centers and NIBIN. . . . . 17

    Strategic targeting of gun prosecutions in federal court. . . . . 18

    Operation Exodus. . . . . 19

    Youth violence reduction in Chicago . . . . . 19

    Denver Impact Teams. . . . . 20

    Violence intervention strategies . . . . . 20

    Violence reduction network . . . . . 21

What More Needs To Be Done? . . . . . 23

    More timely and accurate data. . . . . 23

    More federal resources for re-entry programming . . . . . 23

    More flexibility and focus on the use of federal funds . . . . . 25

    More public and visible displays of support for police officers and community partners . . . . 27

Conclusion . . . . . 29

Appendix. Violent Crime Summit Participants . . . . . 31

About PERF . . . . . 35

About the COPS Office . . . . . 36

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# LETTER FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice, I want to thank the police chiefs, mayors, U.S. Attorneys, and others who participated in the October 2015 Attorney General's Summit on Violent Crime. All of the participants provided valuable contributions to our discussion on what continues to be a profoundly challenging issue for our communities and our country.

We covered a lot of ground at the summit, and this report summarizes the group's wide-ranging discussions and findings.

As we discussed in this meeting, there is no single solution to the problem of violent crime, and because the causes and effects of violence are multifaceted our responses and approaches to prevention must be similarly sophisticated, comprehensive, and multilayered. It is my hope that through this report we can expand the conversation and provide law enforcement leaders across the country with information and ideas that may lead to workable solutions.

As I said in October, progress will not be immediate. But I remain encouraged by the spirit of engagement, the commitment to action, and the ideals of service exemplified by the men and women who contributed to this report. I commend these dedicated public servants for sharing their experiences and vigorously exploring every societal, law enforcement, and criminal justice issue that may have a bearing on a rise in violence. And as we continue to work together and strengthen our partnerships, I am optimistic that we will find ways to reduce violent crime, promote officer safety, and restore community trust and security throughout the country.

Finally, I am grateful to everyone who made this summit possible. I especially want to thank Ronald L. Davis, Director of the Office of Community Policing Services (COPS Office) and his excellent staff for organizing this summit, as well as the White House for their support and participation throughout the planning process. I also want to thank the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) for their outstanding work in facilitating the summit, which was moderated by PERF Executive Director Chuck Wexler, and for the time and effort they put into preparing this valuable report.

Sincerely,



Loretta E. Lynch  
Attorney General of the United States



*Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch speaks at the Attorney General's Summit on Violent Crime, October 7, 2015*

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# INTRODUCTION

***“I am encouraged by the spirit of engagement, the commitment to action, and the ideals of service exemplified by the people in this room today. As dedicated public servants and criminal justice professionals, you possess valuable experience, deep knowledge, and critical insight about the ways we promote public safety and protect our citizens.”***

—Loretta E. Lynch, Attorney General of the United States

This report summarizes the findings from a one-day conference on violent crime convened by U.S. Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch in Washington, D.C., on October 7, 2015. After several U.S. cities experienced sudden increases in violent crime during the first half of 2015, the Attorney General’s Summit on Violent Crime was called to help both policy makers and practitioners gain a better understanding of the situation and how it could be addressed most effectively.

Mayors, police chiefs, and U.S. attorneys representing 20 U.S. cities, most of which have recently experienced increases in violent crime, came to Washington to offer their perspectives on the issue. Along with high-ranking representatives from the U.S. Department of Justice and other key federal agencies, summit participants discussed the factors that may be driving the recent uptick in violence, some promising strategies for combating violence, and additional steps that may need to be taken to reverse recent increases. The participation of such a broad cross-section of local and federal officials helped to ensure both a high level and a broad base of knowledge about what is happening with respect to violent crime in American cities today.



Participants meet at the Attorney General's Summit on Violent Crime, October 7, 2015



## VIOLENT CRIME TRENDS: NATIONAL CONTEXT

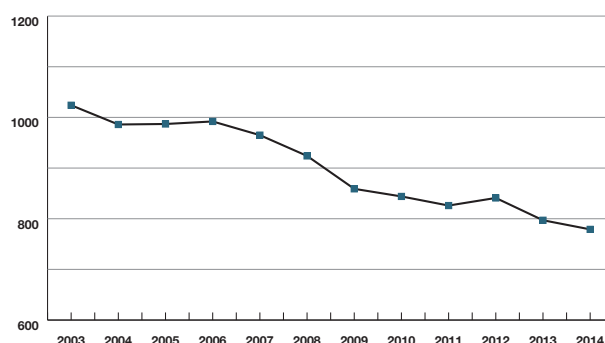
When considering recent increases in violence, it is important to view them in context. Since the early 1990s, there has been a long-term downward trend in violent crime in the United States. From 1995 to 2014, the number of violent crimes reported by police nationwide fell by more than 35 percent, and the per-capita violent crime rate has been cut nearly in half.<sup>1</sup>

These reductions in violent crime rates have continued over the last decade. As seen in figure 1, among the 20 cities whose officials participated in the summit, the violent crime rate declined from more than 1,000 reported offenses per 100,000 population in 2003 to fewer than 800 per 100,000 population in 2014. That year, in fact, several cities had record or near-record low homicide totals for the modern era.

It was against this backdrop of overall reductions in violent crime that a number of U.S. cities began experiencing sharp upticks in violence in early 2015. In 16 of the 20 cities, homicides increased during the first six months of 2015 when compared to the same period of 2014 (see figure 2 on page 4). After

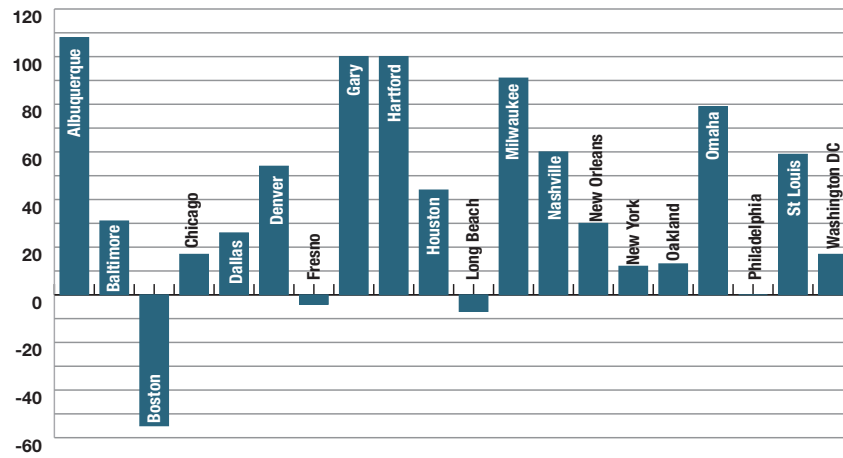
experiencing historically low homicide totals in 2014, some cities have seen their homicides surge by 50 percent or more in 2015. Another concern is the increase in shootings reported during the first half of 2015. Even in some cities that have not experienced an increase in homicides—such as Fresno, California, and Boston, Massachusetts—the number of shootings has gone up (see figure 3 on page 4).

**Figure 1. Combined homicide, robbery, and aggravated assault rate per 100,000 population for all cities participating in the Attorney General’s Summit on Violent Crime**



1. Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Crime in the United States, 2014*, Uniform Crime Report (Washington, DC: Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2015), <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/>.

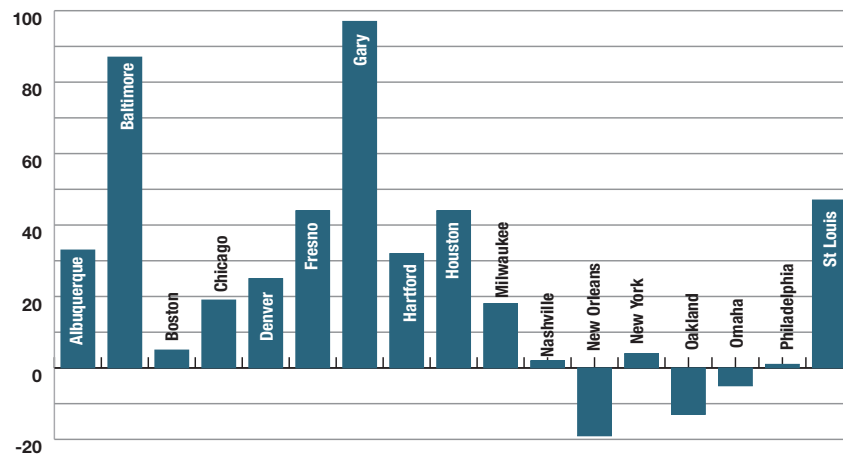
Figure 2. Percent change in homicide in participating cities, first six months of 2014–first six months of 2015



This surge in violence in some locations has caught the attention of police and other justice system officials at all levels of government. Their overriding concern is to identify the factors that may be driving the increase in violence and to stem and reverse this course before it can gain momentum. The leaders at the Attorney General’s Summit on Violent Crime discussed their local situations and explored theories about

- » why violence is increasing in some cities but not others;
- » why homicide rates and statistics on shootings do not always track each other;
- » what can explain the recent uptick in violence when compared to the situation just a short time ago.

Figure 3. Percent change in shooting incidents in participating cities, first six months of 2014–first six months of 2015



# ABOUT THE VIOLENT CRIME SUMMIT

To explore these and other issues in some depth, Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch convened the Summit on Violent Crime. Mayors, police chiefs, and U.S. attorneys representing 20 cities were joined by top federal officials including the following:

- » Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates
- » White House Counsel Neil Eggleston
- » Deputy Assistant to the President Roy Austin
- » Associate Attorney General Stuart Delery
- » Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)  
Director James Comey
- » Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and  
Explosives (ATF) Acting Director  
Tom Brandon
- » Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA)  
Acting Administrator Chuck Rosenberg
- » U.S. Marshals Service Acting Director  
Dave Harlow
- » Assistant Attorney General Karol Mason
- » Office of Community Oriented  
Policing Services (COPS Office)  
Director Ronald L. Davis

Organizations representing police officers, police chiefs, and mayors, along with academic, professional, and community representatives also attended. (See the appendix for a complete list of summit participants.<sup>2</sup>) The COPS Office partnered with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) to convene and facilitate the summit, which was moderated by PERF Executive Director Chuck Wexler.

The purpose of the summit was four-fold:

1. To better understand the nature and potential causes of recent upticks in violence in some jurisdictions, especially any common elements among them
2. To identify and examine effective violent crime reduction strategies that have contributed to the historic decline of crime and violence and which may help address recent upticks
3. To explore potential U.S. Department of Justice resources that could be used to assist in efforts to reduce crime
4. To identify how local, state, and federal agencies can better collaborate to respond to the recent spike in violence

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2. All titles in this report reflect participants' positions at the time of the summit in October 2015.

In her comments, Attorney General Lynch captured the complexity of the issues involved as well as the potential for progress when people work together:

***“We understand that these are multifaceted issues that must involve more than one kind of response. . . . It’s why we are examining holistic, comprehensive approaches. And it’s why we will continue to build a strong and effective coalition to take on these complex challenges.”***

—Loretta E. Lynch, Attorney General of the United States

This report provides a summary of the main issues discussed during the Attorney General's Summit on Violent Crime. The summit produced new ideas for combating violent crime, stronger relationships to carry out those ideas, and a renewed commitment by a wide range of leaders to ensure that the historic reductions in violence of the past two decades will continue.

# WHAT MAY BE BEHIND THE INCREASES IN VIOLENT CRIME? A LOOK AT SOME KEY FACTORS

The Attorney General's Summit on Violent Crime was not a series of speeches but rather a frank, unscripted dialogue among local and federal officials, many of whom are experiencing the surge of violence firsthand. Much of the day was spent exploring various issues that participants identified during pre-summit interviews as being among the key factors that may be impacting violent crime in their cities.

## Illegal gun possession

### Easy availability, few consequences

There was overwhelming consensus that lax state and federal gun laws and ready access to firearms by criminals (in particular by violent repeat offenders) are major contributors to violent crime. While summit participants acknowledged that this situation was hardly new, they pointed to some recent trends that are making an already difficult landscape with gun violence even more challenging for police and communities.

### Weaker gun laws

The move toward weaker gun laws has continued and has even accelerated in some states. St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay reported

that Missouri recently amended its state constitution to create an "unalienable right" to carry a gun. He said some judges are now dismissing "felon in possession" gun charges because they interpret the state constitutional amendment as trumping local gun laws. In Wisconsin, individuals convicted of multiple misdemeanor gun crimes are not prohibited from buying or owning a gun under state law, and a 2011 law created a loophole that allows some career criminals to obtain concealed-carry permits. In many states, there continues to be no requirement to report a lost or stolen firearm. Several summit participants reported that one consequence of these legislative trends is that more criminals, especially repeat career criminals, are choosing to carry firearms on the streets of their cities.

***"My average shooter has 14 prior arrests; my average victim has 11 prior arrests. . . . Right now, in the calculation of one of our career criminals, it's more dangerous to get caught without your gun, because you might get shot by a rival gang member or somebody, than to get caught with it by***

***the police. Why? Because in Wisconsin you can be arrested 10 times for carrying a concealed weapon illegally and it stays a misdemeanor. Unless you are a previously convicted felon, it never becomes a felony."***

—Edward Flynn, Chief,  
Milwaukee (Wisconsin) Police Department

***"We've recently begun tracking the 'time to crime,' and it's very similar to Milwaukee. It's a pretty quick turnaround from those guns that are purchased in the suburbs of Chicago, then end up being used in crimes in the City of Chicago."***

—John Escalante, First Deputy Superintendent,  
Chicago (Illinois) Police Department

### **Inconsistent gun laws**

As gun laws get weaker in some jurisdictions, the lack of consistency makes fighting crime difficult for jurisdictions with stricter laws. States and municipalities with relatively strict laws on gun possession (and in some cases with no gun stores within their cities) find that many of their crime guns are purchased and imported from nearby "source" states and municipalities. In many instances, officials can pinpoint specific gun dealers that supply a disproportionate number of crime guns, but police have had limited recourse in doing anything about them.<sup>3</sup> To better understand the distribution patterns of crime guns, both Chicago and Milwaukee have begun tracking the "time to crime"—the elapsed time from when a gun was originally purchased to when it was used in a crime. Officials reported that "time to crime" has declined sharply in both cities; it is now less than six months in Milwaukee.

### **Weak background checks**

Holes in the background check process continue to make it easy for criminals and persons with mental illness to obtain firearms. Summit participants noted that there continues to be overwhelming support—among not just mayors and police executives but also the country as a whole—for universal background checks on all gun purchases. Because making a straw gun purchase is not a felony under Wisconsin law, Chief Edward Flynn of Milwaukee said it is not uncommon for a prohibited buyer to send someone else to a big-box store to purchase multiple weapons, which are then sold on the secondary market in Milwaukee. St. Louis, Missouri, officials reported that firearms sold without background checks at gun shows are increasingly showing up at crime scenes. Other summit participants called for greater sharing of information about individuals who fail background checks.

3. Shortly after the summit, two Milwaukee police officers who were shot and seriously injured in the line of duty successfully sued the owners a West Milwaukee gun store for failing to stop the straw purchase of the weapon used to shoot them. For background on this case, see John Diedrich, "Jury Finds for Wounded Officers in Badger Guns Lawsuit," *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, accessed April 11, 2016, <http://www.jsonline.com/watchdog/watchdogreports/jury-finds-for-wounded-officers-in-badger-guns-lawsuit-b99596217z1-332567372.html>.

***“The U.S. Conference of Mayors is asking for immediate federal action to stem violence. . . . When it comes to guns, we’re asking the FBI to notify local authorities immediately when an individual trying to purchase a gun fails a background check.”***

—Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor, City of Baltimore, Maryland, and President, U.S. Conference of Mayors

### **Inexperienced gun users**

Evidence suggests there may be more guns on the street in the hands of inexperienced users. Several cities—including Baltimore, Chicago, Milwaukee, and St. Louis—reported that police seizures of firearms are up sharply in 2015. Some cities also reported that the number of stolen guns reported to the police has risen. Baltimore Police Commissioner Kevin Davis reported one piece of anecdotal evidence suggesting that more young people who are inexperienced with weapons may be carrying guns: The number of accidental, self-inflicted gunshot wounds in the city is up 40 percent with many people inadvertently shooting themselves in the upper thigh or top of the foot.

***“They’re not used to carrying a firearm, but they’re choosing to carry one anyway. They typically don’t use holsters; so they’re sticking that gun in their waistband or in their pocket. More people are carrying guns because that’s their way of conflict resolution.”***

—Kevin Davis, Commissioner, Baltimore (Maryland) Police Department

### **Prevalence of guns**

Because of the ready presence of firearms, petty arguments are often resulting in lethal violence. Some cities reported an increase in the number of indiscriminate “up close and personal” shootings, in which the victims and offenders know each other and come largely from the same demographic: career criminals from neighborhoods with a history of violence, high unemployment, and limited educational opportunities and achievement. When guns are so readily available, they become the conflict resolution tool of choice. Several police chiefs noted the influence of social media: Petty spats on Twitter, Instagram, or other online platforms are easily and quickly escalating to shootings and homicides.

***“In many cases the only thing that made the victim the victim is he lost the gunfight.”***

—Charles McClelland, Chief, Houston (Texas) Police Department

### **Low priority of gun cases**

Even when arrests are made, gun cases are not always a priority for prosecutors, and many offenders receive probation. Even as gun seizures by police have increased, Chicago officials reported that individuals caught with illegal guns are not always being held accountable. Chicago Police Department First Deputy Superintendent John Escalante said that more than 25 percent of the inmates in Cook County Jail awaiting trial or sentencing are there on drug charges, but just 5 percent are in jail on gun charges. This means that many gun arrestees are free pending trial, increasing their chances of becoming an offender or victim in another gun crime.

Several mayors and police chiefs expressed frustration that even when people are arrested and convicted of gun possession crimes—sometimes multiple times for multiple offenses—the harshest punishment they receive is probation. Police chiefs and mayors are asking federal prosecutors to take more gun cases, especially those involving repeat offenders, to federal court, where penalties are often less lenient. But U.S. attorneys noted that their resources are limited, so they can take only a small fraction of gun cases.

***“This is incredibly frustrating for us. We arrest individuals for unlawful use of a weapon, for possession cases, even for acts of violence. Professor Rick Rosenfeld from the University of Missouri-St. Louis did a study and looked at the cases that went before the courts in the circuit in St. Louis. In almost two-thirds of those cases, probation is the outcome.”***

—Sam Dotson, Chief,  
St. Louis (Missouri) Metropolitan Police Department

### Unfinished receivers

So-called “unfinished receivers” are a growing concern in California and could spread nationally. Also known as “80 percenters,” these largely unregulated component pieces can be easily obtained and adapted at home into fully functional automatic or semiautomatic weapons that have no serial numbers and cannot be traced. Police chiefs and U.S. attorneys in California report that more of these weapons are turning up at crime scenes; they fear the trend could move to other parts of the country.

***“We did a takedown yesterday where we arrested six people and seized 50 newly constructed AR-15s. In the course of the investigation we purchased another 35 or 40 of them. They’re easily put together completely outside the license process in machine shops in homes. It’s happening in big numbers in California, and it’s going to start spreading around the country.”***

—Benjamin Wagner, U.S. Attorney,  
Eastern District of California

### Criminal gangs

**Changing gang structures have led to more violence and more unpredictable violence**

While violence associated with street gangs is not new, summit participants identified some important changes in how gang violence is impacting their cities.

### Changes in gang organization

Changes in the organization and activities of some gangs are changing the nature of gang-related violence. Large-scale feuds among street gangs, often over control of drug markets, remain a concern in many cities. However, several police chiefs and prosecutors noted that recently, much of their gang-related violence is being driven not by the large, organized, hierarchical gangs but rather by small, neighborhood-based factions or individuals only loosely affiliated with the established gangs.



Lacking the hierarchy and discipline of the larger criminal organizations, these “micro-crews” are engaging in petty disputes with one another and then settling them violently with firearms. Several summit participants noted that this type of violence is proving to be even more random and unpredictable than traditional gang violence of the past.

***“More and more what I’m seeing are less organized, looser collections of street guys and that presents some really different and more difficult law enforcement issues for us. We’ve gone from the organizational crime which we can get our hands around, versus the crimes of opportunity.”***

—David Capp, U.S. Attorney, Northern District of Indiana

### **Social media**

Social media has become a new form of gang tagging and taunting. Several summit participants noted that social media is contributing to the random nature of much of today’s violence. This is especially true among members of the so-called micro-crews or loose gang affiliates, for whom a seemingly minor taunt or challenge on social media can easily and quickly turn into a shooting or homicide on the street.

***“We’re seeing a lot of our violence now being driven by social media. It’s the new form of tagging and taunting, and we know a lot of our violence is being driven by social media.”***

—John Escalante, First Deputy Superintendent,  
Chicago (Illinois) Police Department

### **Retaliation**

Gang retaliation can be quick and ferocious. Denver (Colorado) Police Chief Robert C. White reported a recent spate of lethal violence associated with the murder of a single gang-affiliated rap artist. The rapper had been challenging and taunting rivals through his lyrics, in concerts, and on social media. His murder outside a nightclub in late 2014 led to 12 retaliatory homicides in the first quarter of 2015.

### **Cybercrime**

Gangs are increasingly moving into cybercrime, leaving behind traditional drug markets, which can spark confrontations. New York City Police Department (NYPD) Commissioner William Bratton noted that some of the larger, hierarchical gangs are moving away from traditional sources of income, such as illegal drugs, and are moving into more lucrative cybercrimes, such as identity theft and credit card fraud. Summit participants expressed concern that any void left in drug distribution networks could lead to violent confrontations among other gangs or gang affiliates.

***“We’re seeing a very significant shift in what our gangs are involved in as far as moneymaking activity.”***

—William Bratton, Commissioner,  
New York City Police Department

## **Illegal drugs**

### **Heroin re-emergence, new psychoactive drugs are complicating matters for cities**

The explosion of heroin abuse and new psychoactive drugs (often called “synthetics”) in some cities, combined with the drug distribution networks operating in those communities, may be impacting violent crime.

### **Opioid abuse**

Prescription drug abuse is helping to fuel a dramatic rise in heroin abuse. For more than a year, mayors and police chiefs in some parts of the country have been noting a dramatic rise in heroin abuse—and overdoses—in their cities, largely among users who started with prescription painkillers. Recently, however, the police, armed with new laws, have successfully disrupted illegal prescription drug markets. Also, over the past few years, the purity of heroin has generally risen and prices have fallen. This combination of factors is leading many prescription drug abusers to turn to the cheaper and more potent heroin, which has the same effect on the body as Oxycodone and similar prescription painkillers.

According to Acting Administrator Chuck Rosenberg of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), heroin is now the number one problem in two-thirds of the DEA’s field divisions nationally. In the short term, some police chiefs reported that

increased heroin use has contributed to a rise in street robberies, and they are concerned that other violent crime could follow.

***“On the streets of Baltimore or the streets of New York, you pay a dollar a milligram for Oxycodone. A 30-milligram pill will cost you 30 bucks, give or take. But you can get the same high from heroin for about five or six dollars. That’s what we’re looking at right now, and it’s an astonishingly difficult and broad problem.”***

—Chuck Rosenberg, Acting Administrator,  
U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

### **Disruption of markets**

The disruption of established drug markets can lead to violent battles to fill the void. DEA Acting Administrator Rosenberg noted that most drug organizations are “poly-drug,” meaning they will supply what the market demands and are flexible in meeting those needs. Dallas (Texas) Police Chief David Brown noted that when drug gangs are disrupted or removed, the competition to fill the void can be violent—an unintended consequence of law enforcement’s success that needs to be planned for.

Sometimes, however, the drug market disruptions cannot be anticipated. Baltimore (Maryland) Police Commissioner Kevin Davis reported that during the civil unrest in the spring of 2015 following the in-custody death of Freddie Gray, looters ransacked pharmacies and introduced at least 288,000 doses of prescription opiates into the market. This disruption of the “normalcy of the traditional

drug markets” led to disputes among dealers at all levels and contributed to a surge in violence, the commissioner reported.

***“We have done a really good job of drug market disruption, but soon after a really good case is taken to the feds, we see a violent competition to take over the void of that market, because it’s driven by demand. So when you take out someone who’s running a street or neighborhood or running a big part of your city, the competition for that replacement is very violent.”***

—David Brown, Chief, Dallas (Texas) Police Department

### **Psychoactive drugs**

New psychoactive drugs are complicating the drug picture in some cities. Officials in New York City and Washington, D.C., especially noted a sharp rise in the sale and use of so-called “synthetic drugs”—variable and largely unregulated substances that go by names such as K2, spice, and legal phunk. Officials reported that these substances, much like phencyclidine (PCP), can produce erratic and sometimes violent behavior among users.

***“To address the growing threat of what are called ‘new psychoactive substances,’ the administration is working across the Federal Government, with Congress, and with international, state, municipal, and community partners to reduce use and***

***availability of these dangerous substances in our communities.”***

—Mary Lou Leary, Deputy Director,  
Office of National Drug Control Policy

### **Legalization of marijuana**

There is not enough evidence yet to determine the impact of legalized marijuana on crime rates, although illegal marijuana distribution continues to fuel violence in some areas. Officials from Denver reported that the legalization of marijuana in Colorado does not appear to have impacted violent crime in the short term, although there has been an increase in commercial burglaries of the all-cash marijuana establishments. NYPD Commissioner Bratton said that while violence associated with open-air drug (mostly cocaine) markets has subsided greatly in New York City, violence associated with marijuana distribution networks continues to be a serious problem.

***“Thirteen percent of all of our business burglaries are marijuana-related, either one of the growers or one of the dispensaries. Right now, this is a cash-only business for the most part, and as a result, those who are ill-intended seize on the opportunity to target those dispensaries that are selling legal marijuana.”***

—Robert C. White, Chief,  
Denver (Colorado) Police Department

## Reduction in proactive policing

**While there is no evidence of organized work slow-downs, some believe there is apprehension among officers, which could be impacting proactive policing**

***“Our discussion about civil rights and the appropriate use of force and all police tactics can only serve to make all of us, community members and police officers, safer. In my discussions with police officers around the country, I have found positive engagement on these issues. So while certainly there may be anecdotal evidence there, as all have noted there’s no data to support it. What I have seen in my travels across the country is the dedication, the commitment, and the resolve of our brave men and women in law enforcement to improving policing, to embracing the [President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing] recommendations, and to continuing to have a dialogue that makes our country safer for all.”***

—Loretta E. Lynch, Attorney General of the United States, testimony before U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary, November 17, 2015

Of all the exchanges that took place at the Attorney General’s Summit on Violent Crime, perhaps the most difficult was the discussion on whether the now commonplace video

recordings of police-community interactions are affecting officer behavior, productivity, and willingness to be proactive—and ultimately affecting violent crime as well. Summit participants offered a number of perspectives on the so-called “YouTube effect” and its impact on police activity and recent spikes in crime in some cities.

No evidence was presented at the summit directly linking any reduction in proactive policing with increases in crime. It was noted that crime did increase at least in the short term following highly publicized incidents in Baltimore, Maryland, and the St. Louis, Missouri, region, although there could be many explanations for that including some factors that began before the incidents themselves. This is clearly an area that warrants further study and attention.

***“I don’t know if there is a chilling effect with the officers. When I go all around the country and listen to officers, and I hear them talking about being more selective, thinking twice about stopping people and using force, my reaction is, ‘Great, that’s what you’re supposed to do.’ You’re talking about the restriction of freedom and possibly the use of deadly force, and the idea that you would think carefully about it is a good thing.”***

—Ronald L. Davis, Director, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services

### **Difficulty of measuring any YouTube effect**

Measuring any reduction in proactive policing is extremely difficult, and there is no evidence of any type of organized or widespread work slow-downs on the part of officers. Professor Richard Rosenfeld of the University of Missouri-St. Louis said that if crime were up and arrests were down across the board, that could indicate a “purposeful de-escalation” of policing activity—but the data are far from clear. In fact, some activity measures, such as the seizure of illegal firearms, are up sharply in several cities, including in Baltimore and St. Louis, where one might expect recent high-profile incidents to have had a chilling effect on officers. Summit participants offered no concrete evidence of “blue flu” or other organized work slow-downs that, in the past, have been associated with traditional management-labor disputes.

***“It’s not apparent to me that places like Minneapolis, Milwaukee, St. Louis—places that are up in crime—have seen a profound decrease in arrests. Perhaps temporarily after protest activity, but not over the long term.”***

—Richard Rosenfeld, Professor,  
University of Missouri-St. Louis

### **Officer anxiety**

Some summit participants argued that officer anxiety in the current environment is real, and it may be leading some officers to be less proactive. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director James Comey said that “a chill wind is blowing through law enforcement,” as officers may be questioning how they do their jobs

and how the public views them. Mayor Rahm Emanuel of Chicago, Illinois, and others said that based on their discussions with officers, many are feeling besieged and are fearful of doing something that could ruin their careers if it is captured on a few seconds of video that may not tell the whole story—the so-called “YouTube effect.”

Summit participants also pointed out that being a police officer today may be the most scrutinized—and now videotaped—job in the country, sometimes through organized campaigns to record police-citizen interactions. This constant scrutiny can feed feelings of apprehension among officers as they question actions they have traditionally done in the past and become more selective in their self-initiated activity.

***“The level of anxieties post-riots, to include the arrest of six police officers, was very real. There was a lot of conversation about what reasonable suspicion is, what probable cause is. Has it changed? Are things being looked at differently? That level of anxiety was so thick you could cut it with a knife.”***

—Kevin Davis, Commissioner,  
Baltimore (Maryland) Police Department

## Other factors

Other factors may help explain any reductions in proactive policing. St. Louis (Missouri) Metropolitan Police Chief Sam Dotson said that because calls for service are up 11 percent in his city and police ranks have thinned, officers are spending more time answering calls and have less time to engage in proactive policing. In some cities, increased documentation of community contacts is taking up more officer time. Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer noted that in California, some officers are growing frustrated because there are seemingly few rewards for being proactive: Suspects they repeatedly arrest are receiving few consequences and are quickly back on the street.

***“You just have to talk to your officers and find out that they are being much more thoughtful, much more selective in who they stop and where they stop individuals on the street. So as a result you’re going to have more people that are driving on the streets today armed with guns that aren’t being stopped that perhaps used to be stopped.”***

—Jerry Dyer, Chief, Fresno (California) Police Department

***“Among the officers, there wasn’t a conscious conversation about, ‘Are we not going to do our jobs?’ It’s the environment, the new norm seen in St. Louis: an 11-percent increase in calls for services, less time for officers to go to the self-initiated activities, increases in crime.”***

—Sam Dotson, Chief,  
St. Louis (Missouri) Metropolitan Police Department

NYPD Commissioner Bratton reported that New York City is purposefully reducing some police activities (including stop-question-frisk encounters, which have declined from 700,000 in 2010 to about 40,000 a year now) so that officers can focus on other priorities that impact violent crime.

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## WHAT ARE SOME PROMISING STRATEGIES TO COMBAT VIOLENT CRIME?

After exploring some of the key factors that may be driving the spikes in violent crime in some American cities, summit participants turned to a discussion of promising strategies for addressing those factors. Following are some of the key efforts discussed at the summit, in particular efforts that involve local and Federal Government cooperation.

### **Crime Gun Intelligence Centers and NIBIN**

#### **Technology and local-federal partnerships enhance criminal investigations and prosecutions**

Three cities represented at the summit—Chicago, Illinois; Denver, Colorado; and Milwaukee, Wisconsin—have launched Crime Gun Intelligence Centers to coordinate and speed up investigations of gun violence. Two elements are key to this approach: collecting guns and ballistic evidence from all crime scenes (including incidents in which shots are fired at buildings, vehicles, street signs, etc., but don't strike anyone) and quickly analyzing that evidence using modern technology.

On the technology side, the centerpiece is the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), developed by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). The NIBIN program automates ballistics evaluations and provides actionable investigative leads in a timely manner. Firearms technicians enter cartridge casing evidence into the Integrated Ballistic Identification System, and these images are correlated against the national database, assisting agencies in linking incidents, identifying trigger pullers, and getting offenders off the streets before the next shooting or homicide occurs.

With its own dedicated crime lab and NIBIN's fast-track capability, Denver has been able to reduce the turnaround time for analyzing ballistic evidence from weeks or months to just days. In Nashville, Tennessee, which also has its own crime lab, police made 22 cold hits through NIBIN in just three months, including a murder case and five related incidents. To better position NIBIN in support of local agencies, the ATF recently moved this function from its Crime Lab to its Field Operations division.

***“One of the most significant opportunities to address violent offenders in our communities is the NIBIN fast-track program. Due to the mobility of criminals today, expansion of access to the fast-track program to more law enforcement agencies will increase the ability to identify violent offenders. Swift accountability for criminals engaged in violence against members of the community, particularly those using guns, provides the greatest returns to law enforcement in achieving our public safety mission. Collaboration of federal, state, and local law enforcement in the prosecution of these offenders can reduce and deter future violence while focusing incarceration and law enforcement resources where they can have the greatest impact.”***

—J. Damian Huggins, Deputy Chief,  
Metropolitan Nashville (Tennessee) Police Department

## **Strategic targeting of gun prosecutions in federal court**

**Local police, state and federal prosecutors work together to go after the most serious violent offenders**

Several jurisdictions reported that local police and state and federal prosecutors now meet on a regular basis to review and triage their

violent crime cases and jointly determine how to have the greatest impact on violence. Often, this means prosecuting the most serious violent offenders on federal charges. One example is Operation Triggerlock in New York City, in which the NYPD, the U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of New York, and the ATF team up to identify and prosecute in federal court the most violent gun offenders in high-crime areas. In Denver, when NIBIN pointed to two gangs involved in a spate of violence, police were able to gather additional evidence, and the U.S. Attorney's Office brought 20 federal cases.

Some of the U.S. attorneys at the summit pointed out that in cases involving drug-related violence, prosecutors may choose to bring drug and Racketeer and Corrupt Organizations (RICO) Act charges, because these are often easier to prove in court and, when handled strategically, can result in removing violent offenders from the community for just as long as if those offenders were prosecuted on other charges.

***“We are all experiencing the same challenges with individuals who are charged in state court being released and the local courts not being a deterrent. We know for a fact in Baltimore, when we have the assistance of the federal system, it makes an impact.”***

—Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Mayor, City of Baltimore,  
Maryland, and President, U.S. Conference of Mayors



## Operation Exodus

### Providing apprentice and job opportunities for prisoners re-entering the community

Faced with the challenge of more offenders—or returning citizens—being released from prison and returning to the community with few skills and limited job options, Boston, Massachusetts, officials approached their local trade unions about creating a pre-apprenticeship training program for some recently released prisoners to gain skills and eventually job placement. Of the 36 initially placed in the program, named Operation Exodus, 28 successfully graduated.

Boston Mayor Martin Walsh said the initiative is meant to do more than find jobs in the short term for people returning to the community; it is intended to break the “generational hopelessness” that permeates many communities. He indicated that as Operation Exodus has grown and word of its success has spread, people in some of Boston’s high crime neighborhoods have begun inquiring how they can get involved.

***“We have to create some type of hope for people, and I think that’s what Operation Exodus has done. It has created a lot of hope and that hope is contagious. People in Roxbury, Mattapan, and Dorchester are saying, ‘How do I get into that program?’”***

—Martin Walsh, Mayor, City of Boston

## Youth violence reduction in Chicago

### Investing in young people to drive down violence

Although homicides and shootings are up overall in Chicago, Illinois, shootings and homicides of young people are down 30 percent and 8 percent, respectively. Chicago officials at the summit attributed these positive trends to an intensive, evidence-based effort to invest in young people. Today, 28,000 Chicago public school students are receiving after-school programming including mentoring and academic support, and 25,000 young people now work in summer jobs. Among the summer job program participants, a subset also received more intensive, “wrap-around” support to address multiple needs. A follow-up analysis revealed that this group had 50 percent fewer arrests than the other program participants.

***“We have in four years increased our after-school funding by 100 percent and our summer jobs by 75 to 80 percent—the largest programs in the history of the city. If anybody doubts those kinds of interventions or investments work, just consider that at a time when we’re seeing dramatic increases in overall shootings and homicides, the trend with adolescents is going the other way.”***

—Rahm Emanuel, Mayor, City of Chicago, Illinois

## Denver Impact Teams

### Targeted enforcement combined with youth outreach

In response to a spate of gang-related violence, Denver, Colorado, officials formed Impact Teams, a large-scale collaborative campaign that brought together two dozen police and community partners. On the enforcement end, the effort used technology and partnerships with federal agencies to focus on gun crimes and target violent repeat offenders for arrest and enhanced prosecution by both state and federal prosecutors.

In the community, Denver officials reached out to high-risk youths through an extensive program of free summer activities including field trips and summer camps and partnerships with faith communities, Boys and Girls Clubs, and even former gang members.

***“Perhaps the greatest resource we have in dealing with the gang issue is getting the community partners on board. The Impact Team has 25 different partners as it relates to addressing the gang issue: 15 are law enforcement components and technology, and 10 of them are community components, such as the pastors.”***

—Robert C. White, Chief,  
Denver (Colorado) Police Department

## Violence intervention strategies

### Systematic efforts to intervene with gang members before the next crime

A number of cities reported on their efforts to identify and directly intervene with known gang members and other potentially violent offenders. The goal is to keep these individuals not only from committing new violent crimes but also from becoming victims of violence themselves.

In Chicago, for example, the police department's Office of Crime Control Strategies created a sophisticated mathematical formula to identify the gang members who are at greatest risk of becoming a victim or offender in future violence. Police officers then go out into the neighborhoods and attempt to make direct contact with the individuals. Officers explain to the individuals why they got on the police department's list, the consequences of continued gang activity, and alternatives available to them.

First Deputy Superintendent Escalante reported that even when officers do not make direct contact with the gang members themselves, they are seeing some success in talking with family members about consequences and alternatives. Gary, Indiana, Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson emphasized the importance of not just giving lip service to the two paths for gang members—an alternative lifestyle or severe consequences—but actually following through on creating and funding both paths.

***“You have to provide the education, the employment, the housing—whatever those individuals who want to get out of the gang life need. But you also have to make good on the promise that if they don’t take the better role, the law-abiding role, then we have created another option for you that you won’t like. You have to be clear on both paths.”***

—Karen Freeman-Wilson, Mayor, City of Gary, Indiana

## **Violence reduction network**

**Data-driven, evidence-based initiatives are supporting local violence reduction efforts**

Deputy Attorney General Sally Yates described recent successes from the Violence Reduction Network (VRN), a U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) initiative that provides strategic, intensive training and technical assistance to reduce violence in high-crime cities. Examples include the following:

- » In Wilmington, Delaware, the homicide clearance rate rose from 10 percent to 50 percent after the VRN provided training and helped the police department establish a homicide response unit.

- » In Detroit, Michigan, the police department partnered with a local university to thoroughly analyze their data and identify warning signs for domestic violence.
- » In Richmond, California, VRN resources were used to support the “Safe City Summer” initiative, a community safety fair and expo that allowed police to engage with approximately 4,000 residents.

Just prior to the summit, the DOJ announced that five new cities were joining the VRN, bringing the total to 10.

***“This is not an [Office of Justice Programs] program; it’s not a COPS [Office] program; it’s not an [Office on Violence against Women] program—it’s a [U.S.] Department of Justice program. And everybody at this table, every one of the federal law enforcement agencies, has been actively involved in it. Our goal is to figure out how we can collectively use the resources that we have to be better partners with all of you to create safer communities.”***

—Karol Mason, Assistant Attorney General,  
Office of Justice Programs



Senior U.S. Department of Justice officials meet at the Attorney General's Summit on Violent Crime, October 7, 2015

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## WHAT MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE?

Finally, summit participants discussed what more needs to be done both to better understand the recent surge in violence in many cities and to implement solutions to reverse those trends. Here are some of the main themes that emerged from that discussion.

### **More timely and accurate data**

#### **Having actionable information can be key to combating violent crime and building community trust**

FBI Director Comey focused much of his remarks on the need to develop a more accurate, rich, and timely view of violent crime data in the United States. (See the sidebar for a more detailed summary of his remarks.) Acknowledging that fighting crime largely is a local issue and will remain so, Director Comey said that nevertheless there would be “tremendous value” in having a detailed, accurate national picture of crime. Using a medical analogy, the director said that just as emergency room doctors benefit from knowing about trends or spikes in certain kinds of illnesses around the country, so too would police chiefs and crime analysts benefit from information about national crime trends or spikes delivered on a timely basis.

Director Comey said that better data would not only help police officials and prosecutors with their tactical responses to violent crime but

would also help inform the broader national conversation about violent crime and police-community relations. He noted that because so much violent crime is concentrated in poor, highly challenged communities, it is sometimes easy for the rest of the country to be unaware of what is taking place—an assertion echoed by Mayors Mitchell Landrieu of New Orleans, Louisiana, and Tom Barrett of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, among others. Having better data would support a truly national conversation about violence. Also, having more timely, accurate, and comprehensive data on violent encounters between police officers and residents would help everyone to better understand the issues surrounding police use of force and to engage in a more productive dialogue that can build community trust.

### **More federal resources for re-entry programming**

#### **A call for more funding, better coordination**

Summit participants pointed out that regardless of what prison system (federal or state) offenders are released from, they end up back in local communities—usually cities that currently lack the resources for comprehensive re-entry programming, especially drug abuse treatment.

## FBI Director James Comey on Data, NIBRS, Police Use of Force

In his remarks at the Attorney General's Summit on Violent Crime, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Director James Comey focused largely on the need for better, more timely, and more complete data to help not only policymakers and practitioners but also the general public better understand and address the issues of crime, violence, and police-civilian interactions. Here are some of the highlights of his remarks.

### Explaining the map and the calendar

In discussing the recent surge in violence in some cities, Director Comey said decision makers need information that helps them explain two important variables:

1. The map—why are spikes in violent crime happening in some places but not in others?
2. The calendar—why are these crime spikes happening now?

He said that explaining the current map and calendar defies easy answers. "The question I keep asking my staff is, do the hypotheses fit the map and the calendar? When you stare at an entire country, you see cities, sometimes with little in common, that are seeing dramatic increases in violence, especially homicide. I keep asking, what has changed that would explain why this is happening in the first nine months of this year and all over the country?"

Director Comey said the Federal Government has a unique role to play in helping to answer these questions but noted that current data systems, such as the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), do not provide either the depth of information or the timeliness that are needed to fully understand emerging trends such as the recent spike in violence.

### NIBRS implementation

Director Comey said that a key long-term goal is the more widespread implementation of NIBRS—the National Incident Based Reporting System—as a replacement for the current UCR system. UCR typically reports information months after it is collected and does not provide the level of detail available in NIBRS. Comey acknowledged that

there are financial and technical hurdles related to NIBRS implementation that local jurisdictions need to overcome. There are also issues of community perception that occur when some reported crime levels appear to increase following NIBRS implementation when in fact the "increase" may only reflect better, more complete reporting. The police chiefs of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and Denver, Colorado—two major cities that have implemented NIBRS—indicated that this was a short-term issue in their communities that was addressed through community education and time. Comey pledged the FBI's help to local jurisdictions in overcoming these hurdles, including plans to keep the UCR running simultaneously for a period of time as agencies implement NIBRS.

In the meantime, he said the country needs to find other ways to develop a good short-term picture of crime in the country. Noting that everything from weekend movie box office sales to flu outbreaks can be measured in almost real time, he said the country should be able to do the same when it comes to violence, including violent encounters between police officers and residents.

### Understanding violent encounters between police and civilians

Director Comey said the lack of timely and accurate information about violent encounters between police officers and residents is contributing to ill-informed discussions that can undermine police-community trust. "I think every single conversation in this country, from the national level to a local level, about use of force and police encounters with civilians is by definition uninformed, and uninformed conversations are just dangerous for our country," he said. He noted that while the number of officers *killed* in the line of duty is tracked through the LEOKA (Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted) program, the profession does not have a firm grasp on the number of officers *assaulted* by civilians in line of duty. "I just don't think we can address these really, really important questions about policing and use of force without knowing the circumstances around how we're encountering civilians and how these incidents are happening," he said.

NYPD Commissioner Bratton suggested that cost savings from incarcerating fewer offenders should be dedicated to re-entry services. Mayors and other officials spoke of the need to ensure coordination in re-entry services among the Federal Interagency Reentry Council (FIRC)<sup>4</sup> and the Strong Cities Strong Communities (SC2) program of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

## More flexibility and focus on the use of federal funds

### A desire to hire civilian employees, direct resources for urban violent crime priorities

Denver Chief White said that, in a push to put more officers on the street, his department would like to use federal hiring grants to recruit skilled civilian employees for technical and administrative tasks currently carried out by sworn officers. This type of program could allow for the hiring of more returning veterans, including wounded warriors, who want to remain in public service. DOJ officials noted that current federal appropriations language restricts hiring grants to sworn officers only, and Attorney General Lynch encouraged police chiefs and mayors to contact members of Congress on this issue.

In addition, Chicago Mayor Emanuel noted that under a federal statute, a small percentage of asset forfeiture funds are returned to the U.S. Treasury each year to support deficit reduction. He argued that the money has a

4. The Federal Interagency Re-entry Council released a series of Mythbusters, or fact sheets, clarifying existing federal policies that affect formerly incarcerated individuals in areas such as financial aid, public housing, employment, parental rights, Medicaid suspension or termination, voting rights, and more. For more information, see “Reentry MythBusters,” Council of State Governments Justice Center, accessed April 11, 2016, <https://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/projects/mythbusters/>.

## Re-Entry Programs

*“We are not going to jail our way to safer communities.”*

—Sally Yates, Deputy Attorney General of the United States

Summit participants spent considerable time discussing recent policy changes—both nationally and in some states specifically—that are shortening prison sentences for mostly nonviolent offenders, some of whom were sentenced years or even decades earlier. Summit participants generally agreed on the need for criminal justice reforms but identified two broad issues that will need attention as these policy changes take full effect.

1. Violent and repeat offenders should be the priority for limited prison space.
2. As more prisoners re-enter the community, there must be sufficient job training, housing, substance abuse, and mental health services available to them to mitigate the potential for recidivism.

Releasing prisoners back to the community without adequate supervision and social services could undermine the effectiveness of criminal justice reforms. Most offenders re-entering the community have multiple needs including a need for job training and placement, housing, and frequently substance abuse and mental health services. If these needs are not met, summit participants warned, many of the same people could end back in the justice system, and community safety will suffer. New York City Police Department (NYPD) Commissioner William Bratton reported that parolee-involved shootings have increased in New York City as the number of people released from state prisons has grown, but the number of parole officers supervising them has not risen. (Just two weeks after the summit, NYPD Officer Randolph Holder was shot and killed by a career criminal who had absconded from a drug treatment diversion program and engaged in a gunfight over a stolen bicycle.)<sup>5</sup> Bratton and other summit participants warned that without coordinated planning and resources, the country may risk repeating the same mistakes made in the 1970s with the large-scale deinstitutionalization of people with mental illness but inadequate resources in the community to help them.

***“In the 1970s, we let hundreds of thousands people out of our mental institutions—well intended—but they didn’t have any place to go, and they didn’t have supervision. We created the homeless problem in the cities. Similarly now, we’re letting people out of jails and prisons, and some of them are not going to have any place to go.”***

**—William Bratton, Commissioner,  
New York City Police Department**

### **California may provide an early look at the impact of policy changes at the state level.**

In recent years, California has undertaken three major changes:

1. A so-called “realignment” that moved large numbers of offenders from state prison to county jails and community corrections
2. Proposition 36, which changed the state’s “three strikes” law to require that the third felony be a *serious or violent crime* to qualify for a mandatory 25 years-to-life sentence (previously, the third offense needed only to be any type of felony)
3. Most recently, Proposition 47, which reduced a number of drug and theft crimes from felonies to misdemeanors

While the California officials at the summit said it was too early to fully assess the impact these policy changes may have on crime and violence in their cities, anecdotal evidence suggests that many of the same offenders are now being arrested—and re-arrested multiple times—mostly for drug and minor property offenses. One analysis found that in the 11 months since Proposition 47 was enacted, more than 4,300 state prisoners had been resentenced and released; in the meantime, crime increased in several California cities.<sup>†</sup> Some summit participants said that repeated arrests for relatively minor offenses committed by the same offenders have the potential to tie up police and criminal justice resources, including probation and parole services, that could be devoted to more serious violent crime instead.

***“The big rub right now is that there has not been an increase in parole agents, and there has not been an increase in probation officers, so we anticipate that is going to be an issue moving forward. We have to see if the other services will be available for those reentering the community from custody.”***

**—Paul Figueroa, Assistant Chief, Oakland (California)  
Police Department**

### **An unintended consequence: Fewer drug offenders seeking treatment.**

California officials reported one unexpected and troubling result of the recently passed Proposition 47: Without the possibility of a felony charge and a state prison sentence hanging over them, fewer drug offenders are electing to have their cases heard in the state’s drug courts, where drug treatment is typically a part of the adjudication. Instead, more of these offenders are choosing to have their cases heard in traditional criminal courts, and most are receiving probation or other community-based sentences that don’t include drug treatment. Over the past year, drug courts in both Fresno and Riverside have closed. With fewer lower-level drug offenders being diverted into treatment, and with resources tight for drug demand reduction in general, officials worry there could be an impact on property crimes and potentially violent crime rates moving forward.

***“One of the things that we did in the 90’s that I think is applicable now is to address the drug demand through drug treatment courts, through other treatment interventions, and also through re-entry, which is one of the progeny of drug treatment courts.”***

**—Karen Freeman-Wilson, Mayor, City of Gary, Indiana**

\* “Career Criminal Charged in Deadly Shooting of NYPD Officer,” CBS Radio Inc., last modified October 21, 2015, <http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2015/10/21/nypd-officer-killed-east-harlem-shooting/>.

† Eli Saslow, “A ‘Virtual Get-Out-of-Jail Free Card’: A New California Law to Reduce Prison Crowding Keeps One Addict Out of Jail, But Not Out of Trouble,” *Washington Post*, last modified October 10, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/sf/national/2015/10/10/prop47/>.



minuscule impact on the overall deficit and that the funds could be used more effectively on hiring assistant U.S. attorneys to prosecute gun crimes and supporting other violent crime priorities. Again, this adjustment would require a change in the language contained in federal appropriations bill.

Finally, Hartford, Connecticut, Mayor Pedro Segarra and Gary Mayor Freeman-Wilson pointed out that many federal programs are funneled through state governments, whose leaders don't always share the mayors' concerns over urban violence. They suggested that money for some antiviolence initiatives be awarded directly to cities, which are better positioned than the states to understand the violent crime problems and know what strategies work best to combat them.

## **More public and visible displays of support for police officers and community partners**

### **A call to stand behind and support those on the front lines of violence prevention and community safety**

Summit participants agreed that the vast majority of police officers in the United States perform admirably and heroically, yet their contributions are often overshadowed by those officers who do not perform to the highest standards. Dallas Chief Brown and others remarked that it is unfortunate and unfair for the entire policing profession to be defined by a small number of officers who engage in wrongdoing.

Summit participants discussed a number of ways that mayors, police chiefs, and other leaders can demonstrate their support for officers—from personally visiting police roll calls, posting positive videos on social media, and expressing support for officers during community events and via the social media. The Reverend Jeffrey Brown noted that it is also important to value and show support for the large number of community members who are on the ground working cooperatively with the police to combat crime—"not the show horses but the work horses" who are committed advocates for true community policing.



Participants meet at the Attorney General's Summit on Violent Crime, October 7, 2015

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## CONCLUSION

***“I know that progress will not be immediate and certainly won’t be easy. But I am confident that we are identifying effective ways to improve public safety—and putting them to good use. And I am excited for all that we will achieve—together—in the days and months to come.”***

—Loretta E. Lynch, Attorney General of the United States

This report summarizes the major themes and issues discussed during the Attorney General’s Summit on Violent Crime. It represents a snapshot of some very dynamic, complex, and challenging issues that our nation—and especially our cities—are grappling with right now.

It is critically important not to look at these issues in isolation. While the summit explored a number of individual factors that may be contributing to recent increases in violent crime—guns, gangs, drugs, and levels of proactive policing—it also served to reinforce the fact that it is impossible to separate these factors from one another. These issues are interconnected, and they are interconnecting at a time when violent crime is increasing in many communities and in an environment where community trust and police legitimacy are facing serious challenges. Proposed solutions need to account for and address the connections among these and probably other contributing factors.

In the meantime, it is imperative that the discussions and information sharing that took place during the Attorney General’s Summit on Violent Crime continue—within individual jurisdictions, across the cities that participated in the summit, and to other communities. This was a theme that Attorney General Lynch stressed in the question-and-answer session she held with summit participants and during her closing remarks at the summit. (See the sidebar for a more detailed summary of the attorney general’s remarks.) She closed by thanking the organizers and participants in the summit and urging everyone to remain committed to working together.

## **Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch on Partnerships, Federal Support, and Creative Responses to Crime**

In her closing remarks at the Attorney General's Summit on Violent Crime, Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch summarized many of the themes discussed throughout the day, including partnerships, federal support for local efforts, and the need for comprehensive responses.

### **The "power of partnerships"**

Attorney General Lynch said the summit reflected the types of collaborative efforts that are needed to stay on top of and address the "shifting patterns of violence over time." She applauded ongoing partnerships not only among law enforcement officials at all levels of government but also "between law enforcement and the citizens we serve." Referring to her recent six-city community policing tour, the attorney general said, "I had the opportunity to see community leaders, public safety officers, elected officials and young people joining together to build safer, stronger, more cohesive communities." She praised summit participants for being dedicated to the same principles.

### **U.S. Department of Justice leadership**

Noting, as others did, that public safety in the United States is largely a local responsibility, Attorney General Lynch highlighted ways in which the U.S. Department of Justice is working to support state and local partners and "helping to advance our shared mission." The attorney general said, "We are taking innovative new approaches to criminal justice and community policing" through programs such as the National Initiative for Building Community Trust and Justice, the Smart on Crime Initiative, the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing, the Violence Reduction Network, and major grant programs from the Office of Justice Programs and Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.

"In all these efforts, we're working tirelessly and creatively, through a variety of channels, to reduce violent crime, to promote officer safety, and to restore community trust and security across the country," Attorney General Lynch said.

### **Multifaceted issues—multifaceted responses**

Finally, Attorney General Lynch noted the complex nature of crime and violence and the need for a variety of complementary responses. Criminal justice officials will always play a critical role in combating violence, she said, but even as the country focuses on what the police can do, "we also need to discuss how we can alleviate some of the problems that stifle opportunity and lead to violence in the first place—from poverty to substandard schools to homelessness to inadequate mental health services," she said. Noting ongoing partnerships with other federal agencies—the U.S. Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development, among others—the attorney general said, "It's why we are examining holistic, comprehensive approaches, and it's why we will continue to build a strong and effective coalition to take on the complex challenges." She applauded all of the summit participants for their willingness to tackle these challenges and work to build safer communities.

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## APPENDIX. VIOLENT CRIME SUMMIT PARTICIPANTS

**Jerry Abramson**

Deputy Assistant to the President and Director  
of Intergovernmental Affairs, The White House

**Tom Barrett**

Mayor, City of Milwaukee, Wisconsin

**Michael Bosworth**

White House Deputy Counsel,  
The White House

**Muriel Bowser**

Mayor, City of Washington, District of Columbia

**Tom Brandon**

Acting Director, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco,  
Firearms, and Explosives

**William Bratton**

Police Commissioner, New York City (New York)  
Police Department

**David Brown**

Chief of Police, Dallas (Texas) Police Department

**Jeff Brown**

Senior Pastor, Twelfth Street Baptist Church,  
Boston, Massachusetts

**Richard Callahan**

U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office  
for the Eastern District of Missouri

**David Capp**

U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office  
for the Northern District of Indiana

**Tom Cochran**

Executive Director, U.S. Conference of Mayors

**Vincent Cohen**

U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office  
for the District of Columbia

**James Comey**

Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

**Kelly T. Currie**

U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office  
for the Eastern District of New York

**Deirdre Daly**

U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office  
for the District of Connecticut

**Kevin Davis**

Police Commissioner, Baltimore (Maryland)  
Police Department

**Ronald L. Davis**

Director, U.S. Department of Justice Office  
of Community Oriented Policing Services

**Stuart F. Delery**

Acting Associate Attorney General,  
U.S. Department of Justice Office of the  
Associate Attorney General

**D. Samuel Dotson**

Chief of Police, St. Louis (Missouri) Metropolitan  
Police Department

**Jerry Dyer**

Chief of Police, Fresno (California)  
Police Department

**Neil Eggleston**

White House Counsel, The White House

**Rahm Emanuel**

Mayor, City of Chicago, Illinois

**John Escalante**

First Deputy Superintendent, Chicago (Illinois)  
Police Department

**William Evans**

Police Commissioner, Boston (Massachusetts)  
Police Department

**Zachary Fardon**

U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office  
for the Northern District of Illinois

**Paul Figueroa**

Assistant Chief, Oakland (California)  
Police Department

**Edward Flynn**

Chief of Police, Milwaukee (Wisconsin)  
Police Department

**Karen Freeman-Wilson**

Mayor, City of Gary, Indiana

**Bob Gualtieri**

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Police Department

**Sally Yates**

Deputy Attorney General, U.S. Department of  
Justice Office of the Deputy Attorney General



Senior U.S. Department of Justice officials meet at the Attorney General's Summit on Violent Crime, October 7, 2015



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## ABOUT PERF

The **Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)** is an independent research organization that focuses on critical issues in policing. Since its founding in 1976, PERF has identified best practices on fundamental issues such as reducing police use of force, developing community policing and problem-oriented policing, using technologies to deliver police services to the community, and evaluating crime reduction strategies.

PERF strives to advance professionalism in policing and to improve the delivery of police services through the exercise of strong national leadership, public debate of police and criminal justice issues, and research and policy development.

In addition to conducting research and publishing reports on our findings, PERF conducts management studies of individual law enforcement agencies, educates hundreds of police officials each year in a three-week executive development program, and provides executive search services to governments that wish to conduct national searches for their next police chief.

All of PERF's work benefits from PERF's status as a membership organization of police officials, academics, Federal Government leaders, and others with an interest in policing and criminal justice.

All PERF members must have a four-year college degree and must subscribe to a set of founding principles emphasizing the importance of research and public debate in policing, adherence to the Constitution and the highest standards of integrity, and accountability to the communities that police agencies serve.

PERF is governed by a member-elected president and board of directors and a board-appointed executive director. A staff of approximately 30 full-time professionals is based in Washington, D.C.

To learn more, visit PERF online at [www.policeforum.org](http://www.policeforum.org).

## ABOUT THE COPS OFFICE

The **Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office)** is the component of the U.S. Department of Justice responsible for advancing the practice of community policing by the nation's state, local, territorial, and tribal law enforcement agencies through information and grant resources.

Community policing begins with a commitment to building trust and mutual respect between police and communities. It supports public safety by encouraging all stakeholders to work together to address our nation's crime challenges. When police and communities collaborate, they more effectively address underlying issues, change negative behavioral patterns, and allocate resources.

Rather than simply responding to crime, community policing focuses on preventing it through strategic problem solving approaches based on collaboration. The COPS Office awards grants to hire community police and support the development and testing of innovative policing strategies. COPS Office funding also provides training and technical assistance to community members and local government leaders, as well as all levels of law enforcement.

Another source of COPS Office assistance is the Collaborative Reform Initiative for Technical Assistance (CRI-TA). Developed to advance community policing and ensure constitutional practices, CRI-TA is an independent, objective process for organizational transformation. It provides recommendations based on expert

analysis of policies, practices, training, tactics, and accountability methods related to issues of concern.

Since 1994, the COPS Office has invested more than \$14 billion to add community policing officers to the nation's streets, enhance crime fighting technology, support crime prevention initiatives, and provide training and technical assistance to help advance community policing.

- » To date, the COPS Office has funded the hiring of approximately 127,000 additional officers by more than 13,000 of the nation's 18,000 law enforcement agencies in both small and large jurisdictions.
- » Nearly 700,000 law enforcement personnel, community members, and government leaders have been trained through COPS Office-funded training organizations.
- » To date, the COPS Office has distributed more than eight million topic-specific publications, training curricula, white papers, and resource CDs.
- » The COPS Office also sponsors conferences, roundtables, and other forums focused on issues critical to law enforcement.

The COPS Office information resources, covering a wide range of community policing topics—from school and campus safety to gang violence—can be downloaded at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov). This website is also the grant application portal, providing access to online application forms.



After several U.S. cities experienced sudden increases in violent crime during the first half of 2015, the U.S. Attorney General's Summit on Violent Crime was called to help both policy makers and practitioners gain a better understanding of the situation and how it could be addressed most effectively.

Mayors, police chiefs, and U.S. attorneys representing 20 U.S. cities, most of which have experienced increases in violent crime, came to Washington to offer their perspectives on the issue. This report provides a summary of the issues discussed, which focused on the factors that may be driving the recent surge in violence and possible strategies for reversing it, exploring topics such as illegal gun possession, gangs, drugs, and the reduction in proactive policing.



**COPS**  
*Community Oriented Policing Services*  
*U.S. Department of Justice*

U.S. Department of Justice  
Office of Community Oriented Policing Services  
145 N Street NE  
Washington, DC 20530

To obtain details about COPS Office programs, call  
the COPS Office Response Center at 800-421-6770.

Visit the COPS Office online at [www.cops.usdoj.gov](http://www.cops.usdoj.gov).



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