



U.S. Department of Justice

Office of the Deputy Attorney General

Washington, DC 20530

August 12, 2013

MEMORANDUM FOR ALL UNITED STATES ATTORNEYS

FROM: James M. Cole
Deputy Attorney General

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J.M. Cole", written over the printed name of James M. Cole.

SUBJECT: Anti-Violence Strategies in U.S. Attorneys' Offices

In 2010, the Attorney General outlined the Department's commitment to a violent crime strategy that emphasized enforcement, prevention, and reentry as its cornerstones. The Attorney General's Advisory Committee reinforced this vision in a November 2010 memorandum that assigned to all United States Attorneys the responsibility of working as a catalyst for bringing together federal, state, and local officials and devising effective place-based anti-violence strategies for those communities most in need in their districts. In a memorandum dated January 19, 2011, I further encouraged United States Attorneys' Offices (USAOs) to participate in post-conviction reentry programs, and I provided general guidelines for consideration when becoming involved in reentry programs.

A central message of this earlier guidance was that, while the aggressive enforcement of federal criminal statutes remains necessary, we cannot arrest our way out of the violent crime problem. To be effective, federal efforts to combat violent crime need to address all three prongs of the violent crime strategy. As the Attorney General said in 2010, "federal prosecutors must become neighborhood problem solvers, not simply case processors." Enforcement, prevention, and reentry are interlocking components of that integrated, comprehensive strategy.

U.S. Attorneys have already been leaders in these efforts. In conjunction with your federal, state and local law enforcement partners, you have bolstered intelligence capabilities, planned and executed sophisticated criminal investigations and prosecutions that target the most significant threats, and complemented these efforts by undertaking prevention and reentry outreach programs, such as "front end" drug court programs and post-conviction reentry courts. These efforts have been undertaken in an era of declining resources when we are being asked to do more with less.

Our work, however, must continue. Many of our communities still suffer from alarming rates of homicides, firearms violence and aggravated assaults. Confronting this problem and its

root causes with a holistic approach remains a priority for the Department of Justice. To that end, it remains critically important for United States Attorneys to lead the efforts of federal, state and local law enforcement to address violent crime within their districts. This Memorandum provides guidance on how USAOs should work to continue to tackle these challenges.

I. Convene a Law Enforcement Forum

Coordination and cooperation are hallmarks of a successful anti-violence strategy. With multiple federal, state, and local agencies involved in the fight against violent crime, strong relationships and robust information sharing are critical to achieve common goals and to avoid the unnecessary duplication of competing resources and efforts.

Many have found that a United States Attorney-led forum, convened on a regular basis (weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or quarterly), is a helpful way to foster such relationships and facilitate communication about efforts to combat violent crime. If you do not already do so, I strongly encourage you to regularly convene such a forum in your district comprised of federal, state, and local law enforcement partners. By bringing together high-level commanders with decision making authority (*e.g.*, Special Agents-in-Charge, Assistant Special Agents-in-Charge, U.S. Marshals and Chief Deputy Marshals, and State and Local Police Chiefs, Commanders, and Captains) for those areas most in need, and by providing an environment that encourages an open exchange of information and ideas, United States Attorneys can assist the collective group to develop and design a sustainable anti-violence strategy.

II. Evaluate and, if Conditions Warrant, Update the Place-Based Anti-Violence Strategies for Your District

Evaluate the anti-violence strategies you have in place for the communities in your district most plagued by violent crime. Focusing on the three key areas of enforcement, prevention, and reentry, you should consider whether current conditions in your district require modification or reinvigoration of your anti-violence strategy. Recognizing that the size, demographics, and local conditions in individual districts may vary, the November 2010 Memo provides a flexible blueprint for leading a comprehensive and effective anti-violence effort. Evaluations of current anti-violence strategies should entail, among other steps, collaboration and coordination with federal, state, and local partners to collect reliable data on local violent crime trends; creation of inventories of federal, state, and local enforcement, prevention, and reentry assets that can be brought to bear; robust communication between federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies; and support for community-based crime prevention and reentry efforts.

Just as the frequency with which your local forum meets will vary depending upon the conditions in your district, so too will its precise objectives. Some forums may focus primarily

on analyzing crime data and trends in an effort to focus resources in a coordinated manner. Other objectives may include candid discussions of enforcement priorities, and jurisdictional, manpower and resource constraints; the sharing of intelligence information to enhance officer safety and avoid duplicative efforts; and prevention and reentry efforts. The Attorney General's anti-violence strategy calls on each United States Attorney to work with their federal, state, and local partners to devise effective place-based anti-violence strategies.

III. Designate a Prevention and Reentry Coordinator

The anti-violence strategy includes prevention and reentry because they are essential to efforts to address the underlying problems often driving criminal conduct at its roots. To make our communities safer, we must make the investment in prevention and reentry efforts. The result will be a better outcome overall for the defendant, the criminal justice system, and society. Engaging in prevention and reentry activities is an efficient use of scarce resources as it can return both economic and societal benefits. Assigning someone to coordinate and oversee this work will ensure that it receives the attention it deserves. After prison, we see that recidivism rates are too high. A reduction in the recidivism rate of even one or two percentage points could create long-lasting benefits.

USAOs are already leading prevention and reentry activities across the country. Designating a Prevention and Reentry Coordinator (Coordinator) in each office will help develop a more efficient framework across the Department for prioritizing and recognizing this important work in each office. This Coordinator requirement replaces the Reentry Point of Contact function identified in my January 2011 Memo.

The Coordinator responsibility may be a collateral duty for staff in the USAO. It may be fulfilled by either an Assistant United States Attorney or any appropriate support staff as each United States Attorney sees fit. Prevention and reentry work in the USAO can be assigned to the Coordinator or spread among several individuals, as needed.

I understand being asked to do more in this difficult fiscal environment is not easy. To help in this regard, neighboring districts may consider sharing Prevention and Reentry Coordinator duties. I also encourage you to partner with other entities, such as the courts, the Probation Office, or non-governmental entities to implement these initiatives. Coordination and cooperation with these entities can help avoid duplication of efforts and save valuable time and resources.

We want to recognize the accomplishments of USAOs in the areas of prevention and reentry and work with you to set up and support these programs across the country. As encouragement and incentive to undertake and pursue work in prevention and reentry efforts, I have asked the Executive Office for United States Attorneys (EOUSA) to explore mechanisms

for recognizing your initiatives. These mechanisms are being put into place so that the time and effort you and your staff allocate to prevention and reentry work is fairly and accurately measured and credited to your districts. Although not case work, USAOs and staff will get credit for time spent on prevention and reentry activities. EOUSA will provide further guidance on these opportunities to provide credit for your prevention and reentry work. Of note, EOUSA will create a Director's Award category to provide recognition for USAO work in these areas. Our overall goal is to ensure that each USAO undertakes sustained effort in both prevention and reentry activities. Doing so can have enormous impact and create long-lasting societal benefits.

IV. Resources

To assist in these efforts, I have asked EOUSA to maintain a comprehensive listing of the Department's resources, training aids, and technical support, along with points of contact, so that you and your local partners can take full advantage of the Department's technical assistance and subject matter expertise in the area of violence prevention. EOUSA also is assembling and maintaining a library of anti-violence strategies and initiatives that have been implemented in various districts. EOUSA will maintain these resources on its website, available at the Office of Legal and Victim Programs' Violent Crime page. Offices around the country have been creative in implementing the Attorney General's anti-violence strategy, and we should ensure that the lessons learned from those efforts are catalogued and distributed. I encourage all of you to consult and contribute to these resources, so that we can continue to learn from one another and build upon our successes. Of note, the Department's 2011 Reentry Toolkit for United States Attorneys' Offices provides a wealth of advice on possible approaches and effective ways of engaging on reentry and prevention issues. The Toolkit is being expanded and updated this summer.

V. Conclusion

Violent crime damages and destabilizes our neighborhoods, challenging our citizens as they strive to raise their families and be productive members of society. As the chief federal law enforcement officer in your district, each of you is well-positioned to provide leadership in this area. By coordinating the efforts of federal, state, and local law enforcement to identify specific community needs and the range of available responses, the Department of Justice will continue to ensure that scarce law enforcement resources are being brought to bear in the most effective way possible to protect the people we serve.