**Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**

**Quarterly Meeting**

**April 12, 2013**

**U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs**

 **810 Seventh Street NW, Washington, DC 20531**

**Abstract**

At the April 12, 2013, quarterly meeting of the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (Council), the Council discussed implementing the recommendations set forth in the *Report of the Attorney General's National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence,* which focus on launching a coordinated national response to address and prevent children’s exposure to violence.

Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) welcomed meeting attendees and introduced Robert Listenbee, Jr., who recently assumed the role of Administrator of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). Attorney General Holder emphasized his commitment to reduce violence and bring hope and healing to those who have been traumatized by violence. He announced that, in response to one of the Task Force’s recommendations, he has appointed Acting Associate Attorney General Tony West to oversee the creation of an American Indian/Alaska Native Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence.

Tony West and Robert Listenbee, Jr., welcomed attendees and reported on steps DOJ and OJJDP have taken to move forward with the Task Force’s recommendations. Then Council agency members and practitioners discussed ways to collaborate, prioritize, and leverage resources to implement the Task Force’s recommendations.

Finally, Council members heard updates on several agency initiatives.

**Meeting Summary**

**Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Introductions**

***Eric H. Holder, Jr., Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and Council Chair; Tony West, Acting Associate Attorney General, DOJ; Robert Listenbee, Jr., Administrator, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), DOJ, and Council Vice Chair; Kathi Grasso, Director, Concentration of Federal Efforts Program, OJJDP***

Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr., welcomed meeting attendees and introduced Robert Listenbee, Jr., OJJDP’s new Administrator. Before joining OJJDP, Mr. Listenbee was a highly respected public defender, a champion of juvenile justice reform, and a member of OJJDP’s Federal Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice. In addition, Mr. Listenbee co-chaired the Attorney General’s National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence, which presented its final report and recommendations for launching a coordinated national response to address and prevent children’s exposure to violence at the December 2012 meeting of the Coordinating Council (Council). Attorney General Holder commented that, as OJJDP Administrator, Mr. Listenbee will continue to be a strong voice for all children and their families, particularly those impacted by violence.

Attorney General Holder observed that the recent mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, CT, served as a shocking reminder that children’s exposure to violence has become a national crisis. He added that he remains firmly committed to do everything he can to reduce violence, prevent future tragedies such as the Newtown tragedy, and implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence*.* He said that he and his colleagues across DOJ view the Task Force’s 56 recommendations as a blueprint for action and reported that, during the past several months, OJJDP has been working with federal partners to develop short- and long-term collaborative strategies in four areas: (1) raising public awareness, (2) strengthening professional education and training, (3) building knowledge through ongoing research, and (4) increasing DOJ and federal coordination and capacity. He observed that we have come a long way since 2010, when the Defending Childhood Initiative was launched, but we have a long way to go to address this national crisis. He said that he is confident that by working together and remaining steadfast in our determination to protect our nation’s children, we can turn back the tide of violence.

Attorney General Holder announced that, in response to one of the Task Force’s recommendations, he has appointed Acting Associate Attorney General Tony West to oversee the creation of an American Indian/Alaska Native Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence.

Mr. West reported that this new task force will be a joint effort between DOJ, the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), and tribal governments. The task force will focus on improving the identification and treatment of American Indian and Alaska Native children exposed to violence, supporting American Indian and Alaska Native communities and tribes as they define their own responses to this problem, and involving American Indian and Alaska Native youth in developing solutions. He thanked the Attorney General for his leadership in ensuring that the voices of American Indian and Alaska Native youth are heard.

Mr. Listenbee thanked Attorney General Holder for his commitment to improving the lives of children. He observed that, since the December Council meeting, OJJDP has worked hard to develop strategies to implement the recommendations of the Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence. He said that he is honored to be at OJJDP and stated that the Office is committed to creating a strong, sustainable, coordinated response to address and prevent children’s exposure to violence. Mr. Listenbee then asked meeting participants to introduce themselves.

Kathi Grasso, Director of OJJDP’s Concentration of Federal Efforts Program, thanked Robin Delany-Shabazz for her many years of service to the Coordinating Council. She reported that, due to budgetary constraints, several of the Council’s practitioner members would participate in the meeting by telephone. She reminded participants that meeting materials, a written meeting summary, and a video-recording of the meeting will be available at the Council’s website, [www.juvenilecouncil.gov](http://www.juvenilecouncil.gov) and invited members of the general public to submit written questions or comments directly to her at OJJDP. She invited Council members and federal staff to meet immediately after the Council quarterly meeting to share information on federal collaborative activities.

**Council Discussion: Implementing Recommendations of the Attorney General’s National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence**

Mr. Listenbee moderated a discussion about how to implement the recommendations of the Attorney General’s National Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence.

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

***Larke Huang, Senior Advisor, Administrator’s Office of Policy Planning and Innovation, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)***

Larke Huang reported that HHS convened representatives from the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and SAMHSA to examine the Task Force’s recommendations and prioritize recommendations that HHS can help to implement. Building on the work that is being done and existing resources at HHS, the Department proposes to collaborate with DOJ and other agencies on 10 of the Task Force’s recommendations.

***Prevention Activities***

**1.1** Charge leaders at the highest levels of the executive and legislative branches of the federal government with the coordination and implementation of the recommendations in this report.

**1.4** Ensure universal public awareness of the crisis of children exposed to violence and change social norms to protect children from violence and its harmful effects. *[Dr. Huang said HHS wishes to highlight this recommendation as an important prevention strategy.]*

**1.5** Incorporate evidence-based trauma-informed principles in all applicable federal agency grant requirements.

**1.7** Continue to support and sustain the national data collection infrastructure for the monitoring of trends in children exposed to violence.

**4.1** Expand access to home visiting services for families with children who are exposed to violence, focusing on safety and referral to services. *[Dr. Huang reported that HHS already has significant funds dedicated to home visiting.]*

***Screening, Assessment, and Evidence-Based Treatment***

**2.2** Ensure that all children exposed to violence are identified, screened, and assessed.

**3.5** Provide trauma-specific treatments in all agencies and organizations serving children and families exposed to violence and psychological trauma that are suitable to their clinicians’ and staff members’ professional and paraprofessional roles and responsibilities.

**6.1** Make trauma-informed screening, assessment, and care the standard in juvenile justice services.

**6.3** Provide juvenile justice services appropriate to children’s ethno-cultural background that are based on an assessment of each violence-exposed child’s individual needs.

***Policy Advancement***

**1.9** Develop and implement public policy initiatives in state, tribal, and local governments to reduce and address the impact of childhood exposure to violence.

Dr. Huang highlighted ongoing work at HHS focused on preventing and addressing children’s exposure to violence including ACYF’s focus on children’s well-being, CDC’s Essentials for Childhood, CDC’s Striving To Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere (STRYVE) initiative, CMS funding of screening and treatment services, and SAMHSA’s National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative. She reported that HHS staff went through the list of DOJ’s Defending Childhood Initiative Demonstration sites and National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention sites and identified HHS-funded programs and resources in these communities that can be leveraged to maximize the work being done in these communities around children’s exposure to violence. She concluded by saying that HHS is looking forward to collaborating with DOJ.

**Executive Office of the President, Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)**

***R. Gil Kerlikowske, Director***

Gil Kerlikowske reported that ONDCP’s policies range from preventing youth substance abuse to addressing the needs of juvenile offenders. He highlighted ONDCP’s Drug Free Communities Support Program, a partnership with SAMHSA that provides funding to community-based coalitions organized to prevent youth substance use. Last year the program awarded $84.6 million in grants to 600 communities; more than 1,700 community coalitions have been funded since the program began in 1997. National evaluation found that communities funded by the Drug Free Communities Support Program have achieved significant reductions in youth substance use. Mr. Kerlikowske observed that this program specifically addresses recommendation 5.1 of the Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence, which calls for organizing local coalitions representing professionals from multiple disciplines, families, and other community members. He remarked that he has witnessed the power of these coalitions in dealing with a range of community issues including substance abuse, youth violence, gangs, and crime and in promoting positive youth development and community resiliency.

**U.S. Department of Education (ED)**

***David Esquith, Director, Office of Safe and Healthy Students (OSHS)***

David Esquith spoke about his recent visit with ED Secretary Arne Duncan to a District of Columbia middle school, where every student they spoke with indicated that they know someone who had been shot. These children expressed the need for a recreation center in their community—a safe place where they could go after school. They described “living in a war zone,” and said they were afraid to walk to school or play outside. He observed that these children have been traumatized but are not receiving the necessary mental health services. He expressed his concern that the benefit of the research on children’s exposure to violence (e.g., demonstration grants) is not making it into the schools, and remarked that there is a gap between what we know and what schools are able to provide to students and families. Support from Congress for OSHS has dwindled, while the problem of children’s exposure to violence has mounted. He encouraged the Council to look at the resources that are actually being used in the schools. Attorney General Holder commented that, as a nation, we need to have a discussion and make a commitment to keep our children safe in school and make them feel safe.

**U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)**

***Kevin Washburn, Assistant Secretary, Indian Affairs***

Kevin Washburn said that, before coming to DOI, he provided testimony to the Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence regarding violence in Indian Country. He is grateful that the Attorney General has made a commitment to address this issue, which has huge ramifications for American Indian and Alaska Native children. He reported that the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) has been developing sexual violence prevention programs for BIE-funded schools. BIE is also talking with DOJ’s Office for Victims of Crime about conducting victimization surveys in BIE-operated and tribally operated schools to gain a better understanding of the issue.

**U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

***Lisa Lauxman, Director of Youth Development, National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA)***

Lisa Lauxman reported that USDA has a 150-year history of working with land grant universities and has representation in every community through its Cooperative Extension System. Because of the scope and breadth of its presence, USDA is in a unique position to partner with DOJ and Council agencies to work with youth. 4-H, which is the youth development program of NIFA, partners with schools, families, and communities and provides a variety of opportunities to engage youth including those in underserved communities. Dr. Lauxman said that USDA looks forward to working with other federal agencies as a partner in positive youth development activities.

**John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**

***Laurie Garduque, Director of Justice Reform and Coordinating Council Practitioner Member***

Laurie Garduque reported that the MacArthur Foundation takes an evidence-based approach to its work, investing in research and translating research into policy and practice; it values an interdisciplinary perspective; and it collaborates with a number of public and private partners at the federal, state, and local levels. She said that with that perspective in mind, she applauds the Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence for its bold and comprehensive report. She appreciates the public health perspective, the recognition that a complex problem requires multi-systems collaboration, and the emphasis on including young people.

Dr. Garduque shared lessons learned from her work at the Foundation, which she said she hopes will be helpful to DOJ and Council agencies in thinking about how to implement the report:

* Build on existing strengths and assets. Capitalize on existing initiatives and blend and pool resources rather than re-inventing the wheel.
* Close the gap between what we know works and what is being done in terms of existing policies and practices.
* Address securing and sustaining progress up front. It is important to think about how bringing these efforts to scale will be financed.
* Establish priorities. It is not realistic to expect to implement all 56 recommendations at once.
* Develop a realistic timeframe.
* Think about how to work across agencies at the federal level and across jurisdictions with state and local partners.
* Be clear about desired outcomes. Identify measurable outcomes at the systems level and at the individual level (e.g., outcomes for children and families).

She and her colleagues at the MacArthur Foundation are hopeful that DOJ and OJJDP will address the last set of recommendations (recommendations 6.1–6.9), which involve rethinking the juvenile justice system. The Foundation hopes that fewer children go into the justice system, that efforts are made to divert them, and that better efforts are made to serve them through programs offered by other Council agencies. She encouraged OJJDP to consider its mission and how, within its mission, it can best serve young people who come into conflict with the law. The Foundation welcomes the opportunity to work with DOJ and OJJDP to discuss how to set priorities and how to move forward.

**Discussion**

Attorney General Holder thanked Council members for their continued support in ensuring the welfare, development, and safety of the nation’s children. He observed that each of the Council agencies plays an important part in this work and said he looks forward to continued collaboration to address children’s exposure to violence.

Mr. Listenbee invited other Council members and practitioner members to comment.

Judge Gordon Martin (practitioner member) said he agrees with Dr. Garduque’s emphasis on diversion. Unfortunately, some good diversion programs have lost their funding.

Judge Martin asked Mr. Esquith if there is funding for afterschool programs. Mr. Esquith said that components of Now Is the Time would address afterschool programs. But there is not enough funding in this initiative ($350 million) to reach all of the students who are experiencing violence-related trauma. Judge Martin observed that the time immediately after school is the time of greatest risk.

Dr. Garduque said that in Models for Change, the MacArthur Foundation works very closely with state and local jurisdictions. She observed that developing collaborative relationships takes time, and it is often tempting to “stay within our silos.” She said she hopes the Task Force’s report provides a platform for true interdisciplinary collaboration and collaboration across agencies.

Mr. Listenbee asked Council members for recommendations about how OJJDP can collaborate with other federal agencies and the private sector on the Task Force’s recommendations.

* Richard Morris (U.S. Department of Labor [DOL]) reminded attendees that, at the December Council meeting, Jane Oates, Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training Administration, committed DOL to collaborate by looking at ways to introduce violence prevention and intervention in solicitations for discretionary grants.
* Dr. Huang agreed with Dr. Garduque’s emphasis on building upon existing strengths and assets. Council agencies already have programs and investments up and running in communities. A key implementation focus should be to map communities where Council agencies are working so these funds can be leveraged toward shared goals.
* Judge Trina Thompson (practitioner member) agreed with Dr. Huang’s comment about leveraging resources toward shared goals. She said that in Oakland, CA, a collaborative effort through the California Endowment and Youth Alive educated Highland Hospital medical professionals about trauma-informed care so they can connect young people hospitalized for violence-related injuries with existing resources. She suggested investing in educating communities about existing local and state resources.

Mr. Listenbee said that OJJDP is developing strategies for youth engagement and asked Council members for suggestions on how to bring youth to the table and to sustain their interest:

* Reginald Dwayne Betts (practitioner member) observed that when OJJDP engages youth who are involved in the juvenile justice system, it is important to continue to engage them when they transition out of the system.
* Benjamin Tucker (ONDCP) reported that ONDCP has successfully engaged youth through its National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign, “Above the Influence.” ONDCP empowers youth by asking for their input on issues that are important to them. Its Facebook page has 1.8 million young people engaged in conversation among themselves. He said that ONCDP would be happy to share its outreach strategies.

**Agency Announcements**

**U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**

***Maurice Jones, Deputy Secretary***

Maurice Jones reported that HUD is sponsoring its annual Father’s Day event in June. The goals of the initiative are to strengthen the bonds between children living in public housing and their fathers and to connect dads to community resources including job training, health screenings, and education opportunities. Last year more than 7,000 fathers participated in events that local public housing authorities (PHAs) held across the country. Because of budget constraints resulting from sequestration, HUD is looking for federal partners to join with PHAs to help host these events. He observed that the most transformative vehicle for preventing youth violence is the relationship a youth has with a caring adult.

**SAMHSA**

***Larke Huang***

Dr. Huang reported that, in May, SAMHSA will host youth dialogues with justice-involved youth of color with behavioral health issues. SAMHSA will draw from the experiences of youth to guide its planning. Focused invitations will be sent to staff from other Council agencies.

**ONDCP**

***Gil Kerlikowske***

Mr. Kerlikowske announced that the Drug Enforcement Administration is sponsoring National Prescription Drug Take Back Day on April 27. This event provides an opportunity to help prevent abuse and misuse of prescription drugs by disposing of unneeded or expired medications.

**USDA**

***Audrey Rowe***

Ms. Rowe observed that children exposed to violence are often exposed to hunger and malnutrition as well. She said that food insecurity among children is most severe during the summer and reported that USDA has committed to increasing the number of meals served to children this summer by 5 million. She provided written materials about how Council agencies can share this information with community partners so they can reach out to children and families who need food and nutrition assistance.

**Summary and Meeting Adjournment**

***Tony West***

Mr. West thanked Council members and meeting participants for their continued commitment to addressing children’s exposure to violence. He observed that, while the most difficult and challenging work is yet to come, he is optimistic that Council agencies can work together to implement strategies to reduce children’s exposure to violence and address its consequences. He adjourned the meeting at approximately 11:45 a.m.