In December 2014, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) issued a grant to bring together the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention, the Community-Based Violence Prevention program, and the Defending Childhood Initiative under one umbrella for training and technical assistance (TTA). The convening of three separate initiatives was in part based on understanding that to address factors affecting violence and ultimately eliminate youth violence altogether, a shared framework is required.

While these initiatives have unique strengths and differences, they share a vision and objective to end violence and trauma and ensure the well-being of young people throughout the country. The unified TTA grant takes the first step by providing crosscutting resources that allow sites in all three programs to learn from each other. In an effort to better understand and support the sites, a needs assessment was developed and implemented. Additionally, Development Services Group (DSG) is in the process of reaching out to the cities to gain a broader perspective on key issues related to governance, sustainability, and TTA. Based on the sites’ responses in the needs assessment and follow-up calls, DSG will issue a report to OJJDP that delineates a wide range of crosscutting TTA ideas.

In the spirit of taking a shared approach to TTA, we are establishing a unified communications platform that
highlights and promotes the tremendous work being done across the initiatives. In this issue of the Forum newsletter, we want to first introduce our readers to the other two programs and lay out our initial plan for expanding coverage to focus on the Community-Based Violence Prevention program and Defending Childhood Initiative.

The Community-Based Violence Prevention (CBVP) program is working to stop youth gang and gun violence by taking evidence-based deterrence and public health approaches in 16 cities. CBVP is characterized by partnerships among law enforcement, service providers, residents, and community- and faith-based organizations. The initiative's overarching goal is to reduce violence in targeted communities through the replication of programs such as Operation Ceasefire, the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model, and the Cure Violence model.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPCOMING EVENTS

Funding Opportunities

FY 2015 Grant Competitions: Office of Innovation and Improvement
The Office of Innovation and Improvement will conduct 11 grant competitions in six program areas: Arts in Education, Charter Schools, Investing in Innovation, Opportunity Scholarship, Ready to Learn Television, and Supporting Effective Educator Development. Announcements and details will follow through spring and summer.

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News

Bullying No Match for Virtuous Behavior
ThinkVirtues Inc. is an Illinois company that believes teaching children values could put an end to bullying and youth violence. The company uses more than 50 "virtue" cards each year to instill principles of good behavior, like courtesy, generosity, courage, and respect. Kathy Motlagh, co-founder of ThinkVirtues, said the goal is to help a child understand how these qualities can lead to good things. The program is practiced in five schools and taught to about 600 kindergarten and middle school students.

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Other Resources

Keeping Trafficking Out of Schools
With the right guidance, people who work with kids every day can pick up on the warning signs of child trafficking. All school community members—from administrators, to bus drivers, to teachers—should know the facts. The U.S. Department of Education has released a guide to help school staff identify and prevent trafficking. This guide has information about risk factors, signals, and what to do if you suspect child trafficking.

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