

HAMPTON VA

NEWS RELEASE

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Hampton brings national, regional leaders together to improve outcomes for black males

Jan. 21, 2016 –Hampton, along with Cities United, will convene a regional symposium, **“The Urgency of Now: Changing the Narrative for Black Males from Failure to Hope.”** Teams from Hampton Roads’ seven core cities can **hear first-hand from leaders from across the nation**, including Birmingham, Louisville and Philadelphia. Hampton Mayor George Wallace and City Council are hosting the event Feb. 11 at the Hampton Roads Convention Center.

Data has shown that young black males are involved in a significant portion of violent crime – both as **victims and as offenders**. It’s a statistic that affects Hampton, the region, and much of the nation.

A resource fair will be open to the public from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. with two key goals:

- To **recruit volunteers** for youth-serving community organizations, and
- To **connect families** in need of services with organizations that can help them.

Cities United plans for the Hampton symposium to be a **national model** for other parts of the country. The group is a network of more than 50 mayors (including both Hampton and Newport News) committed to reducing violence-related deaths of African-American males. In addition to Hampton, Chesapeake, Newport News, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach, have been invited to send delegations.

Hampton’s role is as host, bringing together elected officials, city managers, police, young people, and representatives from schools, business groups, faith communities, academia and non-profits.

Vice Mayor Linda Curtis and Councilman Will Moffett convened a Hampton United group in 2014 on behalf of City Council. Moffett said, **“With me, it is personal.** I have seen both sides of the issue from members of my family. I want to be part of the solutions.” Curtis “spent 17 years as the chief prosecutor from the city and saw firsthand the devastation this causes, family by family and neighborhood by neighborhood. Now, from City Council, I have the broader perspective of how **violence affects the overall health and vitality of our city.**”

Synethia White, manager of Hampton’s Youth Violence Prevention Program, said that **what is different about this initiative** is that it is action-oriented. “The community is tired of conversation. This is an opportunity for find the best course of action for our community.”

Mayor George Wallace will bring together key leaders at the end of the day to coalesce around next steps. Hampton City Manager Mary Bunting pledged to work with the other regional city managers to **build a roadmap for action** after this inaugural event.

“Every locality can adopt its own unique approach, but we need to **be connected and working toward the same goal,**” said Curtis.

The goal of the Cities United program is ambitious: To reduce violence by 50 percent by the year 2020.

At-a-glance

In Hampton, black males make up 80% of the young people charged with crimes.

Citywide, black males 15-24 account for 46% of arrests for violent crimes, but they make up less than 5% of the population.

- Hampton Police Division

Nationally, homicide is the leading cause of death for black males between the ages of 15 and 24, and is responsible for more deaths of black males in this age group than the nine other leading causes combined.

- Centers for Disease Control, 2010

If current trends continue, one in three young African American men will serve time in prison.

- U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics (Bonczar, 2003)

Every 24 hours in America, 13 young people under the age of 25 are victims of homicide.

- Centers for Disease Control (2012)

Black males in America are incarcerated at a rate of more than 6 times that of white males.

- Bureau of Justice Statistics (2014)

(National statistics from citiesunited.org)

Program highlights

Hampton Roads Mayors Roundtable (participants invited but not confirmed), tentatively 10 a.m.

National speakers include:

- Birmingham Mayor William A. Bell, Dr., co-chair of the United States Conference of Mayors' and President Obama's initiative "My Brothers Keeper"
- William C. Bell, president and chief executive officer of Casey Family Programs
- Anthony D. Smith, executive director of Cities United

Organizations include:

- Cease Fire, New Orleans: Gregory Rattler Jr.
- PowerCorps, Philadelphia: Julia Helingas, plus youth
- Louisville, KY, Safe and Healthy Neighborhoods Program: Quanique Carthan

Topics include:

- Recognizing and dealing with trauma
- The importance of engaging with youth with varying life experiences
- Data before, during and after
- Being made whole, re-entry and rights restoration
- In the classroom, out of the courtroom, and off the streets
- Integrating multiple initiatives in localities

More information, including how to register to attend and application forms for exhibitors, is available online at www.hampton.gov/ruon. Visit the Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Urgency-of-Now-Symposium-666164153526320/>, or the twitter page at www.twitter.com/RuON757.