



Sheila Dixon

Mayor,
Baltimore

250 City Hall · Baltimore Maryland 21202
410-396-3835 · Fax: 410-576-9425

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 2, 2007

CONTACT:

Anthony McCarthy
(410) 869-6079 (Cell)

Mayor Sheila Dixon Seeks Community Partners for Operation Safe Streets

Baltimore, MD (May 2, 2007) – Mayor Sheila Dixon and the Baltimore City Health Department’s Office of Youth Violence Prevention announced today that a second round of funding, through a grant from the United States Department of Justice, is available to communities to implement Operation Safe Streets (OSS).

“Violence in any neighborhood affects us all, and it is unacceptable in our city,” Mayor Dixon said. “We have to work together to prevent violence, and I am looking forward to working with a second community to implement Operation Safe Streets.”

Operation Safe Streets is a community-based intervention program focused on reducing shootings and homicides. Community organizations in areas with high rates of violent crime are eligible to apply.

Operation Safe Streets is based on the highly successful CeaseFire model developed at the University Of Illinois School Of Public Health in Chicago. CeaseFire works with community-based organizations to develop and implement strategies to reduce and prevent violence, particularly shootings and killings. The model relies on outreach workers, faith leaders, and other community leaders to intervene in conflicts, or potential conflicts, and promote alternatives to violence. Along with cooperation from police, CeaseFire includes a strong public education campaign to promote the message that shootings and violence are not acceptable.

CeaseFire also focuses on strengthening communities so they have the capacity to exercise informal social control and respond to issues that affect them. Since its launch in 2000, Ceasefire has been successfully operating in 15 of Chicago's high-crime neighborhoods. With the collaboration of community groups, outreach teams, law enforcement and clergy, communities experienced reductions in shootings up to 68% in the first year of implementation.

“In Baltimore City, homicide is the leading cause of death in adolescents and young adults,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health. “Operation Safe Streets represents a significant opportunity for Baltimore communities to impact the violence that they experience using behavior change, a part of the public health approach.”

Interested groups should contact Dr. LaShawn Worsley, Director of Operation Safe Streets, at 443-984-3566 or LaShawn.Worsley@baltimorecity.gov for information about applying. A Bidder's Conference for groups interested in applying will be held at the Baltimore City Health Department in the Maxie Collier Room on May 22, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

###

Please visit our website at www.baltimorecity.gov