

## News from the National League of Cities

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### Youth Curfews Continue to Show Promise

Washington, DC, January 13, 2006 – Although cuts in federal aid and reduced budgets are making it more difficult for cities to provide adequate public safety programs, the latest Insta-Poll from the National League of Cities (NLC) shows that city officials continue to implement and enforce youth curfews as an effective strategy for deterring crime and violence among adolescents.

Of the cities surveyed, more than half have implemented a daytime or nighttime curfew, and most are optimistic about their curfew enforcement activities. Ninety-six percent view their laws as very or somewhat effective for combating juvenile crime in their communities and 93 percent say curfew enforcement is still a good use of police officers' time.

“Local officials are relying on youth curfews as one way to ensure the safety of the citizens in their communities,” said Donald J. Borut, NLC Executive Director. “The findings of this poll show that enhanced officer training and creative partnerships are common elements in local programs aimed at reinforcing youth curfews.”

In many cities, local agencies and community groups serve as resources for officers dealing with troubled youth. Seventy-eight percent report that their police officers are instructed or trained to refer troubled youth to a local agency for help. Some examples of services provided by city officials include: youth service departments, teen shelters, mental health institutions, parks and recreation programs such as the Boys and Girls Club, and local nonprofit agencies. Innovative programs like the New Haven, Conn., partnership with the Yale Child Study Center and the Pasadena, Calif., first-time offender diversion program were also cited.

Youth curfews have become a growing trend. According to the NLC poll, 67 percent of those cities with curfews have enacted them in the past 20 years and 38 percent within the last 10 years. Daytime curfews appear to be less popular. Only 18 percent of cities responding to the survey have instituted daytime curfews.

Though daytime curfews seem to be less attractive, more than 3 in 4 cities found afterschool programs to be effective in helping to cut down on juvenile offenses during the daytime hours. Seventy-eight percent report that after-school programs have enhanced their community's efforts to curb juvenile crime and violence in the daytime.

The 2005 survey is the latest in a series conducted in 1999, 2001 and 2003, and includes responses from mayors and city officials from 436 cities. The survey group included 62 central cities, 215 suburban communities and 159 rural and non-metropolitan cities and towns.

For more information about the report, contact the Latricia Good at 202-626-3051 or [lgood@nlc.org](mailto:lgood@nlc.org). For more news and information about NLC and local government issues, visit [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).

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**NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES  
Insta-Poll on Youth Curfews**

*The results being reported from this survey are not based on a nationally represented sample of U.S. cities. Responses are from 436 cities including, 62 central cities, 215 suburban communities and 159 rural and non-metropolitan cities and towns. City Officials were also surveyed in 1999, 2001, and 2003. This survey included additional questions, which were not asked in the previous surveys.*

**2005 Results as Compared to 2003/2001/1999**

*Majority of city officials (40 percent) believe their curfews are very effective at fighting juvenile crime.*

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1999</b>
Very Effective	40%	46%	31%	31%
Somewhat effective	56%	50%	66 %	65 %
Not effective	2%	4%	3 %	4%

*Of the cities that have implemented curfews, 67 percent have a night curfew and 18 percent report a daytime curfew.*

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1999</b>
Night Curfew	67%	67%	68%	69%
Daytime Curfew	18%	11%	12%	14%

*Sixty-eight percent of cities with daytime curfews believe their laws are very or somewhat effective in cutting down on truancy.*

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1999</b>
Very effective	27%	24%	61 %	41 %
Somewhat effective	41%	45%	35 %	45 %
Not effective	31%	31%	3 %	14 %

*Overall, city officials believe that youth curfews are effective in limiting gang violence.*

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1999</b>
Very effective	33%	34%	24 %	N/A
Somewhat effective	56%	56%	64%	N/A
Not Effective	9%	9%	12 %	N/A

*Most city officials (95 percent) report no increase in police costs associated with curfews.*

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1999</b>
Yes	4%	12%	11%	14%
No	95%	88%	89 %	86%

*Majority of city officials (91 percent) report no problems with implementing their Day/Night Time curfew.*

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1999</b>
Yes	8%	7%	6 %	8 %
No	91%	93%	94 %	92 %

*Small number (3 percent) of cities report constitutional challenges related to youth curfews.*

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>1999</b>
Yes	3%	2%	4 %	4 %
No	94%	98%	96%	96%

**Questions asked in 2005 and 2003 only:**

*Majority of city officials say youth curfew enforcement is a good use of police officers' time.*

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>
Yes	93%	93%
No	7%	7%

*A significant number of city officials (66 percent) say public safety will be more difficult to maintain due to budgets and reduced police forces, though slightly lower than the number in 2003.*

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>
Yes	66%	70%
No	33%	30%

*Many city officials (73 percent) do not anticipate reducing the size of their police forces because of fiscal conditions, but a small percentage is unsure.*

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>
Yes	14%	13%
No	73%	54%
Don't know yet	12%	33%

*Most city officials report no shifts in resources from public safety budgets in order to cover homeland security costs or activities -- down from 2003.*

	<b>2005</b>	<b>2003</b>
Yes	15%	24%
No	84%	76%

**Questions asked in 2005 only:**

*Most cities officials believe afterschool programs enhance their efforts to curb juvenile crime or violence during daytime hours.*

	<b>2005</b>
Yes	78 %
No	21%

*In many cities, police officers are instructed or trained to refer troubled youth to a local agency for help.*

	<b>2005</b>
Yes	78 %
No	21%

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The National League of Cities is the nation's oldest and largest organization devoted to strengthening and promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership and governance. NLC is a resource and advocate for 18,000 U.S. cities, towns and villages, which collectively serve 225 million people.