



# Center for Neighborhood Enterprise

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## **Student Leaders from Weed & Seed Sites Come to Washington**

Fifty student leaders from across the nation will converge on Capitol Hill January 12 to present their elected representatives information they have gathered about problems in their communities, and ask their support in implementing solutions. The young people are members of the Weed and Seed National Youth Leadership Council, a joint project of the Center for Neighborhood Enterprise and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Weed and Seed.

The youths, who range in age from 14 to 18, will be in Washington, DC from January 11 through the 14 to further develop their leadership skills as well as meet their elected representatives. The CNE/DOJ conference will be held at the National 4-H Youth Center in nearby Bethesda, Maryland. In addition to the leadership workshops and Congressional meetings, the young people will tour historic sites and monuments in the nation's capital.

The young people come from the states of Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, New York, Nevada, Ohio, and Rhode Island. They have secured appointments in the offices of six Senators and four Representatives.

Members of the Youth Leadership Council began honing their skills at a Summer Youth Leadership Camp in August, where they learned how to identify problems and risk behaviors in their communities and worked to identify solutions. Some of the members also attended previous Summer sessions hosted by CNE and the Weed and Seed Office. The CNE/W&S partnership has sponsored three Summer camps and three National Youth Leadership Council meetings.

The Youth Leadership series has produced many positive impacts with youths returning to their communities and initiating measures to address the problems they had identified. In Waycross, GA, for instance, youths were able to make a presentation to the City Council as to why a liquor store should not receive a license. Many other similar experiences have been reported by the youths.

The young people will be available to the media during their visit to Washington, DC. Please call Arika Brown at (202) 518-6500 to arrange an interview or receive further information about the timing of the Congressional meetings.

The Center for Neighborhood Enterprise was founded in 1981 by Robert L. Woodson, Sr., to assist the residents of low-income neighborhoods in solving the problems of their communities. The Center has a major focus on programs addressing youth violence with its Violence-Free Zone initiative, a community-based approach to reducing violence in schools and neighborhoods. Other major program areas in addition to the Weed and Seed Youth Leadership Development include Building Capacity of Faith-Based and Community Organizations; and Adult Financial Literacy.