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U.S. Sanctuary Cities Weigh Response to Trump's Threat to Curb Funding.

NEW YORK — Officials from so-called sanctuary cities met in New York on Tuesday to discuss their response to threats from the Trump administration to cut off some funding to cities and states that fail to assist federal authorities in arresting illegal immigrants.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions threatened on Monday to strip U.S. Justice Department grants from cities and other local governments that choose to shield illegal immigrants from deportation efforts under President Donald Trump.

His remarks were aimed at dozens of cities and other local governments, including New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, that have joined a growing “sanctuary” movement aimed at protecting immigrant communities.

Tuesday’s meeting in New York marked the second straight day of brainstorming on the immigration issue by leaders of some of America’s biggest urban centers.

Public officials, liberal activists and academics from around the country shared information on a host of issues. Topics discussed included when and how to challenge requests from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to hold illegal immigrants under arrest, for separate local offenses.

Attendees came from California, Texas, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Washington State and elsewhere.

Sanctuary cities in general offer safe harbor to illegal immigrants and often do not use municipal funds or resources to advance the enforcement of federal immigration laws. Sanctuary city is not an official designation.

Federal records show the Justice Department doled out \$1 billion to state governments and \$430 million to nonprofits in 2016, but only \$136 million directly to cities and counties.

Crime is generally lower in sanctuary counties, according to a study presented by University of California San Diego assistant professor Tom Wong. He said the findings echoed those of law enforcement officials themselves, since they have found they are more effective when they can focus on day-to-day policing instead of immigration enforcement.

Chicago City Council member Carlos Ramirez-Rosa said that although his city is a sanctuary jurisdiction, immigration agents raided a home there on Monday where eight people, including three children, were sleeping.

The agents shot and wounded Felix Torres, though he was not the person agents were seeking, Ramirez-Rosa said.

“This guns blazing raid ... is exactly why my city should refuse to comply with ICE, under all

circumstances," he said.

By REUTERS

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(Reporting by Hilary Russ; Editing by Daniel Bases and Tom Brown)

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