

**URBAN VIOLENCE IN  
THE COMMONWEALTH:  
PREVENTION, INTERVENTION &  
REHABILITATION**

**REPORT TO THE HONORABLE DEVAL PATRICK**



**COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
GOVERNOR'S ANTI-CRIME COUNCIL  
URBAN VIOLENCE SUBCOMMITTEE**

**NOVEMBER 2008**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Urban violence is an on-going problem in our Commonwealth and throughout the United States. Violence is devastating for victims, their families, and their communities. The human and economic costs send ripples through communities, and the violence perpetuates itself, as children who grow up in violent environments themselves become offenders. As we enter a period of economic crisis, we are likely to experience increased criminal activity, especially in our cities.

In April 2007, Governor Deval Patrick issued Executive Order Number 482 to create a new Anti-Crime Council. This multi-agency, multi-disciplinary council was tasked with focusing on the challenges facing crime victims, social service providers and Massachusetts law enforcement organizations. As an outgrowth of the council's work, the Governor established an Urban Violence Subcommittee, co-chaired by Attorney General Martha Coakley and Essex County District Attorney Jonathan W. Blodgett, in order to examine the prevalence, causes and deterrence of violent behavior in our cities. Attorney General Coakley and District Attorney Blodgett gathered leaders with diverse perspectives about urban violence, including law enforcement, educators, business leaders, youth service agencies, and the clergy, to tackle the issue of urban violence.

Through its members, the subcommittee solicited input from experts in urban violence in order to provide both public and private sector leaders with the most up-to-date analysis of this difficult issue. This report is a result of this collaboration, and sets forth ways in which we can address urban violence through comprehensive prevention, intervention and rehabilitation. In addition, the report contains a statistical analysis of youth violence trends and recommendations for reducing urban violence in our Commonwealth.

While overall rates of violence have decreased in recent years, such data has obscured a disturbing increase in incidents of youth violence and victimization. We must take action to address these issues or face escalating violent crime rates in the next decade. Evidence-based studies prove that violent crime is best addressed through a combination of prevention, intervention and rehabilitation. Programs providing youth employment opportunities, mentoring, substance abuse treatment, school initiatives, community policing, and re-entry services for ex-offenders are effective ways to target these areas.

This report was compiled by the subcommittee members, all of whom are leaders in our community with diverse professional backgrounds and unique perspectives on this important issue. In addition, we were fortunate to receive input from crime expert Dr. James Alan Fox, the Lipman Family Professor of Criminal Justice from Northeastern University, who presented his findings to the subcommittee and compiled a report on those findings that is included herein.

This report serves a dual purpose: (1) it brings to the forefront what those in the criminal justice field have known for decades – that prevention, intervention and rehabilitation are the cornerstones of a safe community; and (2) it serves as a resource for individual communities to discern what new strategies they may wish to implement for effective change.

Included in this report are recommendations for reducing urban violence that take into account the research on comprehensive and successful violence prevention. We have also included some of the most up-to-date statistical information on violence trends, and have compiled a comprehensive list of programs and initiatives that our subcommittee members believe represents effective measures for combating urban violence.

This report is intended to be a resource for communities looking to address issues of urban violence, and as an informational tool for lawmakers and community leaders when considering tough fiscal decisions about urban violence prevention initiatives that must be made in this poor economic climate.

Urban violence issues encompass a wide range of considerations that are too varied to contain in one report. As such, we have narrowed the focus of this report to issues primarily concerning juvenile behavior. The rehabilitation and reintegration of prior offenders is also included. While this report touches upon gang violence issues, it does not focus on gang intervention in great detail because the Governor is establishing a separate subcommittee to address the particular issues associated with gang violence. Additionally, this report does not specifically address problems brought about by both domestic violence and the issue of violence among young women. These are important and complex topics in their own right that would be best addressed in their own reports.

We recognize that to be successful in addressing urban violence we must look beyond the traditional facets of law enforcement. As such, in compiling this report, we took into consideration the risk factors that most often affect urban environments and the services needed to provide a truly comprehensive strategy for dealing with violence in our cities. Providing such an approach requires that we look through the lenses of prevention, intervention and rehabilitation. To achieve these goals, we must tap into the resources already in place within those communities most affected, and we must also secure additional resources in order to solidify success in these areas.

Of course, maintaining effective violence prevention programs depends heavily upon funding and the availability of resources. Our Commonwealth should, if anything, expand its investment in programs that address the root causes of urban violence. Yet the current fiscal crisis and economic slowdown will place enormous pressures on available funding and make it difficult even to preserve existing programs.

In this challenging climate, it is especially critical that our federal, state and local governments work together with private sector partners, nonprofit organizations, and community leaders to find ways to achieve effective violence prevention strategies. Prevention programs are necessary not only as a matter of public safety, but as an economically responsible alternative to paying the costs that will result from a substantial increase in crime. Addressing a surge in crime after the fact will cost four times as much as instituting quality prevention programs now. In the face of budget deficits, we should explore ways to improve efficiencies, to focus resources on the most effective approaches, and to draw upon available federal resources and private collaborations. Future generations will pay a steep price, both socially and economically, if violence prevention programs are not prioritized. We can act now, or pay for our inaction later.



# MESSAGE FROM THE CO-CHAIRS

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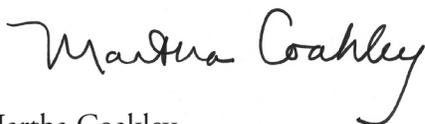
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As co-chairs of the Urban Violence Subcommittee formed by Governor Deval Patrick as part of his Anti-Crime Council, we are pleased to present a report and recommendations for your consideration regarding ways in which our Commonwealth can tackle the complex issues surrounding urban violence.

Implementing any of the recommendations requires a commitment to taking the time and allocating the resources to address the root causes of violence. We are mindful that many of the recommendations contained in this report have been highlighted in the past. However, it is clear that we must now remind those who grapple with urban violence, including our state officials, that when resources are committed to these strategies, change will indeed occur. We all know that strategies such as community policing, mentoring, and substance abuse treatment can go a long way to making our communities safer places to live. Unfortunately, now more than ever, we are faced with a lack of sufficient resources to implement such strategies in a meaningful, comprehensive way. With Governor Patrick's leadership on this issue, now is the time to re-think our commitment to allocating sufficient resources to prevent crime by utilizing traditional and non-traditional methods.

The economic crisis we face will certainly result in increased violent behavior as families endure financial strain and emotional hurdles. Collaboration with private sector partners and nonprofit organizations, and a focus on tried and true violence prevention programs, are effective solutions to tackling growing violent trends and shrinking government budgets. Indeed, there is no question that implementing these strategies will save us money in the long run. This report reinforces this philosophy, and we believe that the Commonwealth is up to the challenge.

On behalf of the subcommittee, thank you for allowing us to examine this important public safety issue. We hope that you find this report and its recommendations useful as you continue your work on the Anti-Crime Council.



Martha Coakley  
Massachusetts Attorney General



Jonathan W. Blodgett  
Essex County District Attorney



# FOREWORD

## TIME TO REINVEST IN PREVENTION: REPORT TO THE URBAN VIOLENCE SUBCOMMITTEE ON YOUTH VIOLENCE TRENDS IN MASSACHUSETTS

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**JAMES ALAN FOX, PH.D.**

*The Lipman Family Professor of Criminal Justice, and Professor of Law, Policy & Society  
Northeastern University*

At least on the surface, the news from the crime front appears encouraging. The FBI, in its recent release of crime figures for the nation, reported that violent crime in 2007 was down across the board compared to 2006, including a 1.3 percent decline in murder. Although welcomed and widely cheered, the news contrasts sharply with the experience of countless Americans living (and some dying) in violence-infested neighborhoods – those for whom the frightening sounds of gunfire is a far too frequent occurrence.

It is not that the FBI figures tell an inaccurate story about the state of crime trends in America. Rather, they obscure the divergent tale of two communities – one prosperous and safe, the other poor and crime-ridden. The truth behind the fears and concerns of the nation's underclasses about crime and violence lies deep beneath the surface of the FBI statistical report.

Looking at the longer term trends for the nation, the rate of violence, and homicide in particular, has been relatively stable over the past few years. Exploring deeper, this is the case as well for whites, black females, and adult black males over the age of 25. But the picture for young black males, especially teenagers, is radically different. From 2002 to 2007, for example, the number of homicides involving black male juveniles as victims rose 33 percent and as perpetrators jumped 65 percent. In terms of gun killings involving this same population subgroup, the increases are even more pronounced: 56 percent for victims and 70 percent for perpetrators.

## VIOLENT CRIME TRENDS IN MASSACHUSETTS

The landscape of violent crime in Massachusetts roughly mirrors national patterns. In fact, as shown in Figure 1<sup>1</sup>, in terms overall rates of violent crime (criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery and aggravated assault) per 100,000 populations for the state and the nation are virtually identical. Of course, much of the anguish and anxiety regarding the scourge of violent crime surrounds episodes of lethal violence, rates of which are largely obscured in the overall violence trends. Comparing murder rates in particular, Figure 2 confirms the fact that Massachusetts has consistently had a murder rate that is roughly half that of the nation as a whole. In fact, Massachusetts typically ranks as the lowest among industrialized states in terms of homicide rate. Despite this relatively advantageous standing, the upward trend in the Massachusetts murder rate since the late-1990s has alarmed public officials and citizens alike.

Patterns and trends in Massachusetts homicide figures can, of course, largely be traced to the situation in Boston, as nearly 45 percent of Massachusetts homicide cases occur in the Hub. Especially because of the widespread praise surrounding the 1990s so-called “Boston Miracle” in successfully fighting youth crimes, the surging rate of lawlessness, especially homicide, has been a significant matter of concern and point of criticism by citizens and the mass media.

At the close of 2005, for example, talk of an out-of-control murder toll headlined local newspapers, particularly in the Boston area. As one reporter noted, the count of slayings had reached a 10-year high, with no relief in sight. But the broader historical perspective shown in Figure 3 suggests that the widely-reported and discussed 10-year high is more about the successes of previous years than about contemporary failures. In essence, the apparent spike in violence indicates that the city is victim of its earlier success. Were it not for the 1990s downturn, recent figures would hardly stand out as cause for alarm.

There are actually naturally-occurring cycles to crime rates. Although not as firm and deterministic as Newton’s law of gravity, when it comes to the crime rate, what goes up, generally comes down, and what goes down generally rebounds. The past two years has confirmed that the 2005 scare was a case of short-sighted jumping to conclusions. Since then, murder counts in Boston and Massachusetts plateaued and then declined. While no level of victimization can be termed “acceptable,” compared to the early 1990s when a deadly mix of gangs, guns, and emerging crack markets fueled an unprecedented surge in violence, the current state is not out of control. As a result, a reinvestment in the programs and strategies that worked in the past, along with restored funding levels, can reverse the current spate of street and gang violence.

## FOCUS ON YOUTH VIOLENCE

Overall, then, the news is encouraging. The discouraging news is that, as with the national data, the steady state of crime statistics masks a resurgence of violence – and youth violence in particular – among certain segments of the population.

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1 All figures and tables are included at the close of this forward.

The rate of killing involving juvenile and young adult males, has rebounded since 2000, even while the figures involving residents over age 25 have remained low, much due to successes in combating domestic violence as well as efforts to incarcerate and therefore incapacitate the most dangerous offenders.

Tables 1 and 2 contain Massachusetts rates of homicide victimization and offending by age, race and sex. A clearer picture of ongoing trends is given in Figure 4, which displays the estimated number of white and black males, ages 14 to 24 in Massachusetts, committing murder from 1976 through 2007. As with the national patterns mentioned at the outset, the increase in the number of youthful killers among black males is especially pronounced.

Also mimicking the national pattern, the role of firearms in the recent increase in youth killings, shown in Figure 5, is particularly significant and disturbing. The percentage of murderers ages 25 and over who used a firearm has remained fairly stable in Massachusetts, hovering around the 40 percent mark. By contrast, the percentage of gun killings among 14- to 24-year-old perpetrators has experienced a four-fold increase over the past three decades, now reaching an 80 percent high point. The upturn since 2000 is especially prominent, and may have much to do with restrictions in the ATF gun tracing program and other pro-gun legislation that passed through Congress early in the decade.

Murder figures are, of course, not the only concern. Unfortunately, it is not possible to track trends in other violent episodes, except in the aggregate. Figure 6 displays violent crime arrest rates per 100,000 for juveniles and adults, reflecting a general downward trend in recent years for both groups. These trends, however, are somewhat ambiguous in terms of their interpretation. Arrest data can reflect either or both changes in criminal behavior or changes in the capacity of law enforcement to identify and apprehend offenders. It is well-known that the code of silence among youth populations, especially gang affiliates, challenges the police in this regard, largely invalidating arrest as a barometer of trends in criminal activity. In addition to the interpretation problem, it is not possible to disaggregate these data by race to uncover the kind of divergent patterns uncovered with homicide.

## **PRIMETIME FOR JUVENILE CRIME**

Regardless of trend, be it upward, downward or stable, the concern for the safety of children is genuine and critical. With parents spending less time supervising their children – some out of choice, others out of necessity for the sake of managing expenses, and a few out of sheer indifference or negligence, the increasing number of youngsters who are unsupervised during out of school hours is worrisome. According to Afterschool Alliance, a Washington, D.C. nonprofit, as many as three out of 10 children of Massachusetts working parents are totally unsupervised in the afternoons. Poor supervision, combined with idleness and boredom, is a recipe for trouble. Far too many youngsters, therefore, are especially at-risk for a range of problems, such as violence, as well as drinking, drug use, and teen pregnancy.

Figures 7 and 8 display the time-of-day patterns of violent victimization among juveniles in Massachusetts, separately for the months between September and June when school is in session and the two summer months of school vacation. Clearly, the incidence of victimization peaks in the after school hours – the primetime for juvenile crime – when many parents are working and kids are often on their own, and then begins to tail off in the evening hours when parents typically are home to monitor their children. Weekend days during the academic year reflect a very different pattern in which the evening hours are more problematic. The summer months reveal patterns that are close to that for weekend days of the school year. However, the pronounced peak in the late evening hours of weekend days in the summer is of special concern in terms of providing constructive programs and alternative forms of supervision.

## **FUTURE POSSIBILITIES**

The fact that the problem of youth violence, especially among minorities, has emerged and persisted for several years suggests that it is hardly an aberration or statistical blip. Moreover, it could worsen in the years ahead as the population of at-risk youth (blacks and Latinos) grows as a result of both demographic patterns and immigration. Figure 9 shows patterns in the numbers of young children – infants and toddlers under age 5 – recently and projected for the state, with each semi-decennial count compared to a baseline of 1990. While the number of white children living in the state has dwindled with no clear sign of recovery, the pattern is remarkably different among racial and ethnic minorities. The number of black children has rebounded and is projected to grow in the years ahead. The growth, partially tied to immigration patterns, is especially pronounced about Asians and Hispanics. Given the social and economic strains that unevenly impact upon minority communities, growth in the population of at-risk youth signals the clear potential for increased problems of homicide, violence, and other social ills associated with an expanding population of underclass youngsters.

## **ATTRACTION OF GANGS**

Notwithstanding the official crime statistics, it hardly takes a rocket scientist – or a research criminologist – to recognize that there are increasing numbers of wayward and poorly-supervised youngsters with guns in their hands and gangs in their plans. Regrettably, as the nation celebrated the successful fight against violent crime back in the 1990s, we grew complacent and let up on our efforts. Unfortunately, the crime problem and the gang problem do not disappear, and rebounded once we shifted priorities elsewhere. Unless we restore the sense of urgency, some day we may look back and call these the “good old days.”

Even while targeting gangs for intensive enforcement, we need also understand their special appeal. Gangs offer youngsters many desirable advantages – status, excitement, power, praise, profit, protection, mentoring, and opportunity for advancement – healthy goals fulfilled in unhealthy ways. Today’s youngsters who are drawn to gang membership are too young to have witnessed the gang wars of the early 1990s when joining a gang often meant an early grave.

Our challenge, therefore, is to identify and promote healthier means for youngsters to achieve the same need-fulfillment, constructive ways to feel good about themselves and their prospects for the future, while at the same time having fun. This, of course, is where program like the Boys & Girls Clubs play a significant role, and a role that, given ongoing trends, needs to be expanded.

While many Americans rail on about underage, underprepared, and undermotivated parents “who just need to do a better job of raising and supervising their children,” we recognize that these families cannot do it on their own. We must assist families, not assail them, when they become overwhelmed with the day-to-day struggles of raising children, particularly in a downturn economy. The alternative forms of supervision and mentoring are extraordinarily critical.

## PRINCIPLES OF PREVENTION

Unfortunately, not all Americans are convinced about the value of prevention – especially early childhood enrichment efforts. As a result, prevention initiatives are too often funded and implemented on a shoestring, and a rather short shoestring with a brief window of opportunity to show results. This is a recipe for failure and provides additional fodder for skeptics.

Smart crime fighting involves a balanced blend of enforcement (from community policing to identifying illegal gun markets), treatment modalities (from drug rehab on demand to community corrections and post-incarceration services), as well as general and targeted crime prevention (from family support to summer jobs for high-risk youth). Regrettably, the prevention approach has at times been disparaged as “worthless” and as “soft of crime.” Yet, this cynical perspective reflects gross misunderstanding of the process and goals of prevention, and a selective examination of outcomes. Simply put: Prevention programs *can* work; good prevention programs that are well-implemented *do* work.

Besides the matter of funding adequacy, there are five fundamental principles of crime and violence prevention that are critical to a successful investment:

1. **NO PROGRAM IS SUCCESSFUL ALL THE TIME OR FOR ALL INDIVIDUALS.** No matter what the initiative, there will be failures – those who commit crimes or recidivate despite our best efforts to prevent it. Rather than focusing on the failures (as the media tends to do in its “good news is no news, bad news is big news” posture), the goal should be a reasonable reduction in offending rates. In light of the enormous social and administrative costs associated with each criminal act, even modest gains are worthwhile.
2. **PREVENTION SHOULD HAVE AN EMPHASIS ON THE PREFIX “PRE.”** While it is unwise and inappropriate to “give up” on even a seemingly hardened offender, the greatest opportunity for positive impact comes with a focus on children – those who are young and impressionable and will be impressed with what a teacher, preacher or some other authority figure has to say. It is well-known that early prevention – during grade school if not earlier – can carry the greatest and lasting impact before a youngster is seduced by gangs, drugs and crime.

3. **PATIENCE IS MORE THAN A VIRTUE, IT IS A REQUIREMENT.** Prevention is not a short-term strategy. Rather, it involves a continued effort, undaunted by setbacks. Unfortunately, many prevention programs are given short windows in which to show progress, and are often terminated before the final results are in.
4. **PREVENTION SHOULD TAKE A MULTI-FACETED APPROACH.** Understandably, there is much temptation to target gang activity as perhaps the most visible and immediate threat to public safety. While that focus underlying the ongoing Senator Charles E. Shannon Community Safety Initiative (the “Shannon Grant Program”) is laudable and should be strengthened, there are many other points of intervention for successful crime reduction programming. For example, several proven and promising strategies are directed at at-risk families with young children. Rather than criticizing struggling underage mothers for their lack of parenting effectiveness, many programs support them in raising children who are less likely to become juvenile offenders. In addition, many school-based initiatives effectively and efficiently enhance the well-being of large number of children. Behavioral skills training at the elementary school level (such as Boston’s Lesson One Foundation), anti-bullying curricula for middle school students (such as the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program) that recognize the link between bullying and later offending, peer mediation and mentoring programs in high school, after-school activities targeted at the “prime time for juvenile crime,” all have payoffs far greater than the investment.
5. **PREVENTION IS SIGNIFICANTLY COST-EFFECTIVE.** Virtually all assessments of crime prevention confirm the adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of prison time. It is, however, a political reality that sound investments in crime prevention can take years to reap the benefits. For example, the Perry Preschool Program experiment implemented in Ypsilanti, Michigan, in the 1960s translated into a 17-to-1 rate of return on investment, yet it wasn’t until years later when the preschoolers matured that their significantly lower involvement in crime, alcohol and drug abuse was observed. It takes a bold leader to earmark funds today for tomorrow’s success that his or her successor will derive.

## CONCLUSION

The current surge in youth violence, in Massachusetts and elsewhere, was actually anticipated years ago. Even while rates of crime were falling in the 1990s, criminologists warned about the potential for another wave of youth and gang violence ahead, a not-so-perfect storm combining an upward trend in the at-risk youth population with a downward trend in spending on social and educational programs to support youth.

Furthermore, we should not be surprised if the concomitant increase in the number of at-risk youth, especially black and Latino children with less than adequate supervision, combined with budget cuts for youth programs, translates into further increases in gang and gun violence. We are already seeing the early signs.

The good news – or at least the encouraging word – is that the crime problem is not out of control, at least by contrast to the early 1990s when the nation’s murder rate was almost twice what it is today. It is not surprising that a small bounce back would occur after the glory years of the late 1990s. But let this small upturn serve as a thunderous wake-up call that crime prevention needs to be a priority once again.

At this juncture, we must, of course, look toward immediate solutions for controlling the high level of gang activity and easy access to illegal firearms – approaches that depend heavily on police personnel, intelligence, and deployment. At the same time, however, we must maintain a long-range view toward the future. The choice is ours: pay for the programs now or pray for the victims later.

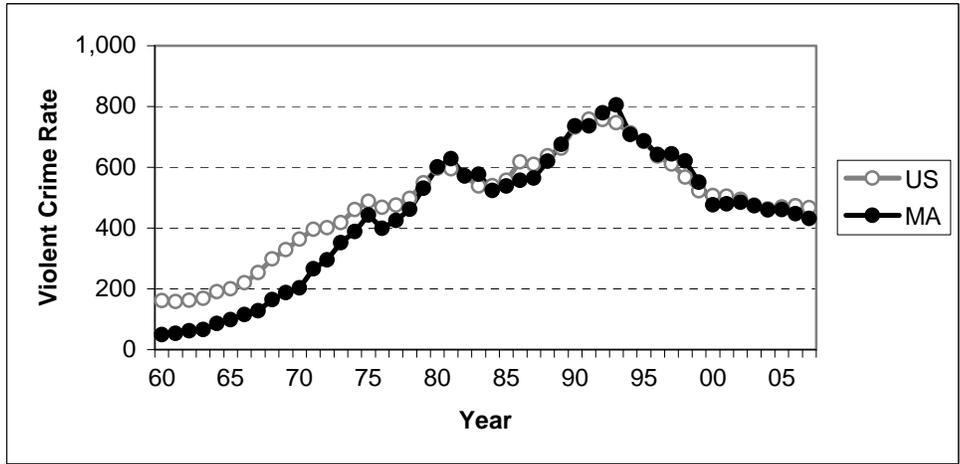


Figure 1: Violent crime rates for Massachusetts and the nation, 1960 to 2007.

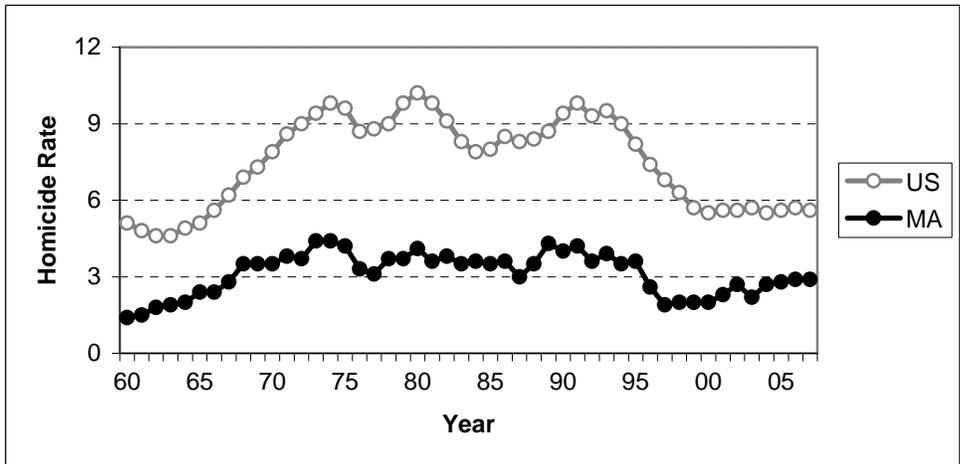


Figure 2: Homicide rates for Massachusetts and the nation, 1960 to 2007.

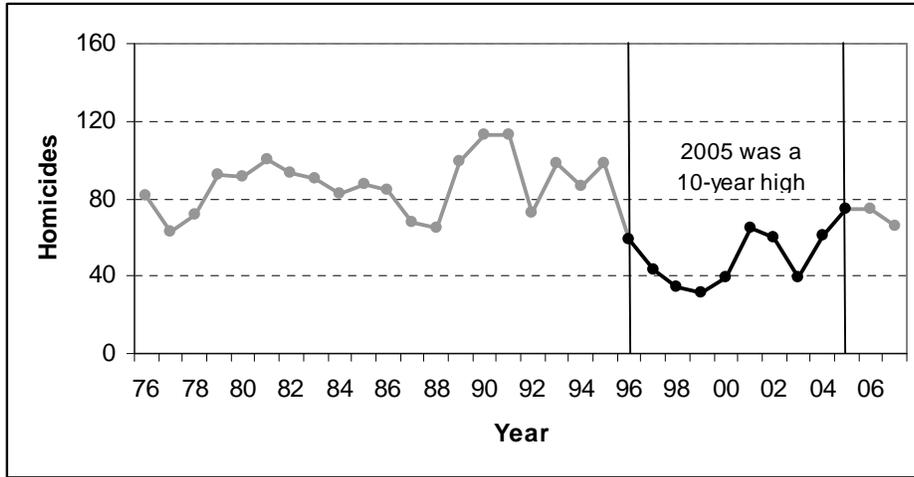


Figure 3: Boston homicides per year, 1976 to 2007.

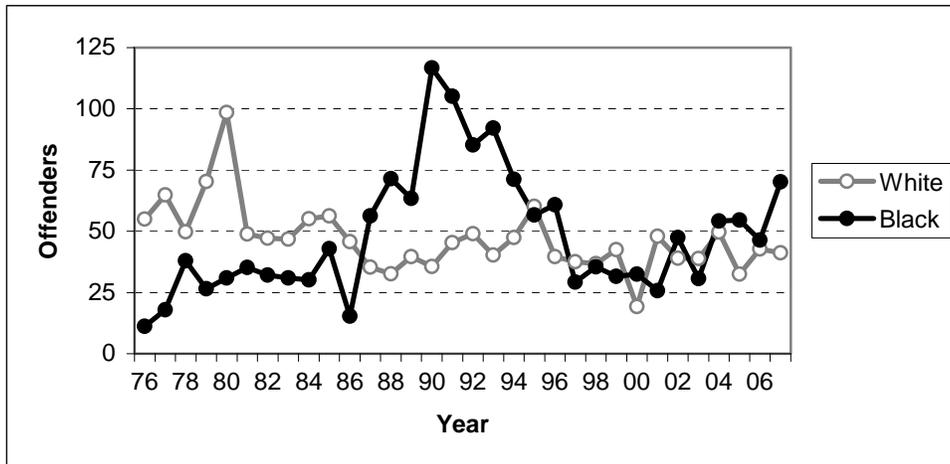


Figure 4: Massachusetts homicide offenders, males ages 14 to 24, 1976 to 2007.

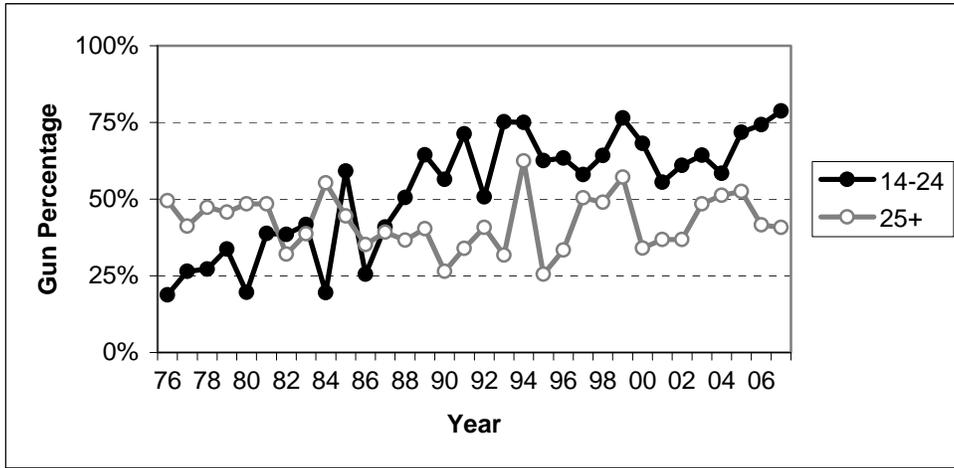


Figure 5: Percentage gun homicides in Massachusetts by age of offender, 1976 to 2007.

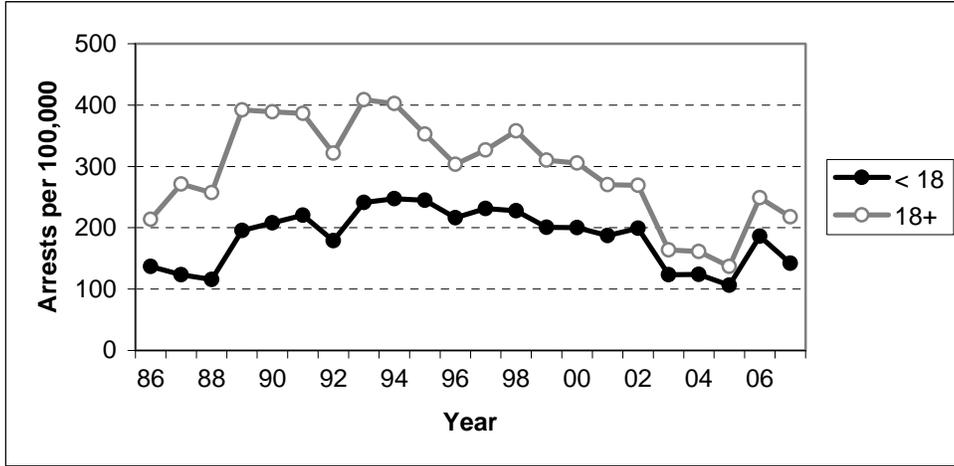


Figure 6: Massachusetts arrest rates for violent crime, 1986 to 2007.

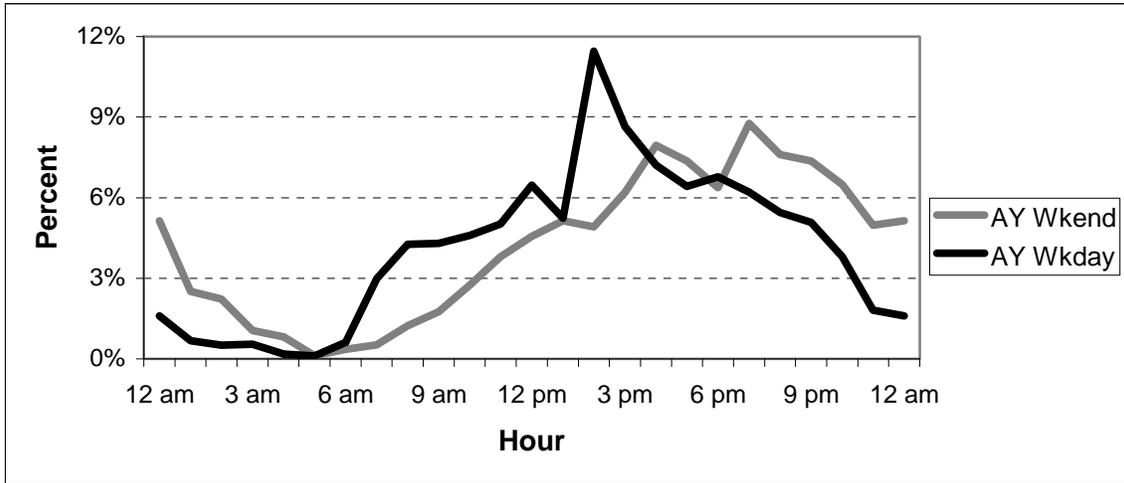


Figure 7: Time of day patterns for juvenile violent victimization in Massachusetts during school year.

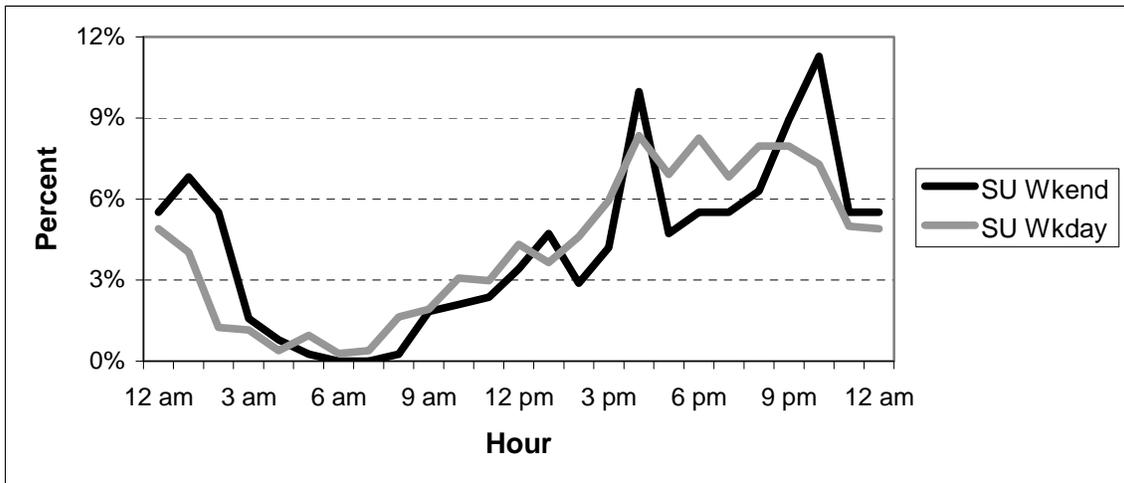


Figure 8: Time of day patterns for juvenile violent victimization in Massachusetts during summer vacation.

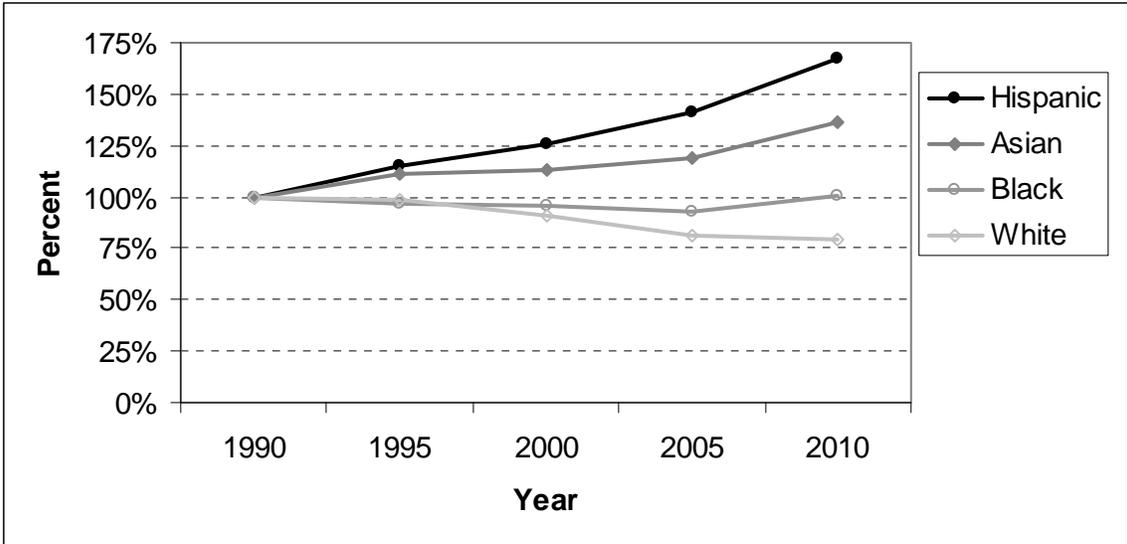


Figure 9: Changes in race/ethnicity-specific numbers of infants and toddlers in Massachusetts.

Table 1: Massachusetts homicide victimization rates by age, race and sex, 1976 to 2007.

	Male						Female					
	White			Black			White			Black		
	14-17	18-24	25+	14-17	18-24	25+	14-17	18-24	25+	14-17	18-24	25+
1976	3.7	7.8	4.7	13.7	62.8	65.5	1.6	2.5	1.2	0.0	15.7	8.9
1977	0.5	5.4	4.3	0.0	68.4	70.6	2.2	1.5	1.3	0.0	30.2	10.6
1978	1.5	9.7	4.9	0.0	54.9	64.4	3.1	1.7	1.6	11.7	13.9	7.7
1979	2.5	9.3	4.6	23.7	61.1	47.5	2.6	3.1	1.3	45.6	27.3	20.2
1980	3.3	6.3	6.0	0.0	40.4	67.4	2.7	3.2	1.5	0.0	12.3	10.5
1981	2.9	4.3	5.0	40.1	63.4	60.1	1.8	1.8	1.8	0.0	16.1	9.7
1982	0.6	6.0	4.8	29.3	92.3	46.8	2.4	3.2	1.4	9.7	10.2	6.1
1983	1.2	4.2	4.6	38.3	57.1	45.6	0.0	3.2	1.4	0.0	19.6	7.1
1984	3.2	6.2	5.1	39.4	67.9	33.0	1.3	2.7	1.4	0.0	19.8	7.0
1985	1.3	4.1	4.3	19.8	87.1	42.7	1.3	1.9	1.3	19.8	9.8	14.9
1986	2.4	5.0	3.8	46.8	65.7	55.6	0.8	3.0	1.6	0.0	28.7	10.8
1987	0.0	4.0	2.9	54.0	66.2	40.1	2.3	0.7	1.6	0.0	15.9	4.2
1988	0.9	4.7	2.6	61.3	124.5	42.4	1.8	3.0	1.1	0.0	12.0	16.9
1989	2.0	7.1	2.8	131.0	153.8	51.6	2.0	1.4	2.0	0.0	19.4	14.5
1990	6.3	7.2	3.3	129.7	195.1	50.7	0.0	0.4	0.8	26.6	28.5	17.3
1991	2.8	6.3	3.0	101.4	184.1	43.1	2.0	0.4	1.5	0.0	41.3	6.1
1992	2.9	7.3	2.7	80.2	157.5	32.5	1.0	2.5	1.9	0.0	16.8	3.7
1993	4.5	5.8	3.0	122.0	161.7	50.4	0.9	2.0	1.2	21.0	16.0	7.9
1994	5.8	4.2	3.2	74.7	186.7	54.7	1.8	2.1	0.9	9.8	15.8	7.4
1995	2.4	6.1	2.9	60.6	176.1	44.7	0.8	3.0	1.6	0.0	15.7	10.3
1996	0.0	8.7	1.7	32.2	133.1	26.7	1.6	3.9	0.9	0.0	10.1	6.8
1997	2.1	3.1	1.3	30.6	68.0	29.2	0.0	1.3	0.9	16.3	10.1	4.7
1998	1.5	8.1	1.6	40.0	93.5	23.0	0.0	1.0	0.5	0.0	5.3	5.0
1999	2.2	5.7	1.7	8.1	91.3	19.6	0.0	1.5	0.8	8.6	5.3	4.0
2000	0.7	6.1	1.2	27.7	60.9	13.6	0.0	0.9	1.3	0.0	8.4	1.7
2001	0.6	8.6	1.5	18.4	68.5	25.9	1.3	0.8	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.7
2002	1.3	9.3	1.8	0.0	84.6	29.2	0.0	1.6	0.8	0.0	7.5	3.0
2003	0.0	5.6	1.9	37.3	59.9	19.1	0.7	0.4	1.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
2004	4.0	7.9	1.6	37.2	136.8	21.6	0.0	0.4	0.7	0.0	3.7	2.3
2005	0.7	7.2	2.0	41.9	144.7	21.6	0.7	1.9	0.9	0.0	3.6	2.9
2006	0.0	6.7	2.1	41.2	130.0	32.3	1.3	1.1	0.8	0.0	10.4	3.5
2007	1.3	6.7	1.4	59.4	102.9	21.6	0.0	1.9	1.2	6.1	10.4	5.6

Table 2: Massachusetts homicide offending rates by age, race and sex, 1976 to 2007.

	Male						Female					
	White			Black			White			Black		
	14-17	18-24	25+	14-17	18-24	25+	14-17	18-24	25+	14-17	18-24	25+
1976	6.0	12.0	4.9	57.3	51.3	106.9	1.5	0.9	0.9	16.5	19.1	13.6
1977	4.9	15.5	3.5	87.3	81.7	97.7	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.0	17.0	20.3
1978	2.4	12.7	5.6	123.0	207.3	83.9	0.5	1.3	0.6	0.0	7.0	11.0
1979	8.3	15.2	4.7	110.6	126.6	60.0	0.0	1.1	0.7	12.2	22.9	9.0
1980	9.8	22.1	5.3	112.2	127.2	80.6	0.6	1.4	0.5	0.0	28.6	9.3
1981	7.8	9.4	5.1	61.2	149.4	71.8	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.0	12.1	4.2
1982	8.5	8.8	5.1	91.3	112.2	52.3	0.0	0.6	0.8	13.4	6.0	6.5
1983	6.4	10.0	4.9	24.7	138.6	63.5	0.0	1.0	0.2	10.5	0.0	11.1
1984	6.0	12.7	4.1	43.3	121.6	82.6	0.0	0.0	0.2	10.6	16.9	3.5
1985	7.0	12.9	3.7	173.9	111.5	57.3	0.0	1.4	0.7	44.5	5.4	5.8
1986	4.2	11.6	6.0	33.3	54.1	55.9	0.0	0.8	0.1	0.0	6.8	5.7
1987	4.7	8.5	3.6	155.5	179.1	20.3	1.3	1.0	0.2	0.0	8.3	0.0
1988	3.6	8.4	3.3	232.3	204.9	55.1	0.0	1.6	0.1	11.1	27.1	3.6
1989	9.1	8.4	4.6	206.6	180.2	52.3	0.0	1.0	0.3	0.0	10.3	10.1
1990	3.4	9.9	3.9	454.8	306.3	50.3	0.0	0.8	0.1	0.0	7.6	6.5
1991	7.5	12.1	3.8	184.7	400.1	33.7	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	4.9
1992	15.6	10.6	3.4	299.4	261.2	32.7	0.0	0.5	0.3	0.0	5.6	0.0
1993	6.8	11.9	4.1	273.2	313.2	36.8	1.1	0.5	0.6	0.0	0.0	3.0
1994	6.7	15.4	3.1	100.3	312.1	53.9	0.0	0.5	0.4	0.0	6.8	2.4
1995	7.8	21.1	3.3	104.4	236.9	39.8	0.0	0.8	0.3	0.0	12.4	9.4
1996	5.6	14.3	1.9	121.7	249.8	34.9	0.0	0.0	0.2	11.5	0.0	1.1
1997	10.5	10.7	1.7	70.3	111.1	24.7	0.9	2.3	0.2	0.0	0.0	4.1
1998	2.8	15.2	1.4	36.3	165.3	32.7	0.8	0.9	0.3	0.0	5.3	1.1
1999	8.4	14.0	2.1	30.5	143.7	29.5	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.8
2000	1.6	7.0	2.0	39.2	109.1	27.4	0.0	1.9	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.8
2001	8.2	14.4	2.1	7.8	96.3	25.9	0.7	1.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	1.0
2002	1.7	14.5	2.3	45.5	152.7	27.2	0.0	0.8	0.3	0.0	12.7	4.7
2003	4.8	12.4	1.5	34.5	92.3	25.3	0.0	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0
2004	5.3	16.0	2.5	34.5	175.0	29.6	0.0	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
2005	5.1	9.3	2.8	49.2	162.5	40.3	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	15.1	1.4
2006	5.4	12.9	3.0	5.6	156.2	35.2	0.7	0.8	0.3	0.0	0.0	2.8
2007	2.6	13.9	2.7	31.1	221.5	20.5	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0

# I. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC SAFETY

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In order to reduce urban violence, Massachusetts must build capacity in its communities to address the root causes of violence. These root causes include prior exposure to violence, economic disparity, unemployment, alcohol and other drug abuse, and educational failure. In addition, strategies to reduce access to illegal firearms are a highly successful violence prevention strategy and are included in the recommendations below. Comprehensive capacity building will not happen overnight and requires that violence prevention be at the forefront of public concern, debate, and engagement. Indeed, Massachusetts must choose to allocate resources which provide comprehensive and appropriate services to reduce the cycle of crime, addiction, violence, and poverty.

The subcommittee recognizes that we are experiencing the worst fiscal climate since the Great Depression and that every dollar spent must be examined carefully. When faced with a decision to cut public safety or cut an “elective” program (such as school programs that foster communication, conflict resolution, mentorship, sports, music, or art), cities and towns will almost always make a decision to cut the elective. But in the case of violence prevention, these are precisely the cuts which can increase violent behavior, and thus bring unanticipated and significant economic and public safety costs down the road.

It costs as much as four times more to prosecute, convict and incarcerate the perpetrator of a violent crime – or to provide medical care to his or her victim – than it does to prevent the crime from occurring through a research-tested, violence prevention program.<sup>2</sup> Through public/private partnerships, a focus on key programs that result in crime reduction and reinvigorated advocacy for more funding at the federal level, we can meet the challenges of our poor economy.

The subcommittee, therefore, strongly encourages the adoption of evidence-based violence prevention efforts throughout Massachusetts. We recommend that such efforts be coordinated via collaborative multi-agency oversight led by the Governor. Specifically, we recommend that the following actions be taken in the Commonwealth to reduce violence:

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2 Juvenile Justice Bulletin, *Blueprints for Violence Prevention* (July, 2001), available at [http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/jjbul2001\\_7\\_3/page1.html](http://www.ncjrs.gov/html/ojjdp/jjbul2001_7_3/page1.html).

1. Establish violence prevention councils in every community to assess risk factors, review local data, and advocate for the expansion of local violence prevention efforts.

**RATIONALE:** Youngstown, Ohio, has utilized this strategy and has experienced a 55.3 percent reduction in the annual number of drug complaints. The overall crime rate has been reduced by 9.6 percent.<sup>3</sup>

2. Sustain, amplify and replicate promising law enforcement initiatives that have reduced violence.

**RATIONALE:** Massachusetts should replicate the successful models noted in this report, such as community policing initiatives, in order to increase capacity and improve outcomes in violence prevention statewide.

3. Take immediate action to develop a strong system of accountability and re-entry support for violent offenders, including substance abuse treatment and job readiness training.

**RATIONALE:** Since 1980, the Massachusetts prison population has grown by 300 percent. Approximately 97 percent of inmates are released back into the community and 95 percent return to their home communities. Inmates who are released into the community often have substance abuse problems and lack adequate job training to successfully re-integrate.<sup>4</sup> There is a direct link to these obstacles and rates of recidivism. More than 50 percent of those released offenders are rearrested or return to prison within three years.<sup>5</sup>

4. Ensure access and availability of substance abuse treatment for all residents, regardless of income.

**RATIONALE:** One out of 10 people in Massachusetts ages 12 and older (577,000) are dependent on alcohol or other drugs. An estimated 39,700 people need but are not receiving substance abuse treatment. The costs and consequences of substance abuse include illness and death, accidents and injuries, violence, crime, and lower productivity.<sup>6</sup>

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3 Heidi Hallas, *City of Youngstown Police Department's Weed and Seed Strategy Four Year Evaluation Report* (April, 2004), available at [http://www.weedandseed.info/docs/studies\\_local/youngstown-oh.pdf](http://www.weedandseed.info/docs/studies_local/youngstown-oh.pdf).

4 L. Engel, *Promoting Public Safety Through Successful Transition: Toward an Evidence-Based System of Offender Re-entry*, Crime & Justice Institute (2008) ("Research shows that crime-prone characteristics include, [among others] ...substance abuse problems...and lack of vocational and financial achievement.").

5 United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics' Criminal Offender Statistics available at <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/crimoff.htm> (last modified August 8, 2007).

6 Mary Brolin, Constance Horgan, and Michael Doonan, *Substance Abuse Treatment in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Gaps, Consequences and Solutions*, Massachusetts Health Policy Forum Policy Brief (March, 2006), available at <http://masshealthpolicyforum.brandeis.edu/publications/pdfs/27-Nov05/PolicyBrief27.pdf>.

5. Develop and implement effective truancy prevention programming and swift and effective responses to truancy and dropping out of school.

**RATIONALE:** In the 2006-07 school year, 11,436 or 3.8 percent of students in grades 9 through 12 dropped out of school in Massachusetts.<sup>7</sup> Students who drop out of school are at greater risk for becoming involved with gangs, drugs, alcohol, or violence, and 82 percent of prisoners today are school dropouts.<sup>8</sup>

6. Mandate comprehensive, violence prevention programs, including bullying prevention, for all public schools, from kindergarten through grade 12 and provide an appropriate level of funding to ensure implementation.

**RATIONALE:** A report compiled by the U.S. Secret Service, through an interview-based investigation of friends, family and neighbors of 41 school shooters, found the one commonality among the 41 was that 71 percent had been the target of a bully.<sup>9</sup> Also, students who bully are five times more likely to become criminals as adults.<sup>10</sup>

7. Establish mechanisms to identify, immediately respond to and treat children who witness violence.

**RATIONALE:** A study conducted at Boston Medical Center's outpatient pediatrics clinic found that 28 percent of children age 6 and under had witnessed severe or moderate violence over a 12-month period; half of this violence occurred in the home. According to researchers from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, children who experience traumatic stress as a result of witnessing violence have an increased risk of becoming juvenile offenders.<sup>11</sup>

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7 Massachusetts Department of Education, *Statistical Report: Dropout Rates in Massachusetts Public Schools 2006-07*, available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/dropout/0607/summary.doc> (last modified March 20, 2008).

8 Linda Starr, *Tackling Teen Truancy*, Education World (April 9, 2002), available at [http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_issues/issues300.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_issues/issues300.shtml).

9 United States Department of the Treasury, *An Interim Report on the Prevention of Targeted Violence in Schools*, The United States Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center Safe School Initiative (October 13, 2000), available at [http://www.ustreas.gov/uss/ntac/ntac\\_ssi\\_report.pdf](http://www.ustreas.gov/uss/ntac/ntac_ssi_report.pdf).

10 <http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/index.asp?area=effects>.

11 The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, *Questions and Answers About Domestic Violence: An Interview with Betsy McAlister Groves, MSW* (2007), available at [http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn\\_assets/pdfs/QA\\_Groves\\_final.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/QA_Groves_final.pdf).

8. Support the development of job training and job development for youth ages 14 to 22.

**RATIONALE:** The percentage of Massachusetts teens who are employed has declined from 53 percent in 1999 to 39 percent in 2004. If a young adult is unemployed and has no skills, he or she is much more likely to become involved in substance abuse and crime, placing both the individual and the community at risk.<sup>12</sup>

9. Ensure that all children have a caring adult or mentor in their lives by funding after-school programs throughout the state.

**RATIONALE:** The after-school hours are the peak time for juvenile crime and risky behaviors such as alcohol and drug use. Students who fail to participate in extracurricular activities, such as those offered in after-school programs, are 49 percent more likely to have used drugs and 37 percent more likely to become teen parents than those students who spend one to four hours per week in extracurricular activities.<sup>13</sup>

10. Take aggressive steps to reduce access to and possession of illegal firearms.

**RATIONALE:** According to the National Institute of Justice's (NIJ) "Kansas City Gun Experiment," the policy of additional police patrols resulted in increased gun seizures, which, in turn, reduced gun crime. The NIJ and Weed and Seed funded study found that gun seizures by police in the target area increased by more than 65 percent, while gun crimes declined in the target area by 49 percent.<sup>14</sup>

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12 Andrew Sum, Kamen Madjarov, and Joe McLaughlin, *Employment Prospects for Teens*, Research and Evaluation Brief: Facts, Figures and Insights for Workforce Development Practice & Policy (June, 2006), available at <http://www.commcorp.org/researchandevaluation/pdf/ResearchBrief3-05.pdf>.

13 National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, *After School Programs* (2001), available at <http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/facts/afterschool.asp>.

14 Lawrence W. Sherman, James W. Shaw, and Dennis P. Rogan, *The Kansas City Gun Experiment* (January, 1995), National Institute of Justice Research in Brief, available at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles/kang.pdf>.

## II. PROGRAMS THAT WORK

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Our recommendations to Governor Patrick focus on prevention, intervention and rehabilitation. The following portion of our report highlights a variety of programs offered in Massachusetts that our subcommittee members propose as workable solutions to tackling urban violence. This listing is offered to illustrate the variety of crime prevention efforts that are occurring across the state. We acknowledge that these programs reflect the direct knowledge of our subcommittee and emphasize that the omission of any program from this report is solely attributable to the fact that such a program was not addressed by the subcommittee members.

This compilation of programs is intended to be used as a resource for those who are exploring new strategies to combat urban violence. We encourage leaders from municipal government, law enforcement, faith communities and youth serving agencies to review this listing and consider whether any of the programs might be an appropriate fit for their community.



# A. ADDRESSING URBAN VIOLENCE THROUGH COMPREHENSIVE PREVENTION

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Addressing urban violence requires us to create a framework of social, economic and educational opportunities that support both the individual and the larger community. The causes of violence are complex, but are often originated from both an exposure to violence and in a lack of economic or other opportunities. In order to reduce violence, we must increase the protective and supportive services that may be offered at the individual, family, school, and community levels.<sup>15</sup> The following is a compilation of effective programs provided by the members of the subcommittee.

## SUMMER JOBS AND SCHOOL YEAR INTERNSHIPS

Long periods of unemployment, dropping out of school or marginalization are recurring causes of delinquency in urban youth.<sup>16</sup> Programs that support the development and expansion of employment opportunities are among the most successful in reducing urban violence. Employment opportunities afforded to at-risk youth help to reduce urban crime by introducing youth to various professions and limiting their time spent at home alone or on the streets.

Key components of successful programs include mentoring, leadership workshops, and weekly life skills workshops. These employment programs expose students to a professional work atmosphere and encourage them to pursue careers in various professional fields. In this way, crime is reduced as at-risk youth are employed and provided with useful work tools and life skills.

When private sector and publicly-funded jobs are available for all young people in the community, the relationships between teenagers and adults change in fundamental ways. Parents, teachers, police officers, and even business owners are more willing to challenge young people to avoid dangerous

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15 The Prevention Institute, *What Factors Foster Resiliency About Violence?*, available at <http://www.preventioninstitute.org/schoolviol5.html#four>.

16 The United Nations Population Fund, *Growing Up Urban: Young, Male, Urban and Violent* (2007), available at [http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2007/youth/english/story/freddy\\_youth.html](http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2007/youth/english/story/freddy_youth.html).

associations and activities. A comprehensive commitment to youth employment is a powerful prevention strategy in its own right and an effective tool for youth-serving organizations. The paycheck is the hook that brings even the most hardened teenagers into positive programs.

At Mayor Thomas M. Menino's urging, Boston employers have responded with the largest private sector summer jobs program in the country. Employers such as State Street Bank, Massachusetts General Hospital, Brigham and Women's Hospital, and Bank of America each hire over 100 teenagers during the summer through the Boston Private Industry Council. Hundreds of other private sector employers hire between one and five teenagers as part of the summer jobs campaign. Some employers, such as John Hancock and Blue Cross Blue Shield, sponsor students to work at community-based organizations in addition to their internal hiring.

Private sector employment opportunities are expanding in other cities throughout the Commonwealth with staff support from the state's school-to-career "connecting activities" initiative. For every \$1 the Commonwealth invests in the staff that prepare students and recruit employers, city teenagers receive \$5 in private sector paychecks.

The Commonwealth's commitment to public funding for community-based jobs has increased from \$3 million to \$6.7 million over the past few years. For Fiscal Year 2009, the Legislature included in its budget \$8.1 million of Governor Patrick's proposed \$9.25 million for the Commonwealth Corporation's YouthWorks program that distributes these funds to local workforce investment boards. Community organizations across the state have responded by offering community service jobs and workplace supervision for thousands of teenagers. In addition, some municipalities allocate money from their local budgets to put area teenagers to work.

## LEADING EXAMPLES OF EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

The Attorney General's new **PROJECT YES (YOUTH EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS)** works with community leaders and youth-serving agencies to support the creation of new jobs – as well as providing mentorship and educational opportunities – for young people so that they can be well-prepared to successfully compete for highly skilled and well-paying employment. Project YES acts as a catalyst to encourage local businesses to work with local Workforce Investment Boards to provide paid or volunteer positions to young people ages 14 to 22. The program was piloted in three regions in Massachusetts this past summer (New Bedford, the Greater Springfield area, and Worcester), with the hopes of expansion beyond summer employment and throughout Massachusetts.

The Attorney General's **JOBS FOR YOUTH** program contracts with 12 sites to arrange job placements, job skills development training, enrichment activities, and community service projects for local youth during the school year. The sites recruit, hire, place and supervise youth in an array of public and private sector locations such as health and community centers, arts programs, and city offices. Throughout the year, the sites facilitate several enrichment activities such as mock interviews, résumé writing instruction, and office etiquette workshops, for

example. Furthermore, the youth participate in and assist with the organization of a variety of community events and service projects. Examples include outdoor clean-ups, health workshops, and community art exhibitions.

Boston's **CORPORATE SUMMER JOBS CAMPAIGN** partners Mayor Menino's office with the Boston's Private Industry Council (PIC) to provide summer jobs for Boston youth. The PIC is a business-led intermediary organization that connects youth and adults of Boston to education and employment opportunities. This program offers jobs for Boston's youth jobs that provide work experience to help prepare them for college, as well as money to help cover expenses at home.

The Brigham and Women's Hospital (BWH) **STUDENT SUCCESS JOBS PROGRAM (SSJP)** is a year-round internship program designed to introduce 45 high school students annually from six Boston public high schools to medical and science professions. SSJP matches students with a mentor in the medical field, provides them with hands-on work experience in the hospital, and enhances their interest in higher education in health fields. Each year the majority of SSJP graduating seniors receive scholarships from BWH towards their first year in college.<sup>17</sup>

Brigham and Women's Hospital **SCIENCEWORKS** is a program that, for the last 11 years, has provided middle school students introductory work experiences in health care. Students are given volunteer assignments and paid summer jobs in hospital departments, teaching them about human anatomy and assisting in their research and writing skills while developing work readiness skills including punctuality, professional dress and behavior, problem-solving, and the use of technology. The program also provides mentoring to students and encourages interest in careers in health care.

The John Hancock **SCHOLARS SUMMER OF OPPORTUNITY** employment program, a 15-year partnership with the Boston Police Department, is directed to serve 40 at-risk youth each summer. According to the company, the program has served nearly 500 Boston youths since its inception in 1994.<sup>18</sup> The program "consists of an intensive 40 hours per week, six-week summer program at John Hancock followed by a 46-week internship and after-school leadership workshops." The company also provides each student with a John Hancock mentor to support their learning. This program has been cited by the former U.S. Attorney General, as well as by Mayor Menino and Commissioner of Police Edward Davis, as a significant factor in reducing the youth crime rate in the city of Boston.

The **WORCESTER YOUTHWORKS SUMMER JOBS PROGRAM** was established in 2005 and is a collaboration between private businesses, nonprofits and schools in Worcester to provide summer jobs for low-income, inner city youth between the ages of 14 and 21.<sup>19</sup>

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17 Brigham and Women's Hospital Center for Community Health and Health Equity, *Student Success Jobs Program*, available at <http://www.brighamandwomens.org/communityprograms/ssjp/default.aspx> (last modified February 11, 2008).

18 John Hancock Financial Services, *Community Outreach Programs* (2008), available at <http://www.johnhancock.com/about/outreach/index.html>.

19 Worcester Community Action Council, Inc., *Youthworks Summer Jobs Program*, available at [http://www.wcac.net/te\\_youthworks.html](http://www.wcac.net/te_youthworks.html).

For the past 12 years, the University of Massachusetts Medical School (UMMS) in Worcester has supported the **HEALTH CAREERS PIPELINE (HCP)** through which Worcester Public Schools students learn about and prepare themselves for careers in the health care professions. The Medical School, the Medical Center, and the Worcester Public Schools provide high school students with internships and employment opportunities. The Medical School also provides staff development to WPS teachers in curriculum areas related to the health sciences.

## **MENTORING AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS**

Positive mentoring experiences have proven to be an effective tool to help youth overcome the risk factors that can lead to educational failure, dropping out of school, and involvement in delinquent activities, including gang crime and drug abuse.<sup>20</sup> Mentoring reduces crime by providing at-risk youth with positive role models, encouraging community interaction and developing meaningful relationships between youth and caring adults.

Successful mentoring programs across the Commonwealth have offered a variety of services including: workshops that educate youth on how to find a job, including resume writing and the interview process; programs that teach youth how to prevent violence or defuse a potentially violent situation; support groups for families and individuals who have experienced or witnessed violence; and before-school and after-school programs, as well as recreational activities in the summer, that keep young people off the streets.

Successful programs encourage community members to take time to mentor at-risk youth in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. Subcommittee members submitted the following listing of mentorship programs which incorporate these best practices. Educational activities include alcohol and other drug awareness as well as workshops on the topics of bullying, Internet safety, child predators, teen dating violence and sexual assault, sexual health, emotional wellness, nutrition, asthma, environmental justice, and community organizing. A goal of each of these programs is to encourage good judgment and community involvement.

Historically, the largest providers of youth development programming are site-based organizations such as the YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, and other community centers. In recent years, health centers, religious organizations, public housing agencies, and police departments have developed programs that focus on public health issues and violence prevention through community service and life skills development. Other organizations are implementing intensive mentoring strategies that link inner city youth with adults who have had similar life experiences.

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20 Linda Jucovy, *The ABC's of School-Based Mentoring*, The National Mentoring Center (September, 2000), available at [http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/32\\_publication.pdf](http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/32_publication.pdf).

## LEADING EXAMPLES OF MENTORING PROGRAMS

**BOLD (BREATH OF LIFE: DORCHESTER) TEENS** is a youth-led organization that focuses on the health, environment and safety of the Dorchester community. BOLD includes youth between the ages of 14 to 18 working to improve the quality of life in the community through education, activism, and peer mentoring.

Brigham and Women's Hospital **SCIENCE CLUBS** are designed for elementary and middle school students to learn about science through interactive, small group projects. This program connects students with health care professionals who serve as role models and mentors to the youths.

The **BROOKSIDE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER MENTORING PROGRAM** consists of three groups of youth ranging in age from 9 to 14 years old. The program aims to educate these children on the benefits of physical activity, nutrition and healthy lifestyles. Youths discuss decision-making and conflict resolution in a group setting. The center also provides them with after-school and weekend activities. Brookside participates in the Hyde Square Task Force's H-Cap Internship, which offers both in-school and out-of-school youth the opportunity to spend 10 hours per week at the health center for nine months. These young people are introduced to various roles at the health center in the hopes that they consider these roles as career options.

In 1996, Our Lady of Assumption Parish helped form **UNITED INTERFAITH ACTION (UIA)**, an organization of religious leaders from Fall River and New Bedford. UIA's initial campaign was called "Hope in Youth," which established before-school and after-school programs. UIA was formed to address the needs of both cities, including better education, safer streets, more living-wage jobs and safer households for recent immigrants. UIA partnered with the city and police in community policing efforts that created closer ties between the community and the police. UIA continues to work with public officials, and the street outreach program captures at-risk youth before they become involved in gangs and drugs. UIA is also working with the University of Massachusetts at Dartmouth, Southcoast Hospitals, and Bristol Community College to help create knowledgeable students ready to work at living-wage jobs.

The **SOUTH COAST MENTORING INITIATIVE FOR LEARNING, EDUCATION & SERVICE (SMILES)** recruits, qualifies and trains adults to be mentors for children in the New Bedford and Fall River public school systems. The goal of this organization is to help at-risk children reach their personal and educational potential through a large-scale one-on-one mentoring program. Mentors are partnered with youth who are considered to be at high risk of dropping out of school. Mentors spend an hour a week with students in a program setting, and the program coordinates field trips and speakers. SMILES' goal is for youths to engage in better behavior and school attendance, as well as encourage children to make healthy choices, as a result of the relationships with their mentors.

Southern Jamaica Plain Health Center has a peer leadership program called **TEAM MITA** that employs six high school students as peer leaders. These leaders receive extensive training in sexual health, mediation, violence prevention techniques, emotional wellness, nutrition, asthma, job readiness, resume writing, communication, environmental justice, and community

organizing. The peer leaders perform outreach to a minimum of 10 youth groups yearly. Since 2005, Team Mita has reached over 237 young people and conducted 42 trainings. The leaders offer workshops to at-risk youth in Boston, including other peer leadership programs and community centers.

Team Mita participates with several other youth leadership programs in **YOUTH UNSCRIPTED**, a program that brings together larger groups of young people who participate in violence prevention workshops by actors from Urban Improv, an interactive program for young people that uses improvisational theater workshops to teach violence prevention, conflict resolution, and decision-making. Common scenarios that can lead to violence are acted out and “frozen” at critical points. The youth discuss how to handle the situation to prevent violence, and police participate in some of the workshops.

Southern Jamaican Plain Health Center is also part of the **SOUTH STREET INITIATIVE**, which operates a youth center and after-school program for younger children. Recently, the program has increased its focus on middle-school-aged youth, who are offered a program every Friday in which they are given the opportunity to develop new skills and meaningful relationships with adults.

The **PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE WORCESTER HOUSING AUTHORITY (WHA), WHA RESIDENTS, AND THE WORCESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT** provides residents with resume writing assistance, interview training and assistance in securing full-time employment through employment counseling and job placement. This partnership has also provided summer employment placement and summer recreation program placement. Residents can take GED, ESL and computer classes, and the youths are provided with other after-school activities and sports.

The Worcester Police Department also offers programs that focus on youth development:

- **GANG SUMMER PROGRAM.** The Gang Unit holds a summer camp (GANG) at Worcester State College. This program provides positive role modeling and promotes teamwork, drug prevention and gang prevention. During the 2007 year, the camp ran for three weeks and approximately 184 youth attended.
- **AFFECTED.** A youth leadership and empowerment program funded by the Safe Schools, Healthy Students Neighborhood Grant, Affected is a collaborative effort of the Worcester Police Department and the Worcester Public Schools. Police Detective Daniel Rosario developed the multimedia program for the event, which is designed as a means to reach out to youth and give them the tools they need to make healthy choices, enhance their feeling of worthiness, help them develop problem solving strategies, learn conflict resolution techniques, and show them how to think and live strongly. Students gain the knowledge, strength and courage needed to make healthy, life-affirming decisions. Participants also study and create public service announcements, which are aired on regional television channels and, to date, have over 1,000 airings on every major network channel. Produced media can be seen at [www.iamaffected.com](http://www.iamaffected.com).

As a part of a continuing effort to expand community policing and to adopt strategies that have proven to be effective, the Worcester Police Department recognizes the benefit of collaboration between faith groups and police. From 2005 through 2007, the **WORCESTER POLICE DEPARTMENT POLICE-CLERGY MENTORING** program has expanded to nine different churches and one South Asian Neighborhood Center that serves Asian-American youths of Buddhist and Catholic Faith. Approximately 275 to 300 youths participate in the mentoring program weekly. Each mentoring church site has a police officer assigned as its mentoring officer who works closely with the youth ministries and youth coordinators within the church. The Police-Clergy Mentoring Program is an opportunity to work with faith-based organizations in a proactive manner to address the complex issues associated with youth at risk. The program does not focus solely on gang youth, but works with a broader group of youth identified by the faith community who are at risk of street violence and related issues.

### **LEADING EXAMPLES OF PUBLIC HEALTH-BASED PROGRAMS**

Several public health-related violence prevention programs are grant-funded programs for the mentoring and development of high-risk youth. These are funded by the Mayor of Boston, local hospitals, and the Boston Public Health Commission. The following are examples of these programs:

**BETH ISRAEL DEACONESS MEDICAL CENTER'S CENTER FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RECOVERY** provides monthly sessions for staff that provide violence intervention sessions in order to reduce the impact of vicarious trauma. In addition, the program offers support groups for families and individuals who have experienced or witnessed violence.

**BOSTON ASIAN: YOUTH ESSENTIAL SERVICE** is implementing the Summer Enrichment for Teens program for at-risk and hard-to-reach linguistic minority Asian youth.

**BOWDOIN STREET HEALTH CENTER** is funding community-building activities in the Bowdoin/ Geneva neighborhood.

The **BRIGHAM AND WOMEN HOSPITAL'S DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MEDICINE** is developing an educational strategy and assessment tool to help improve knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of emergency care providers (paramedics, nurses and resident and attending physicians) on violence and violent-related prevention strategies.

CharlesNewton Housing implements the **BOSTON SUMMER YOUTH PEER VIOLENCE PREVENTION LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**. CharlesNewton partners with the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers to train youth in basics of theater production and to develop and market a violence prevention anti-racism play.

**CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL – JAMAICA PLAIN MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK** is developing culturally- and linguistically-appropriate violence prevention and trauma support materials.

The Crispus Attucks Children's Center offers training in the **PEACEZONE CURRICULUM**, which instructs teachers, parents and caregivers to instill violence prevention and coping skills in 3- to 5-year-olds to reduce risk-taking behaviors.

The **DIMOCK COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER** has introduced summer workshops for families that will focus on conflict resolution skills in a family-peer group setting.

**DOTWELL** offers summer activities, such as basketball and soccer leagues, for girls. The program includes a violence prevention coordinator, who can assist the program staff in assessing and intervening in conflicts.

The Federated Dorchester Neighborhood House is enhancing services in their **TEEN PROGRAM** and **LEADERS IN PROGRESS PROGRAM** to allow participants to engage in adventure- and community-based summer activities.

**HARBOR HEALTH SERVICES** is developing a violence awareness and prevention curriculum for Vietnamese students to be implemented at South Boston High School.

The **HOME FOR LITTLE WANDERERS**, in partnership with YWCA Boston, engages female youth in a curriculum that explores the connections between media images and violence, gender, and body image. This program focuses on media literacy and hands-on media technology skill building.

The **MGH CHARLESTOWN HEALTH CENTER** is training staff and community members in conflict management and learning strategies for preventing and diffusing aggressive, threatening or assaultive behavior.

The **ROXBURY COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER** provides anger management and violence prevention in one-on-one and group sessions for 13- to 17-year-olds in Roxbury and North Dorchester.

**SOUTHERN JAMAICA PLAIN HEALTH CENTER** is sending two staff members to three-day training on violence prevention. The staff will then train the members of their peer leadership group to implement with other youth groups in the area.

Upham's Corner Health Center is adding a new violence prevention program through their **TEEN HEALTH CLINIC** that will allow staff to better serve and empower teens.

## COMMUNITY SAFETY THROUGH INVOLVEMENT WITH SCHOOLS

Students who feel that they are a part of their school and are treated fairly by teachers are more emotionally healthy and less inclined towards drug and alcohol abuse, suicidal thoughts and attempts and involvement in violence.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, collaboration among schools, law enforcement, community organizations, and state agencies provides youth with an amplified support system that engages them and encourages positive interactions.

There are a number of efforts throughout the Commonwealth to address urban violence by increasing safety and fostering the connection between young people and their school and community. Successful components of collaborative programs include bullying awareness, violence prevention, drug and alcohol awareness/resistance, teen dating safety, communication skills, and decision-making skills.

### LEADING EXAMPLES OF SCHOOL INITIATIVES

**MIDDLESEX PARTNERSHIPS FOR YOUTH, INC.**, is a nonprofit organization established in 1988 by the Middlesex District Attorney's Office to provide prevention and intervention resources and training to Middlesex school districts and communities. The partnership serves to foster communication on school-related legal issues relating to substance abuse and violence. Activities include collaborative trainings with law enforcement, social services, and community-based organizations, which share the latest information and resources. Such interactions provide the foundation for creating solution-oriented, community-based, multi-disciplinary approaches to addressing youth violence, substance abuse, child abuse and neglect, hate crimes, and harassment across Middlesex.

The Attorney General's **IMPROVING SCHOOL CLIMATE** initiative provides grant funding and technical assistance to schools and communities to decrease violence by improving school climate. Strategies include: addressing school policies around bullying, acceptance of differences, and violence prevention; changing overall school climate through campus- and community-wide education; establishing comprehensive bully prevention programs, including empowering the "bystander," the majority of the school population who are neither aggressors nor targets; and resolving conflict through peer mediation.

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21 R.F. Catalano and J.D. Hawkins, *The Social Development Model: A Theory of Antisocial Behavior, Delinquency and Crime: Current Theories* 149-197 (J.D. Hawkins ed., Cambridge University Press) (1996).

The Brookline Partnership in Prevention Education for Youth is a collaboration between the Brookline Police Department and the Brookline Public Schools formed to educate students on issues of drug abuse resistance, Internet safety, and teen dating violence. The partnership, has developed an action plan to help improve health education in kindergarten through grade 12. The three programs that are utilized to educate students are:

- **DRUG ABUSE RESISTANCE EDUCATION (DARE)**, a program in which certified DARE police officers work in collaboration with sixth grade teachers to educate students on the dangers of drug use and methods of resistance.
- **MISSING**, a program that was introduced to the seventh grade class to educate students about Internet safety. This program concentrates on child predators, as well as issues of online peer-to-peer bullying.
- The **TEEN DATING VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM**, which educates teens on social skills for healthy relationships, warning signs of abuse, and prevention strategies for teens, parents, schools and communities. This program has expanded to include 800 students throughout the academic year.

The **JUVENILE ROUNDTABLE** includes representatives from the Brookline Police Department, Brookline High School Administration, Brookline District Court and the Violence Prevention and Substance Abuse Program. The roundtable meets on a weekly basis to discuss the recent trends of violence and at risk students. The roundtable is designed to maintain ongoing communication with the police and schools to reduce incidents of violence.

The Brookline Police Department offers a 10-week **ANGER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM** to seventh and eighth grade students. The goal of the program is to provide a learning environment in which group members can develop a more insightful understanding of their personal behavior and its impact on themselves and others. Participants develop practical skills to manage their anger, such as conflict resolution, understanding consequences, problem solving, and self-control.

The Essex County District Attorney's Office currently provides multiple programs to all school systems and municipalities as interactive curriculum and community presentations. Four successful programs are described below:

- **STOP BULLYING BEFORE IT STARTS** is a program designed to educate middle school students about the consequences of bullying, and engage them in developing and delivering bullying prevention messages to younger elementary school students.
- **CHOOSE TO REFUSE** is a heroin and OxyContin® abuse prevention education program that helps young people, ages 13 to 18, understand the legal, physical and social consequences of heroin and OxyContin® abuse. In a six-session curriculum, participants learn decision-making skills, refusal methods, and how to recognize risky situations.
- **PARENTING WISELY** is a computer-based program that teaches parents valuable communications skills such as active listening and assertive discipline.

- The Essex County Sheriff Department's **COMPREHENSIVE SUBSTANCE ABUSE EDUCATION AND TREATMENT PROGRAM** places a Master's level substance abuse clinician in high schools to deliver a two-component substance abuse program. The first component features a classroom-based, empirically-evaluated substance abuse education curriculum. The second component provides confidential substance abuse counseling at school with the clinician, free of charge.

The Worcester Public Schools Department is committed to creating a safe, educational community for all students, and has a number of programs in place to promote this community safety:

- The **MAYOR'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AT-RISK YOUTH** is designed to share information and to foster networking in order to prevent and respond to youth issues affecting the Worcester community.
- The **SUPERINTENDENT'S COMMUNICATION PROTOCOL COMMITTEE** shares information in the community and coordinates responses that prevent and deter youth and gang violence in the schools and community.
- The **INFORMATION SHARING PROTOCOL** is in place to ensure a safe and secure school environment, to enforce clear and consistent discipline actions, and to provide confidence to parents and teachers that a safe learning environment exists.
- The **STUDENT SCHOOL SAFETY CENTER REFERRAL PROCESS** aims to establish a consistent decision making process within schools. The Center gathers a range of information about children at risk, evaluates this information and provides short-term intervention and education. The school-based case management services then follow and counsel students that are discharged from the center. The Center also provides an intensive three-day program for referred students with individualized academic support from a School Adjustment Counselor. Students participate in counselor-led group education focused on developing anger management, conflict resolution, and non-violent decision making skills.
- **POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT (PBIS)** is a research-based, systems-approach program that unites teachers and students with a common language for desired behavioral expectations, respect, and responsibility in order to build a positive school climate. Thousands of students attend the 23 schools and two alternative programs which are implementing PBIS. The University of Massachusetts Medical School's Communities of Care program supports PBIS training for teachers and parents.
- The Worcester Police Department (WPD) collaborates with the Worcester Public Schools to run the **SCHOOL LIAISON PROGRAM**. The WPD Community Impact Division has five officers and one sergeant assigned to the School Liaison Program. Officers are assigned to the 44 schools which are grouped into five districts of the City. School Liaison officers assist school administrators to convene mediation sessions between students and/or families that are in conflict with one another.

The WPD Gang Unit also provides various interventions services and programs to Worcester's youth:

- **WPD GANG OFFICERS** visit approximately 10 to 15 homes of students on a list to confirm or deny gang involvement. Officers speak with parent(s) about warning signs and help to make appropriate referrals to outside agencies for help.
- Gang officers conduct **GANG TALKS**, school talks at all the public elementary schools in the Worcester Public School system. Talks are targeted for sixth grade students. During the talk the Gang Unit officer attempts to teach the characteristics of a gang, how a gang is different from a group and how to identify positive alternatives to gangs. Officers also explore the common myths about gang membership, and define resistance skills. The school-based Gang Talks have been an ongoing program since 1999.
- Gang officers coach two winter sessions of indoor baseball and one session of summer baseball. Each session includes approximately 15 youths, ages 10 to 13. Gang officers are currently implementing **CAL RIPKEN QUICK BALL**, which will involve approximately 100 youths. This program has numerous lesson plans which teach children teamwork, sportsmanship, leadership, work ethic, nutrition, and other lessons to encourage their future decisions. **POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE (PAL) BASEBALL** has three sessions throughout the year which involve approximately 80 youths between the ages of 13 to 21.
- The Worcester Gang Unit will be conducting three-week-long **SUMMER CAMPS** on the campus of Worcester State College. A total of 300 youths will be selected from the Worcester Boys & Girls Club, Youth Net, Worcester Public Housing, and the Worcester School Department. Every morning, the youths will have classroom instruction, in which guest speakers and police officers will inform the youths on various topics. Participants will also take two planned field trips to specified locations. The latter portion of the day will consist of sports activities for the youths. During the beginning of the daily sports program celebrity athletes and established business people will present a brief talk aimed at establishing positive roll modeling. Throughout the camp session, an instructor-to-attendee ratio of 1:3.3 will be strictly maintained.

## EXTENDED SCHOOL DAYS

On school days, the prime time for violent juvenile crime is from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. The crimes that occur during that time are serious and violent, including murders, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults. These are also the hours when kids are most likely to become victims of violent crime or be in or cause a car crash (for 16- or 17-year-olds), which is the leading cause of death for teens.<sup>22</sup>

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22 Sanford A. Newman, J.D., James Alan Fox, Ph.D, Edward A. Flynn and William Christeson, M.H.S., *America's After School Choice: A Prime Time for Juvenile Crime, or Enrichment and Achievement* (2000), Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, available at <http://www.fightcrime.org/reports/as2000.pdf>.

In order to prevent crime and increase community safety, many schools have extended their school days. Extended school days help decrease crime by limiting the amount of free time for at-risk youth. With an extended school day, schools can offer classes in non-traditional subjects, or devote additional time to traditional classes. Two Fall River schools that participated in the Extended Learning Time program saw increases in MCAS scores.<sup>23</sup> In the 2007 budget, \$13 million in funding was allocated for longer school days.

## YOUTH COURTS

Another way to address urban violence is through community-based justice in the form of youth courts. Currently there are youth courts in Malden, New Bedford, and Taunton.<sup>24</sup> According to the National Association of Youth Courts, “[y]outh courts ... are programs in which youth sentence their peers for minor delinquent and status offenses and other problem behaviors. Youth courts can be administered by and operated within a variety of agencies within a community including law enforcement agencies, juvenile probation departments, juvenile courts, private nonprofit agencies, and schools.”<sup>25</sup> Currently there are more than 1,200 youth courts operating nationally.

The New Bedford Youth Court has been successfully hearing cases since October 2002 and is the first recognized youth court in the Commonwealth. Youth courts are organized and operated by youth volunteers trained in all aspects of courtroom etiquette with adults acting only in support roles. School officials, police officers, and juvenile courts refer youth committing offensive behaviors to New Bedford Youth Court, which acts as an alternative to traditional prosecution primarily for first-time offenders or less severe crimes, and allows youthful offenders who successfully comply with youth court sanctions to avoid what could have been a first stain on his or her legal record. It is also an alternative to lengthy out-of-school suspensions.

Every respondent in the New Bedford Youth Court receives an average of four to six sanctions when they leave the courtroom, and every respondent receives community service, participating in such activities as park clean-ups, Adopt-a-Shoreline, service at public libraries, and working for various city-wide community organizations and events. Eighty-five percent of respondents have been remanded to Mandatory programming, which has included New Bedford Police Department Junior Police Academy, New Bedford Police Department School Resource Officer Behavioral Modification Camp, “Invest in Kids” after-school programs, and Citizen Schools at Normandin and Keith Middle Schools.

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23 Will Richmond, *Extra Hours Boost MCAS*, The Herald News, Oct. 8, 2007, available at <http://www.heraldnews.com/education/x942357475>.

24 National Association of Youth Courts, *Massachusetts Youth Court Programs*, available at [http://training.youthcourt.net/national\\_listing/United\\_states/Massachusetts.pdf](http://training.youthcourt.net/national_listing/United_states/Massachusetts.pdf).

25 National Association of Youth Courts, *Youth Court Frequently Asked Questions*, available at <http://www.youthcourt.net/content/view/44>.

Sixty-five percent of respondents who have completed their 120-day sanction period have chosen to voluntarily remain active in one of their sanctioned areas. This means that more youth, who before had typically been involved in negative activities, are now engaged in positive ones.

## COMMUNITY POLICING

Community policing was a critical strategy employed in the 1990s that resulted in a reduction in urban violent crime at its height. Many of the resources that had previously been devoted to community policing programs were diverted elsewhere in the early part of this decade. However, law enforcement has recently revived some forms of community policing in response to the increase in urban violence.

Through community policing initiatives, individuals in a community form stronger relationships with both the police and each other, and thus work together to prevent violent crime. Community policing programs demonstrate the determination of the police department and the city to work together with the citizens who they protect to prevent urban violence. Effective strategies for community policing include the provision of walking or biking police (especially in violent crime “hot spots”), enacting neighborhood watch programs, recruiting officers who reflect the diversity of the city, and teaming police officers with community leaders and probation officers.

## LEADING COMMUNITY POLICING MEASURES

The **BOSTON COMMUNITY CENTERS’ STREETWORKERS PROGRAM** is a program in which 30 to 40 college-educated staff, ages 25 to 55, conduct gang and youth outreach activities engaging gang members in the streets and through home visits. The streetworkers advocate for gang members in the courts when appropriate, help the Probation Service with supervision, mediate disputes, and gang truces, and refer gang members and their families to existing government and community programs.

**CRIME STOPPERS** is a program that was recently expanded to allow citizens to call in or text message anonymous tips to Boston Police regarding unsolved violent crimes. This program is designed to both inform and involve the community in reducing urban violent crimes.

The **NEIGHBORHOOD CRIME WATCH PROGRAM** was first created in 1985 and has since been involved in a number of initiatives to involve the community in preventing crime. Neighborhood Crime Watch seeks to develop and maintain crime watch groups in every neighborhood in Boston and to provide these groups with the necessary skills and tools to act as organized, empowered groups that work with the police to deter crime and reduce fear. The program’s constituency has developed successful crime prevention strategies in neighborhoods and crime watch members are active participants in the development and implementation of Neighborhood Policing in Boston. The Neighborhood Crime Watch Unit often acts as a

liaison between the community and the police, frequently helping to develop a conduit for neighborhood feedback and intelligence to the district.

**OPERATION NIGHT LIGHT** began as a partnership between probation officers in the Dorchester District Court and Boston police officers in the Anti-Gang Violence Unit (which later became the Youth Violence Strike Force) in November 1992, during a time when Boston was experiencing heightening gang violence. The program paired probation officers with police officers to make unscheduled visits to high-risk youth probationers during nontraditional night hours. It also marked an approach to law enforcement in the city that involved more collaboration and community involvement in policing. The program became highly successful and has since also been known as Operation Silent Night.

The **SAFE STREET TEAMS** initiative is a walking police program that has been successful in deterring crime and making important and meaningful connections with residents through community policing. Each Safe Street Team consists of six officers who walk a given area of deployment, and each is directed by a Boston Police Sergeant. This initiative allows officers to form sustained, meaningful contact with business owners and families and provide a valuable opportunity to address quality of life issues effecting local residents.



## B. ADDRESSING URBAN VIOLENCE THROUGH INTERVENTION

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Because of the severity of violent crime and its prevalence in urban settings, it is necessary to address such crime more directly through intervention strategies. Policies and programs that allow authorities to directly intervene in the lives of at-risk and adjudicated youth substantially reduce participation in gang activity and, thus, reduce urban violence as well.

Intervention can and should occur at a number of levels in order to be effective. By intervening early with at-risk and adjudicated youth, more serious offenses and violent crimes can often be avoided in the future. However, even after crimes have occurred, intervention makes it possible to rehabilitate offenders and transform them into positive members of society.

Intervention is most successful when it involves mentor or role model figures who can exert a positive influence on youth and who have received training in conflict resolution. More severe intervention can be effective through a working relationship between law enforcement agencies, nonprofit/community service providers, community leaders, and the local house of correction and district attorney.

Intervention strategies can result in many positive changes in youth, including a desire to stay in and finish school. Indeed, the successful completion of high school decreases the likelihood that an individual will engage in criminal activity. This correlation between high school dropout rates and crime cannot be ignored. Over 70 percent of the inmates in the Massachusetts correction system are high school dropouts. Real earnings for high school dropouts have plummeted by 29 percent over the past 30 years, as dropouts are locked out of the mainstream. This awareness is bringing urban school districts, a potentially powerful partner, into the violence prevention coalition in new ways.

## REDUCING THE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATE

One of the most promising interventions taking shape in the Commonwealth is a broad-based effort to reduce the number of young people who dropout of high school each year and to increase the number of dropouts returning to school in pursuit of a diploma or GED. Increasingly, those who leave high school without a diploma are locked out of the economy, and many turn to crime, as evidenced by the fact that over 70 percent of the state prison population dropped out of high school.

### LEADING EDUCATION INITIATIVES

Boston has launched an initiative called **PROJECT RECONNECT** to pursue high school dropouts in the community and re-enroll them in school. Two former dropouts, now college graduates working for the Boston Private Industry Council, have reconnected over 200 young men and women. This outreach effort emerged from the local Youth Transitions coalition, which includes school officials, state agencies, and community organizations. Similar coalitions are taking shape around the state through the Commonwealth Corporation's P-21 initiative (Pathways to Success by 21). Innovative programs to curb truancy, such as the collaborative effort lead by the Berkshire County Sheriff's Office, are essential to reducing the number of high school dropouts.

The **WORCESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS** (WPS) maintains one of the lowest dropout rates among the state's urban school districts. During the 2005-06 school year, the annual WPS dropout rate was at an all-time low of 4.6 percent. Through collaborations with nonprofit agencies, WPS provides a portfolio of alternative education programs which keep students in school and provide educational opportunities for former dropouts to return to formal schooling. For example, WPS' Gerald Creamer Center annually serves 250 former or potential dropouts. Since 1994, a total of over 1,400 students have graduated from the Creamer Center. In June 2008, the Worcester School Committee allocated additional funding to start an evening program at the Creamer Center so that another 70 former dropouts can resume their schooling and graduate from the Worcester Public Schools. Other WPS alternative programs provide personalized instructional services and counseling to special needs students, middle school students, and adolescent English Language Learners who were denied schooling in their native countries.

**YOUTH BUILD USA** is a proven youth development program currently working in 11 communities throughout the Commonwealth. In Youth Build programs, low-income young people ages 16 to 24 work toward their GED or high school diploma while learning job skills by building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people. Participants spend six to 24 months in the full-time program, dividing their time between the construction site and the Youth Build alternative school. In 2004, Youth Build was selected by the Department of Labor to work with 325 disconnected youth as part of its Incarcerated Youth Re-entry Program. During its first year, the Youth Build USA Youthful Offender Project exceeded all but one of its target outcomes. The 25 percent recidivism rate within two years of program completion was higher than their target, but still significantly lower than the national average.

## **WORKING WITH ADJUDICATED YOUTH**

Once young people are known to the police and the courts, more extensive interventions are necessary.

### **LEADING INTERVENTION PROGRAMS**

The **YOUTH OPPORTUNITY CENTER** in Boston works with the majority of youth under the jurisdiction of the Department of Youth Services (DYS), providing a continuum of case management and employment opportunities for adjudicated youth.

**ROCA**, based in Chelsea, also provides comprehensive services for these youth. Roca, meaning “rock” in Spanish, is a vision- and value-led organization committed to serving the most disenfranchised and disengaged young people ages 14 to 24 in the communities of Chelsea, Revere, and East Boston. In the last 19 years, Roca has received national recognition for its effective and innovative approaches to helping young people live self-sufficiently and out of harm’s way. Throughout the organization, there are former youth members in leadership roles helping to keep Roca in the hands of the young people it serves.

**ROXBURY YOUTHWORKS (RYI)** has a long history of collaboration with the Roxbury District Court. RYI provides community-based, non-residential services to area youth and currently provides diverse programming that is designed specifically to meet the varying needs of the clients. Through the programs it offers, RYI combats the roots of juvenile delinquency in inner-city neighborhoods in Boston by providing innovative support services to court-involved youth up to 21 years of age.

**PROJECT FINAL NOTICE** involves gang officers who meet with individuals at the Worcester House of Correction who are set to be released and who have a lengthy record involving drugs and violence. Individuals are made aware that if they are arrested again for a serious crime it will be prosecuted without plea bargains and a career criminal charge may be pursued. Individuals are also given phone numbers for assistance when they are released from jail.

### **THE CHARLES E. SHANNON COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVE (CSI): COMBINING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION**

The Shannon Grant program is an \$11 million competitive grant program with the purpose of combating gang and youth violence through regional and multi-disciplinary prevention and intervention approaches. These approaches include anti-gang task forces, focused prosecution efforts, re-entry services, social intervention, and opportunities provision programs and community mobilization activities.

Initially, this was considered a one-time only grant. However, it was funded for a second year and

third year through the support of the Governor and Legislature and positive feedback from the grantees, community partners, legislators, and youth served by this grant. The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) has committed \$750,000 in Byrne JAG funding to add a research component to this grant program for year one.

EOPSS has also developed a Resource Guide to help applicants to:

- Specifically define the gang problem in their community.
- Explain the five strategies of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Comprehensive Gang Model.
- Discuss the importance of partnerships in combating gang and youth violence.
- Summarize the U.S. Department of Justice-recommended approaches and examples of effective and ineffective programs to help guide the applicants in designing their approaches to addressing gang violence.

Applicants were asked to design their approaches using the framework of the OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model. This model encourages a multi-disciplinary approach using five strategies:

1. Provision of Opportunities – Develop education, training and job opportunities.
2. Social Intervention – Provide crisis intervention, treatment, and referrals to social workers for at-risk youth and their families.
3. Suppression – Use criminal justice interventions to target gang-involved youth.
4. Organizational Change and Development – Establish agreement among stakeholders about the gang problem. Talk across traditional silos.
5. Community Mobilization - Involve community members, including former gang members, and the coordination of agencies, programs and services.

### **SHANNON CSI YEAR ONE: LESSONS LEARNED**

A total of 819 individual programs received some support from the Shannon CSI. All Shannon communities took a comprehensive approach to reducing gang involvement and youth violence as envisioned by the original Shannon legislation. The most common programs focused on social intervention and opportunity provision with many Shannon resources supporting street outreach workers, educational support programs, and employment training programs for at-risk youth.

A number of communities developed innovative approaches to monitor and intervene with gang members who continue to engage in violence.

Shannon communities will need to maintain their focus on those youth at greatest risk for gang involvement. Communities should further develop existing and new partnerships and coordinate better across these programs, particularly those that are providing services to the same

at-risk youth. Shannon communities should collect more refined information and data about the services being provided to youth in their community.

Plans need to be developed to specifically address older returning gang members. Targeted middle school programs need to be developed for communities learning that their gang problem is being fueled by youth in their early teens. Evaluation of programs for effectiveness needs to happen in conjunction with research partners.

## **COLLABORATION AMONG LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS**

The passage of the Shannon Bill launched a new era of collaboration among law enforcement agencies and community organizations by providing an \$11 million grant program for anti-gang prevention and intervention approaches. Two years into implementation, this new investment has made these interventions successful. These multi-disciplinary intervention approaches include, but are not limited to: law enforcement approaches such as anti-gang task forces and targeting of enforcement resources through the use of crime mapping; focused prosecution efforts; and programs aimed at successful reintegration of released prisoners.

### **LEADING COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS**

The **SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD INITIATIVE (SNI)** is an effective coalition of community residents, state and local government offices, law enforcement agencies, and human service organizations whose mission is to solve a variety of community problems, including urban violence. Established in February 1993 by the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, the Suffolk District Attorney's Office, the Mayor's Office of the City of Boston, and the Boston Police Department, the SNI model works to stem violence and improve the quality of life in neighborhoods throughout the Commonwealth.

One of the more effective anti-gang interventions over the past decade has been **OPERATION CEASEFIRE**, a partnership established in 1995 to reduce gang and firearm violence in Boston. Operation Ceasefire began after 155 Boston youths were killed by guns or knives between 1990 and 1994. Since this program began in 1995, juvenile handgun murders have decreased significantly. Between 1995 and 1998, not a single juvenile was killed with a handgun in the city of Boston. The strategy of Operation Ceasefire is focused on communication between community leaders, officers, and gang youth. Probation and gang unit officers, streetworkers (30 college-educated staff members walk the street and conduct outreach and advocacy to gang members through the Streetworkers Program), clergy, and community organizations meet formally and informally with gang youth in a variety of settings.

Through Operation Ceasefire, police in the **YOUTH VIOLENCE STRIKE FORCE (YVSF)** collaborate with probation officers and prosecutors to educate youth with criminal records about the legal consequences of continued violence. YVSF targets non-complying gangs with aggressive enforcement of public drinking and motor vehicle violations, outstanding warrants, and probation surrenders and has made numerous arrests. Street enforcement resulted in two dozen federal indictments and arrests in August 1996. News of these activities quickly spread to other gangs in Boston whose members saw what could happen if they failed to comply.

Through the **BOSTON GUN PROJECT**, disruption of gun markets, swift federal prosecution for gun possession or dealing, and the zero-tolerance message and enforcement measures of Operation Ceasefire were all used to reduce gun violence. The major partners in gun trafficking interdiction efforts were the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Field Office in Boston (ATF), the Boston Police Department, the Suffolk County District Attorney's Office, and the U.S. Attorney's Office, all of whom worked together to direct the investigations of firearm trafficking and armed career criminals in the city of Boston. The Boston ATF supervisor claims the key to their success has been the close working relationship and genuine cooperation between ATF and local police. Swift federal prosecution for gun trafficking also took some traffickers off the streets and resulted in the investigation and prosecution of several interstate gun trafficking rings. These actions likely had a deterrent effect because federal crimes carry longer sentences than most state gun crimes, and gang members fear being in a federal correctional facility away from home and visitors and without the security of knowing other prisoners.

The **BOSTON TEN POINT COALITION** was formed by African-American clergy and laity in the city of Boston in 1992 to work with at-risk youth and intervene in their lives. This coalition developed a collaboration with police that was based on the belief that for every nine youngsters who could be saved from violence by the clergy or community-based organizations, there was one who could not and would be better off in the hands of the police. In light of Boston's long history of racial tensions, this type of collaboration between the police department and the coalition was a milestone. The clergy supported selective, aggressive enforcement and helped to "de-racialize" policing in the African-American community. Clergy members of the coalition have gone into crack houses and gang-infested areas at night to reclaim youth. The Ten Point Coalition is an excellent example of an effective intervention program that involves collaboration among law enforcement and a community organization.

Through participation in the **WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS HOMELAND SECURITY COUNCIL**, the Hampden County Sheriff's Department has developed an information-sharing platform designed to make data available to criminal justice agencies throughout Massachusetts. The system provides criminal justice agencies with the ability to query the Sheriff's Departments from Hampden, Hampshire and Berkshire counties for information and data on current and former inmates in a secure environment. This information can assist police investigations, as well as aid in re-entry efforts.

## C. ADDRESSING URBAN VIOLENCE THROUGH REHABILITATION OF EX-OFFENDERS

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Rehabilitation and re-entry programs for recently released offenders serve key functions in reducing crime and recidivism. Through these programs, ex-offenders can develop the tools and skills necessary to obtain and pursue vocations. Rehabilitating ex-offenders helps alleviate many of the unemployment issues that arise upon release from prison that, in turn, lead to further crime and re-incarceration.

Unfortunately, there is currently no statewide re-entry program Massachusetts, primarily due to a lack of funding. Instead, certain individual counties have re-entry programs that are separate from each other and vary in both scale and structure. In Massachusetts, of the 20,000 inmates who are released each year (over 97 percent of Massachusetts inmates are eventually released), more than 40 percent are released without supervision or training, and more than 50 percent return to prison or jail within three years of release. Statewide improvements in rehabilitation and re-entry programs could have an enormous effect on reducing the risk offenders pose to the public.

Successful rehabilitation methods include specific trade/vocational training and education, life skills training, gang intervention, substance abuse therapy, and other methods of treating addiction, mentoring, work programs, job placement, and health care services. Faith-based outreach and rehabilitation/re-entry programs have also been found to be highly successful.

### LEADING RE-ENTRY PROGRAMS

The **ESSEX COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT** has implemented a series of re-entry programs designed to assist offenders who return to the community:

- At the Essex County Correctional Facility, re-entry begins with intake and initial classification of prisoners. Inmates participate in academic, vocational and rehabilitation programs that comprise phase one of the re-entry plan. Additional services include guiding inmates through a MassHealth application, meeting with a Department of

Revenue representative, meeting with probation officials, Department of Children and Families (DCF), and a higher education scholarship fund. Re-entry coordinators are assigned to each inmate to aid in reintegration into society.

- The lower security **LAWRENCE CORRECTIONAL ALTERNATIVE CENTER** represents the step down process that is vital to successful re-entry. When offenders arrive, they are classified and continue programs that began in phase one. Additional programs in phase two include Multiple Offender Program, Family Literacy, Intermediate Classification, Electronic Monitoring Program, Home Placement, work release, and community service.
- The **ESSEX COUNTY RE-ENTRY CENTER** program is modeled after the Key Crest program in Delaware, which uses therapeutic-based programs and training to treat and modify behaviors of substance abusers. This phase includes Intake and Orientation (which helps offenders prepare for change), Criminal and Addictive Thinking, Drug and Alcohol Education, Socialization, Relapse Prevention, and finally Release and Reintegration.
- The **WOMEN IN TRANSITION (WIT)** is a pre-release facility located in Salisbury that provides re-entry services for non-violent female offenders with minimal criminal history.

All offenders released from Essex County facilities who are supervised through probation and parole are evaluated for housing opportunities (Transitional Housing) which include single-occupancy rooms or dorm settings.

The **HAMPDEN COUNTY CORRECTIONAL CENTER** has received national recognition for its innovative facility and community programs, as well as its inmate health unit and inmate GED program. Through a series of phases, detainees are provided with programs that help address criminogenic factors such as substance abuse, education/employment, anger management, victim impact, and cognitive thinking skills. After completing transitional programs, inmates are required to participate in programs that help them gain skills and abilities to avoid re-offense in the future. These programs continue to address the core criminogenic and provide a continuum of services as inmates gradually step down to lower security settings. These Phase III programs are comprehensive and include a 40-hour work week policy, substance abuse programs, vocational training, education classes, personal/emotional and attitude classes, family relationship programs, religious programs, health education programs, and other work programs.

The final phase of the Hampden County Correctional Center rehabilitation program is the re-entry program. The **AFTER INCARCERATION SUPPORT SYSTEMS PROGRAM (AISS)** has been in effect since 1996 and includes two vital components: (1) working with offenders within the correctional center prior to their release and (2) working with the offenders post release when they transition back to the community. This program prepares inmates to return to the community and supports them with community partners upon their return. Through a combination of offender risk and needs assessments, and required participation in quality educational, vocational and treatment programming, Hampden County has developed a process that prepares inmates for a law-abiding life upon release. The program features a

strong post-incarceration community support system to help the ex-offenders develop positive community ties prior to release. Once in the community, ex-offenders are offered community support groups, mentoring, networking, relationship building, education, coping skills, crisis intervention and assistance in daily life through AISS.

In the **OFFENDER RE-ENTRY PROGRAM** in the city of New Bedford, a number of services work with the local House of Correction, the U.S. Attorney's Office, the District Attorney's Office, and local law enforcement to provide job training, support, substance abuse programs, and family services to recently released offenders. A Re-Entry Panel is convened on a monthly basis to identify inmates who are approaching release back into the community.

The **PRISON PREVENTION MINISTRY PROGRAM** was created in 1994 by the Greater Love Tabernacle Church in order to support members of the congregation with family or friends who were incarcerated. The program provides one-on-one mentoring to youth and adult inmates and family support. Formal group counseling sessions on substance abuse, anger management, and other life skills are also offered for the Department of Corrections. Families Seeking Peace was a special project implemented by the Greater Love Tabernacle for the specific needs of women in prison. The Prison Prevention Ministry Program (with Families Seeking Peace) continues to counsel offenders upon their release, helping them cope with reintegration into society.

The **SUFFOLK COUNTY SHERIFF'S PROGRAM** is a multifaceted re-entry program that includes vocational training, mentoring, addiction treatment, life skills instruction, and employment opportunities.<sup>26</sup> There are four primary programs involved:

- The **COMMON GROUND INSTITUTE** is a 10-week vocational training program that offers training in carpentry, custodial maintenance, painting, and landscaping. Participants also learn the soft skills that are necessary to obtain and retain work through a job readiness section of the program.
- The **BOSTON RE-ENTRY INITIATIVE** is a partnership between the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, the Boston Police Department, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Suffolk District Attorney's Office designed to provide a multifaceted approach to help reduce the rate of recidivism for recently released inmates. This initiative emphasizes mentoring, information sharing, treating addiction, and employment opportunities for inmates after release.
- The **OFFENDER RE-ENTRY PROGRAM** is a program that provides comprehensive case management to assist ex-offenders with achieving their personal, educational and career goals. In collaboration with Bunker Hill Community College and Youth Opportunity Boston, the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department seeks to provide students in the Suffolk County House of Correction with the necessary resources and skills to successfully transition to the community. This program acts as a resource for counseling, housing, education, and other personal matters. It also provides assistance with transportation, clothing for interviews, and career development.

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26 Suffolk County Sheriff's Department, *Re-Entry Services*, available at <http://www.scsdma.org/reentryServices/index.html>.

- The **COMMUNITY RE-ENTRY FOR WOMEN** program provides female offenders with life skills instruction, job placement, and health care services to prepare them for re-entry. Participants complete an eight-week life skills class during their incarceration while also receiving pre and post-release case management to assist them with their personal and housing goals, career goals, and health care services.

## **ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION**

Programs designed as alternatives to incarceration are also being successfully implemented to address high risk groups. The Massachusetts Probation Service currently operates Community Corrections Centers that target offenders who would otherwise be serving a jail sentence. This highly structured program is capable of providing both sanctions and services, including treatment and education, to high-risk offenders. By placing offenders in controlled, collaborative, effective and efficient intermediate sanctions, the Massachusetts Probation Service reduces fragmentation in criminal justice and provides a safe and cost effective method of supervising offenders.

Individuals sentenced to a community corrections program remain in the community while being closely monitored through daily reporting and electronic monitoring. Random drug and alcohol testing along with community service are coupled with treatment and job training, all in an effort to reintegrate an offender. By addressing many of the core issues that lead individuals to commit crimes in the first place, this program seeks to provide offenders with the skills necessary to prevent future criminal involvement.

## III. CONCLUSION

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The issue of urban violence is one of great importance to our Commonwealth. As leaders in the community and especially in public safety matters, the members of this subcommittee are deeply concerned about the ability of our citizens to feel safe in their communities. As such, we are committed to advocating for increased resources that can be devoted to the implementation of strategies with prevention, intervention and rehabilitation models.

This report provides us with a timely reminder of the most effective approaches to reduce urban violence in our communities. In addition, it sets forth an overview of promising violence prevention initiatives from across the state that can be examined as models for new initiatives in other communities. The programs and strategies recommended in this report are crucial to making neighborhoods safer by reducing gang violence, increasing mentoring, educational, and job opportunities for youth, and increasing access to substance abuse and mental health services.

The Urban Violence Subcommittee supports a collaborative and comprehensive statewide effort to strengthen and intensify model violence prevention programs. Our vision is for a Commonwealth where every resident, in every community, feels safe from violence at home, at school, and in his or her neighborhood. We look forward to continuing to engage in this effort, and thank Governor Patrick for allowing us the opportunity to examine this issue.



# APPENDIX OF PROGRAM CONTACTS

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Throughout this report, there are references and links to commercial or other third-party websites. The AGO does not endorse or maintain a relationship with any of these companies or organizations, and is not responsible for the content on these sites. The information on the sites remains the property of the respective owners. The AGO does not express any opinion as to the value or accuracy of the information contained on these sites. The references contained within this report are not exclusive lists of companies/organizations providing the services discussed throughout this report.

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