



# Harnessing the Power of Advocacy: Massachusetts' Efforts to Increase State Resources for Youth

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December 8, 2008

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*The Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth (CCRY) Network, an affinity group convened by the Center for Law and Social Policy, met in Boston on June 23 and 24 for its 2008 summer meeting. The focus of the meeting was highlighting communities that have created and are currently implementing comprehensive strategies that decrease gang and youth violence and are effectively serving youth through strong public-private partnerships among law enforcement, the workforce development and education systems, and community and faith-based organizations. The idea for this policy brief emerged from the information presented in one of the meeting's sessions, "Making Youth a Priority on the Local, State, and National Level: How to Garner Political Support, Resources, and Action." The content and additional details conveyed in this brief are derived from that session as well as from follow-up interviews with key leaders in the youth advocacy movement in Massachusetts.*

The CCRY Network aims to support communities across the country in creating comprehensive service delivery systems, strong collaborative partnerships, and innovative peer-to-peer networking to improve the lives of youth.

## **Introduction**

Across the country, cities and states struggle to garner the resources necessary to address the many issues facing their disconnected young people. While grassroots efforts work hard to push for more funding and better programming, city and state officials are challenged with balancing priorities—deciding whether to shift resources among governmental departments or cut funding all together. Despite good intentions, grassroots advocacy campaigns and state policy strategies often are misaligned and push conflicting agendas—resulting in missed opportunities to take full advantage of the positive movement each effort has created. A disjointed advocacy and policy campaign may heighten the visibility of the issue; it may even increase the willingness of legislators and the public to take action on behalf of youth. But such a campaign is unlikely to truly engage the engines that can move policy or increase resources in a progressive way. Coordinated grassroots organizing of local and state advocates that operates in concert with a thoughtful policy construct and that also garners political support can yield far greater outcomes and truly impact the lives of youth in a comprehensive way.

Over the last several years, a highly coordinated local and statewide advocacy movement has experienced groundbreaking legislative success in the state of Massachusetts. Leaders—from local grassroots organizations such as Massachusetts Communities Action Network and Project R.I.G.H.T., the Metropolitan Mayor’s Coalition, the Boston Private Industry Council, and the workforce development system—joined forces to create a thoughtful vision of systemic change for youth in their state. They launched a well-orchestrated and highly collaborative campaign to increase funding in four state departments to more than \$32 million; and they drafted and recently helped pass legislation that asserts a comprehensive, multi-systemic approach to education reform. This policy brief seeks to outline the ways in which advocacy coalitions were formed at the state level in Massachusetts and the approaches advocates used to garner support and resources for systems and programs that serve youth.

## The Massachusetts story

In the early part of the decade, Massachusetts—like many states across the country—experienced tremendous state budget cuts that threatened prevention and intervention programs targeted at youth. At the same time, the state saw an increase in youth violence, which was progressively tearing apart the fabric of the state’s communities. In response, advocates throughout the state focusing on issues related to youth violence and youth development came together to establish a statewide advocacy network called the Safe Teens Safe Communities Coalition, organized by the Massachusetts Communities Action Network. The coalition—which is made up of community organizations, social service agencies, and faith-based organizations, along with allies such as mayors, police chiefs, and district attorneys—began mobilizing around one specific line-item that the governor had initially excluded from the state budget: the Senator Charles E. Shannon Community Safety Initiative (Shannon

**The Senator Charles E. Shannon Community Safety Initiative (Shannon CSI)** is a \$13 million state grant program administered by the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security. The program takes multi-disciplinary approaches to combat gang violence via law enforcement initiatives such as anti-gang task forces and targeting of enforcement resources through the use of crime mapping, focused prosecution efforts, programs aimed at successful reintegration of released inmates and youth from juvenile detention, and programs that provide youth with supervised out-of-school activities. The Shannon CSI provides funding to communities that are able to demonstrate

- \* High levels of youth violence and gang problems
- \* A comprehensive plan to work with multi-disciplinary partners
- \* A commitment to coordinated prevention and intervention strategies

CSI), a state grant program that works to combat gang violence through coordinated programs for law enforcement and prevention and intervention (see box to left)<sup>i</sup>. Shannon CSI was an initiative put forth in 2006 by the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition; a group of over 100 mayors, police chiefs, human service professionals, district attorneys and legislators to promote new public safety initiatives<sup>ii</sup>. The Safe Teen Safe Communities Coalition understood that cross-sector collaboration and partnership among law enforcement and community organizations is critical and worked hard to make sure Shannon CSI was included in the budget and preserve the efforts of the Metro Mayors Coalition. The Safe Teen Safe Communities Coalition designed and implemented a well-organized statewide advocacy campaign by growing its constituency base, holding statewide rallies, and meeting with key decision makers. The coalition’s work ultimately led to 60 legislators sponsoring an amendment to restore the funds in the budget and to the governor publicly supporting Shannon CSI.

Seeing the opportunity to expand its reach, the coalition progressively transitioned its messaging to frame youth violence as a public health issue and targeted its efforts on establishing an additional line item in the budget: the Youth Violence Prevention Program, under the Department of Public Health (see box below<sup>iii</sup>). Similar organizing efforts—local meetings with key legislators, media articles, and an annual rally at the state house—helped advance the passage of funding for this program. The program provided funding for 21 different youth violence prevention coalitions in communities across the state in 2007 and for 27 with increased funding in 2008. Each funded coalition

implements new youth violence prevention programs including afterschool programs, street outreach worker programs, conflict resolution programs, peace summits, teen job programs, and others<sup>iv</sup>.

#### **Impact on the ground: Boston and Brockton**

Progressive policies and additional resources at the state level have made a substantial impact for the youth delivery systems at the local level. For example, in Brockton, the state Shannon grant brought together the police department, law enforcement and juvenile justice systems, the mayor's office and the school district to work collaboratively with five community-based organizations to provide education, skills training, employment opportunities and support services to 200 at-risk youth. The grant was also used to create a youth services clearinghouse that followed the Youth Opportunity model.

In Boston, Youth Options Unlimited (formerly YO Boston) serves exclusively court-involved youth and sustains its efforts with the support of the Shannon grant. Y.O.U partners with the Boston Private Industry Council, Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services, the Boston Police Department, Boston Redevelopment Authority, Department of Probation, Suffolk County House of Correction, Boston's Center for Youth and Families, Department of Youth Services, Boston Public Schools, and the Department of Social Services to provide comprehensive pre-release interventions, case management, support services, education, training and employment opportunities for their youth.

*See appendix for more information on Boston and Brockton's Shannon Grant Initiatives.*

**The Massachusetts Youth Violence Prevention Program (MYVPP)** is grounded in a youth development framework and focuses on multiple dimensions of youth violence, including school violence, gang violence, self-inflicted violence, child and sexual abuse, teen dating violence, bullying/harassment, fighting, weapon-related violence, workplace violence, and sexual violence. MYVPP addresses shared risk and protective factors on multiple levels, including individual, family, school, community, and peer group.

The MYVPP works closely with the Massachusetts Coalition for Youth Violence Prevention, which consists of more than 30 different community-based organizations, academic centers, faith-based organizations, research organizations, and state agencies representing multiple facets of youth violence prevention.

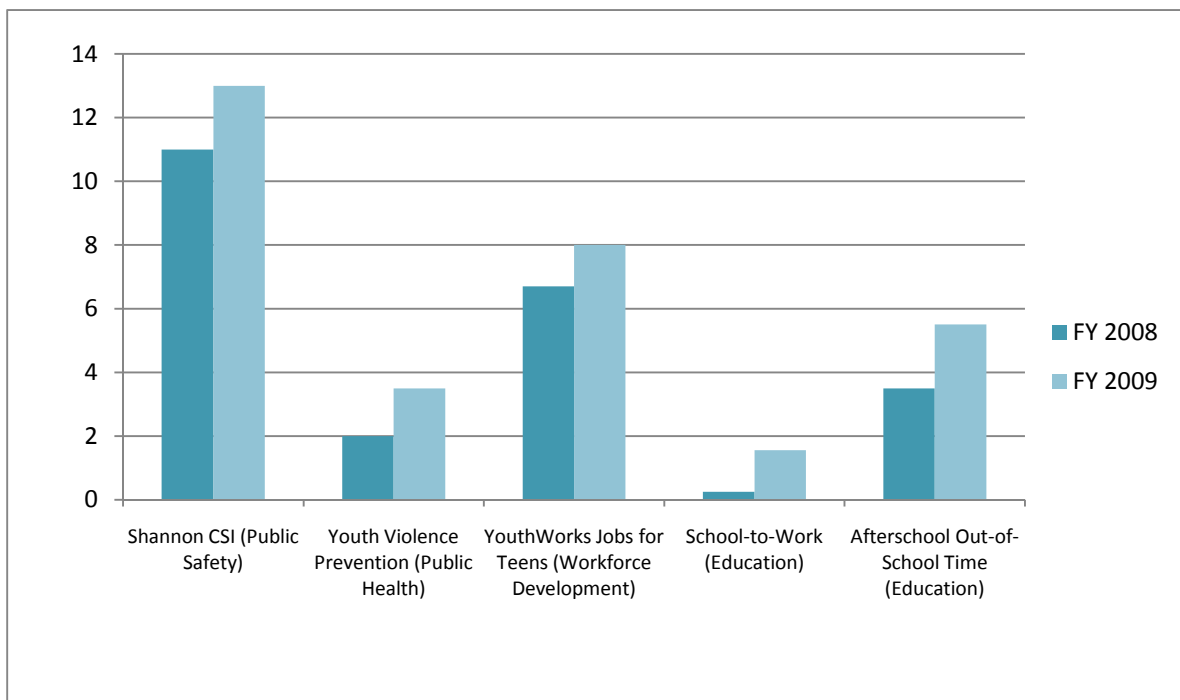
The coalition had successfully pushed to increase funding for both public safety and public health, but it understood that to truly improve the lives of youth it also needed to address the youth unemployment crisis. Youth employment has been a big priority in Massachusetts and highly valued by the municipalities, but their youth needed greater skills, work experience, and employment opportunities. Again, the coalition advocated successfully for increased funding, this time for the YouthWorks Jobs for Teens program, under the Department of Workforce Development. YouthWorks is part of a comprehensive approach that coordinates education, employment and support services for low-income youth in 25 cities and towns in Massachusetts. Last summer, more than 3,200 youth statewide were placed in employment.<sup>v</sup>

Meanwhile, another policy advocacy group was working parallel to the coalition's efforts, focusing its attention on the dropout crisis. The Youth Transitions Task Force (YTTF), pursued with support from a national consortium of funders called the Youth Transitions Funders Group and organized by the Boston Private Industry Council, is made up of state agencies, local alternative education providers, and state and school officials working to raise awareness of the dropout crisis and its impact on youth and the community. YTTF informed key decision makers and the public on the issue by releasing the publication *Too Big to Be Seen: The Invisible Dropout Crisis in Boston and America*, which was collaboratively written by YTTF members and had tremendous support from all of them. YTTF began its own advocacy campaign and drafted and helped pass legislation that addresses dropout prevention and recovery and requires collaboration among key state agencies, such as Public Health, Public Safety, Labor and Workforce Development and Education, and local school officials and community organizations (see box right<sup>vi</sup>).

**An Act to Improve Dropout Prevention and Reporting of Graduation Rates** (Chapter 315 of the Acts of 2008) was approved on August 14, 2008. It "commits the Commonwealth to dropout prevention and recovery as a significant policy objective, one that requires the involvement of several state agencies in collaboration with local school officials, workforce boards, and community organizations." The legislation establishes a statewide commission to set goals and timetables for dropout reduction and requires school districts with an annual dropout rate of more than 4 percent to develop an action plan that includes effective tracking of students, early intervention strategies, outreach to recent dropouts, and enrollment in alternative programs that offer high school diplomas. The bill raises the compulsory attendance age from 16 to 18.

Grassroots community organizations, mayors, police chiefs and other city officials, heads of state agencies, and leaders all the way up to the governor felt the movement happening across the state of Massachusetts around youth issues. Leaders in the advocacy world knew it was a pivotal time to make a large-scale difference for youth in Massachusetts and that everyone needed to be at the table, sharing the same agenda. Through relationship building, trust, and a passion for the cause, these skillful leaders from the Safe Teens Safe Communities Coalition, the YTTF, and other advocacy groups began to meld their agendas and strategies to reinforce the messaging and the thoughtful planning of the other's. In doing so, this larger statewide network of advocates created a powerful force that leveraged their previous advocacy and legislative victories—resulting in the passage of the Dropout Prevention and Recovery bill and in increased fiscal year 2009 funding to four key departments that serve youth, totaling nearly \$32 million<sup>vii</sup>.

**Increase in Youth Funding (in millions)<sup>viii</sup>**



**How they achieved success**

The success of these combined advocacy and policy campaigns has been extraordinary. It suggests a need to look more carefully at not only what objectives were achieved but also at how they were

achieved. This statewide advocacy campaign accomplished such gains because of its focused strategizing in four key areas: coalition building, framing, power analysis, and garnering support of decision makers.

### **Coalition building**

What began to emerge in Massachusetts was the understanding of a need for a broader, more comprehensive and holistic strategy—advocating for increased resources and services in several areas related to youth, such as dropout prevention, violence prevention, public health, and employment. Dynamic, well-respected leaders—with a passion and commitment to the cause and years of advocacy experience—recognized that it was time to bring advocacy groups together, so they began to convene key allies and systems. These leaders demonstrated to individual advocacy groups that together they could make a serious impact working collaboratively in support of a broader agenda and still own their priorities. It was agreed that the goal would be to “develop a broad agenda around youth that is focused on narrow, yet interrelated measures, leading to positive results for everyone.”<sup>ix</sup>

Local advocacy groups from across the state assembled to create a mutually supportive statewide advocacy campaign. In order to build this larger coalition, key organizers had to think strategically about whom to partner with and how these partners advocate for the issues they care about. As they assessed who their potential partners would be, they realized that their base was bigger than they thought. Organizers bridged the divide among diverse groups by bringing everyone into the same room and to the same table to find common ground and build respect. The group learned fast that it was in everyone’s best interest to collaborate and leverage their assets—even if it required sharing priorities and issues. When they came together, organizers planned quality meetings and invited key stakeholders to participate in the discussions. In the end, the larger coalition was able to take all the ideas offered and craft a popularly accessible policy statement that ensured every partner in the larger coalition would be readily willing and able to champion it.

**When interviewed, leaders in the Massachusetts effort provided the following advice for successful coalition building:**

**Cultivate relationships.** When building relationships think broadly and comprehensively about individuals and groups who may have a stake in the issue. Partners can include grassroots neighborhood organizations, social service providers, mayors, police chiefs, district attorneys, and others.

**Find common ground.** Every group comes to the table with different perspectives and different priorities on their agenda. Meeting new allies face to face and sharing similar experiences allows groups to build trust and mutual respect.

**Leverage assets.** It is important to recognize individuals' assets, and those of the collective group. Some individuals and organizations have a great deal of political savvy, while others have less experience in this arena. Often, grassroots organizations have connections on the ground, while systems and agencies have resources and an "in" with policymakers. Leverage each other's assets to maximize the impact.

**Organize quality meetings.** Organizers must make sure that time and resources are respected. Also they should invite influential people to join in the discussions, and allow for honest and sometimes risky exchanges to foster cohesiveness in thinking.

**Facilitate an inclusive policy development process.** All members need to feel ownership of the process. Facilitating an authentic decision-making process that takes all ideas into consideration allows for true buy-in to recommendations and the direction of the campaign.

### **Power analysis**

Once the larger statewide coalition was built, it needed to determine how it would move the advocacy campaign forward and identify, reach, and influence key decision makers. To do this, it completed an "inside the building and outside the building assessment"<sup>x</sup>—a strategic planning tool that identifies whom to target inside and outside the state house. The coalition identified who the key decision makers were, the process for making decisions, and how to strategically influence them. Coalition members met with policymakers—from key legislators to the governor—organized rallies and events, and gained attention from the media.

### **Key components of a power analysis**

#### **Inside the building**

- 1) Identify the key decision makers at the state house: governor, chairs of house and senate committees (especially budget committees).



- 2) Determine how key policymakers make decisions. Understand the state budget and legislative process, and know the dates to determine actions.
- 3) Determine which decision makers have a vested interest in the area of concern. Think broadly about the issues, and figure out how to get an “in” with legislators.
- 4) Map out where grassroots efforts are located and who can impact whom. Determine who in the coalition has contacts with key leadership and how those relationships can be leveraged.

### **Outside the building**

- 1) Meet with legislators in their home district to advocate for appropriation increases or legislative proposals. This helps develop the relationships with legislators and the experience of advocates in organizing and running meetings.
- 2) Schedule meetings with the governor, department heads, cabinet secretaries, and legislative leadership. Be clear about the “ask.”
- 3) Get media attention. Do not depend solely on the media to raise awareness of campaign efforts, but engaging the media should definitely be an intentional part of the plan to cover events, legislative and budget processes, and written reports on the issues.
- 4) Host large rallies, press conferences, hearings, and other events around the issue. When decision makers see that their constituents are involved, they are more willing to focus on the issue.

### **Framing**

Perhaps the most important lesson from the Massachusetts story is the strategic way in which the coalition framed its issues, both for coalition partners and for key decision makers. Leaders in the advocacy community used the governor’s initial exclusion of Shannon CSI in the state budget to electrify their network of advocates and began to shape a campaign that became something larger than a youth violence issue. By framing youth safety as positive youth development, they created a snowball effect, leading the coalition to subsequently focus on access to good jobs and better health. Eventually partners within the coalition, as well as policymakers, began to understand that when you talk about prevention for youth violence, you also imply access to multiple educational options, skills training, and employment. The coalition was strategic about how it made its case for increased resources and better

policies for youth. It identified the language that resonated most with its target audiences and used it to influence and strengthen partnerships.

**When interviewed, leaders in the Massachusetts effort provided the following advice for framing the message:**

**Use holistic language.** Language that shows the interconnectedness of each domain is critical to a campaign's success. Using holistic language to frame the issue broadly enough allows advocates to build larger coalitions, shape an agenda, and avoid limiting its possibilities for movement. For example, the coalition used both "youth violence prevention" and "positive youth development" to advocate for increased support. They learned that if they only used language like "youth violence prevention" some legislators and the public would believe that these programs were only for communities or neighborhoods with gangs and not for a broader prevention effort. On the other hand, if they only used language such as "positive youth development" it may not have portrayed the sense of urgency that "youth violence" would.

**Clarify the language used.** Remember that while you may understand the ins and outs of your field, those who you are advocating to may not. Clarifying the language you use is essential to getting the results you are looking for. The coalition made sure to clearly explain what intervention and prevention programs really do because often legislators and their staff didn't understand the distinction the way people in these fields do. For example, the coalition would explain that intervention programs dealt with youth in gangs or youth who had been in the juvenile justice system. Prevention programs addressed issues for youth that were being "recruited or victimized" by gangs (in the communities with gangs) and for all other youth at-risk (in other communities). The coalition would be specific and name the range of programs youth need so that everyone was clear about what was being discussed, i.e. substance abuse prevention and treatment for drugs and alcohol, pregnancy prevention, dropout prevention and recovery, education on bullying or dating violence, after school programs, summer and year-round employment, and street outreach worker programs.

**Find language that resonates.** The more ways you have to talk about the issues, the better. For some, speaking about the problem in terms of youth violence can emit more of a sense of urgency, giving them something tangible to work from. For others, what resonates more may be a cost-benefit argument or an economic consequences model that frames the issue in terms of the cost to society to address a

specific problem or the savings from taking action. For example, the coalition would remind legislators that lifelong earnings in their state are about \$765,000 for dropouts, \$1.2 million for high school graduates, \$1.5 million for Associate's Degree holders and \$2.2 million for Bachelor's degree holders; that 27% of the state's adults with no high school diploma or GED received some type of cash assistance compared to 15% with just a high school diploma; and that about 70% of the prison population had no diploma.<sup>xi</sup>

### **Garnering support at the State**

After building a strong coalition of partners across the state, analyzing and developing a strategy for the campaign, and framing issues in a way that was unifying, this large network of advocates focused its efforts on garnering the support of key policymakers in Massachusetts. Because of previous grassroots organizing in local areas, many members in the coalition had already established mutually beneficial relationships with key legislators and department secretaries and had proven themselves to be valuable allies. They continued to meet with the governor, speaker of the house, senate president, majority and minority leaders, chairs and vice chairs of ways and means, and cabinet secretaries, as well as with legislators who were not in leadership roles but were potential allies who could act as champions to move the message within the legislature. Once the coalition had established a proven track record of success and demonstrated a tremendous amount of influence on the ground, policymakers saw the advocates as a resource. The advocates, in turn, supported the policymakers as champions of the cause and prepared to demonstrate the value of the proposals.

**When interviewed, leaders in the Massachusetts efforts provided the following advice on garnering support:**

**Plan regular visits and communications.** Meet with as many legislators and other policymakers as possible before, during, and after achieving specific campaign goals. Continually foster relationships by inviting policymakers to meetings, briefing them on how the campaign is going, and giving them something to champion, even if it isn't a big-ticket item.

**Use personal tie-ins.** Bring on advocates who have previously established relationships with legislators. Allow those with prior connections to take the lead in particular meetings or events in which those connections can be leveraged.

**Make the message personal.** In order to get behind policy change or support funding increases, decision makers need to be impacted by the issue personally, politically, or otherwise. The framing and messaging of an agenda need to influence and affect legislators enough to compel them not only to support the issue but to take action and fight for better policies and more resources. Provide advocates with helpful information on legislators, so that the campaign can determine the best way to connect them with its issue and what their self-interest would be in fighting for it.

**Act as a resource.** Present legislators and other key policymakers with information such as updates on movement on the local level, new labor market trends showing clear evidence for taking action, and examples of interventions other states are implementing around the country. Solidifying a coalition's reputation as a resource allows it to go back to policymakers on separate issues and be let in the door.

**Assemble broad state representation.** Decision makers want to know that the state is being covered and that no one group or region is being left out. Make sure that coalition partners from across the state are represented in planning and in meetings.

**Support them as champions.** The key to sustaining relationships with policymakers is to support them in their work as champions of the issues of mutual concern and to make them the hero. Present critical information to policymakers, act as a resource for their efforts, and give them credit for success.

**Be prepared to prove value.** Getting what you ask for is only the beginning. Be ready to prove why and how the campaign's proposals really make a difference by providing data and results to show accountability. Proving value of policy change is a crucial stage for the reputation and sustainability of a coalition's advocacy efforts.

## **Summary**

The story of how Massachusetts harnessed the power of advocacy is one that advocates, policy makers, and administrators across the country can learn from. Building the coalition and necessary relationships with key decision makers did not happen overnight. After many years of hard work and strategic thinking from real leaders in the advocacy and policy worlds, the rewards are now beginning to show. The success is not only that programs for youth in Massachusetts have received more funding but that advocates across the state have created an incredibly strong platform on which to build in the future and have shown that comprehensive, multi-systemic policies are vital to truly improving the lives of youth.

*For more information, contact Sara Hastings, [shastings@clasp.org](mailto:shastings@clasp.org), policy analyst at the Center for Law and Social Policy.*

## **Appendix**

*Descriptions of The Charles E. Shannon Jr. Community Safety Initiative in Boston and Brockton from the Online Resource Center at Northeastern University*

[http://www.shannoncsi.neu.edu/community\\_partners/](http://www.shannoncsi.neu.edu/community_partners/)

### **Boston**

Boston is the largest city in the Commonwealth with a population of 589,141. According to the Boston Police Department, the city of Boston has experienced increases in violent crime and gun related activity over the past three years. In 2005, 341 individuals were victims of shooting incidents, including 51 fatalities - an overall ten year high for the city. The Boston Police Department reports that of these shooting incidents, 27% were found to be resulting from gang activity, however gang and gang intelligence officers estimate that the actual percentage of gang related shootings is much higher - approximately 55% or more. A majority of these shootings, 71% occur in the "hotspot" neighborhoods of Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan.

Research conducted by the Boston Police over the past 10 years has yielded the following findings:

- The majority of violent crime is being caused by impact offenders;
- Violence is concentrated within small sections of inner city neighborhoods;
- There are increases in the youth population with increased exposure to violence and lack of alternatives;
- The majority of offenders returning from incarceration contribute to increases in violence in hot-spot neighborhoods, and;
- Gang activity contributes to the City's firearm and drug activity.

In the second year of the Shannon grant, Boston is concentrating on the strategic reduction of gang and gun violence in hotspot neighborhoods, including the South End and parts of Jamaica Plain, in addition to Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan. The Boston Police Department's new Safe Street Teams Initiative places walking police teams in hotspot neighborhoods to offer resource information and referrals to youth and interact with the community as well as enhance enforcement in those areas. Safe Street Teams has partnered with existing community-based organizations to support violence prevention. The Youth Service Providers Network also focuses on hotspots this year by placing social workers in police stations in the South End, Mattapan, and the citywide gang unit. Finally, the Suffolk County DA's Office is using Shannon funds to hire two Safe Neighborhood Initiatives Coordinators to assist with targeted prosecution, community mobilization, and problem solving in hotspot neighborhoods.

In addition to a citywide focus on hotspots, Boston's Shannon partners have developed new goals for Year Two, while continuing and expanding the programs of Year One. The Boston Centers for Youth and Families focuses on increased programming for high-risk girls, in coordination with the new Girls and Violence Taskforce. The Boston Police Department will create a new position dedicated to research and development of policing policies and practices to reduce gang and gun violence. Similarly, the Boston Regional Information Center's partnership with Brookline Police Department is moving beyond intelligence-sharing to policing strategy development. Finally, the Boston Public Health Commission will focus its Shannon funds on trauma response this year.

## **Brockton**

According to the 2000 US Census, Brockton is the sixth most populated city in the Commonwealth with a total population of 94,304. The Brockton Police Department reports that the city experiences a significant amount of crime relative to other jurisdictions in the Commonwealth. A number of factors have been identified by the city that contribute to criminal activity particularly among youth, some of which include: a significant amount of families in Brockton living below the poverty line, a high school dropout rate almost double the statewide average, and substance abuse among youth.

Brockton has employed a number of strategic approaches to suppressing this activity prior to receiving funding through the Shannon CSI grant. For over eight years Kelley Research Associates have worked with the Brockton Police Department to provide regular crime analysis and has also partnered with the department on a number of grant funded projects. Following the implementation of the federal Weed and Seed program in 2001, the Brockton Police Department created a four man, multilingual team called Impact Shift. This team conducts proactive patrols of high crime areas identified through regular analysis of geographic crime data. The Boys and Girls Club in Brockton had also implemented the Gang Prevention Through Targeted Outreach (GPTTO) program which sought to provide youth with positive alternatives to violence and gang involvement.

Brockton's Shannon strategy in Year Two has developed according to community needs and newly available gang-specific data collected by Kelley Research Associates. Both law enforcement and prevention strategies are expanded this year, guided by the multi-agency Shannon Law Enforcement Task Force (LETF) and Prevention Task Force (PTF). Focusing on law enforcement, the LETF meets regularly to share information on identified "impact players," guide patrol and expedite referrals to services for those individuals. In Year Two, Brockton is adding a Shannon grant-funded prosecutor and Probation personnel to expand the LETF collaboration and ensure prosecution of identified impact players.

Brockton's Year Two strategy has a clear preventative focus, emphasizing outreach, education planning and career training opportunities, and particular attention to younger youth. Building upon the Project Ceasefire model, youths identified by Shannon partner agencies will attend quarterly sessions conducted by the parent of a deceased gang member, former gang members, Brockton Police detectives and the District Attorney's Office staff. These meetings will communicate the consequences of criminal

activity and provide alternative opportunities such as educational, employment, and recreational programs. At the Phoenix Alternative School, the pilot Phoenix Mentoring Program will assign mentors to students who and incorporate outreach strategies into school events and planning.

Another outreach approach involves existing community leaders. Shannon funds will be used to train faith-based leaders in law enforcement and prevention strategies, beginning with an eight-week citizen's police academy for various clergy members. This strategy will strengthen relationships between clergy and police, familiarize leaders with programs available to their communities, and empower them to provide information to youth and families.

Recognizing the need for earlier intervention, in the second year of Shannon CSI, the Boys & Girls Club opens its GPTTO program to youth ages 11-13 this year. Further prevention efforts will be directed at elementary school children, including an anti-bullying campaign and the addition of a school liaison to refer students to counseling services. For older youths, Youth Services Clearinghouse expands its case management program for Shannon-identified youth in workforce and youth development, adding 300 new youth. Staff will identify job openings, match program participants with paid internships, and advocate for greater access to jobs for Shannon youth.

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<sup>i</sup> Charles E. Shannon, Jr. Community Safety Initiative Online Resource, [http://www.shannoncsi.neu.edu/about\\_us/](http://www.shannoncsi.neu.edu/about_us/).

<sup>ii</sup> Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, [http://www.mapc.org/projects\\_initiatives/metropolitan\\_mayors.html](http://www.mapc.org/projects_initiatives/metropolitan_mayors.html)

<sup>iii</sup> Massachusetts Office of Health and Human Services, [http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2terminal&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Consumer&L2=Family+Services&L3=Violence%2C+Abuse+or+Neglect&L4=Youth+Violence+Prevention+and+Services&sid=Eeohhs2&b=terminalcontent&f=dph\\_com\\_health\\_violence\\_c\\_youth\\_prevention\\_program&csid=Eeohhs2](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2terminal&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Consumer&L2=Family+Services&L3=Violence%2C+Abuse+or+Neglect&L4=Youth+Violence+Prevention+and+Services&sid=Eeohhs2&b=terminalcontent&f=dph_com_health_violence_c_youth_prevention_program&csid=Eeohhs2).

<sup>iv</sup> Provided by Lew Finfer, director, Massachusetts Communities Action Network

<sup>v</sup> The Official Website of the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD) [http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=gov3pressrelease&L=1&L0=Home&sid=Elwd&b=pressrelease&f=080513\\_youthworks\\_programs&csid=Agov3](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=gov3pressrelease&L=1&L0=Home&sid=Elwd&b=pressrelease&f=080513_youthworks_programs&csid=Agov3)

<sup>vi</sup> Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Court, Chapter 315 of the Acts of 2008, An Act to Improve Dropout Prevention and Reporting of Graduation Rates, <http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw08/sl080315.htm>



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<sup>vii</sup> YouthWorks Jobs for Teens and School-to-Work funding levels were projected to be slightly higher, but due to recent budget cuts the Governor has funded these programs at the levels shown in chart.

<sup>viii</sup> Funding levels provided by Jorge Martinez, Project R.I.G.H.T and Lew Finfer, Massachusetts Communities Action Network.

<sup>ix</sup> Quote by Neil Sullivan, executive director, Boston Private Industry Council.

<sup>x</sup> Provided by Lew Finfer, director, Massachusetts Communities Action Network

<sup>xi</sup> An Assessment of the Labor Market, Income, Health, Social, Civic and Fiscal Consequences of Dropping Out of High School: Findings for Massachusetts Adults in the 21st Century, Center for Labor Market Studies, Northeastern University  
[http://www.clms.neu.edu/publication/documents/boston\\_youth\\_transition\\_paper\\_2006.pdf](http://www.clms.neu.edu/publication/documents/boston_youth_transition_paper_2006.pdf)