

2025 CHARLES E. SHANNON COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVE WORCESTER

Funded Partners: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Central Massachusetts & Metrowest, Boys & Girls Club of Worcester, Extreme Kid Inc., St. Bernard's Church/Our Lady of Providence Parish, The Torch Foundation, Worcester Community Action Council, Worcester Police Department, Worcester Youth Center Inc.,

Funded by the Office of Grants and Research, a state agency that is part of the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security, the Charles E. Shannon Community Safety Initiative (Shannon) is modeled after the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Comprehensive Gang Model. Shannon is a multi-sector approach used to address a community's gang and youth violence problem. Each community receiving Shannon funding demonstrates the presence of risk factors for youth and gang violence. Shannon participants must be between the ages of 10-24 years.

Strategies, Outcomes, and Funding Allocation

Total Funding: \$1,249,043.89*

Strategies	Outcomes		Funding Allocation
Case Management, Street Outreach, or Intervention	163 youth received case management services	50 youth received outreach services	\$191,485.92
Community Mobilization	1,326 community members attended events, meetings and presentations	135 community events, meetings, and presentations held	\$29,061.34
Education & Employment	109 youth participated in an education program	95 youth participated in an employment program	\$253,849.38
Positive Youth Development & Recreation	587 youth participated in a recreation program	443 youth participated in youth development programs	\$522,546.64
Suppression	20 hotspot patrols completed		\$105,192.03

*In 2025, \$146,908.59 was allocated to administrative/other costs for the site.

Youth Risk Assessments

- 46% **LOW-RISK*** Youth in danger of engaging in risky behavior or gang activity.
- 36% **MODERATE-RISK*** Youth exposed to the same risk factors as low-risk youth, as well as additional risk factors such as truancy.
- 18% **HIGH-RISK*** Youth who are perpetrators or victims of shooting or stabbing violence, and/or are known gang members.

* % of youth assessed for risk

Success Highlight

"One participant entered our program after facing significant challenges, including involvement with firearms and drug-related activity that resulted in his arrest. When he returned to the community, he struggled with structure, accountability, and finding positive spaces where he felt respected and supported. Our program helped him navigate these challenges by providing consistent weekly engagement and a safe environment where he could contribute in meaningful ways. Staff welcomed him into supervised volunteer responsibilities at the church for 10-15 hours each week, which gave him routine, purpose, and positive adult relationships. He assisted with cleaning, setup, and helping younger youth during activities—roles that allowed him to feel trusted and connected to the community again."

~St. Bernard's Church/Our Lady of Providence Parish

Community Risk Factors

Massachusetts

Worcester

Total Population (2025 Estimate)	7,154,084	211,286
Population Lives in Poverty (2020-2024)	9.7%	19.6%
Unemployment Rate (2025)	4.8%	5.0%
Total School Population (2024-2025)	948,709	25,414
Low-Income (2025-2026)	41.1%	69.8%
High School Dropout Rate (2023-2024)	2.0%	2.1%

Sources: www.census.gov/quickfacts; profiles.doe.mass.edu; <https://lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/LMI/LaborForceAndUnemployment#>

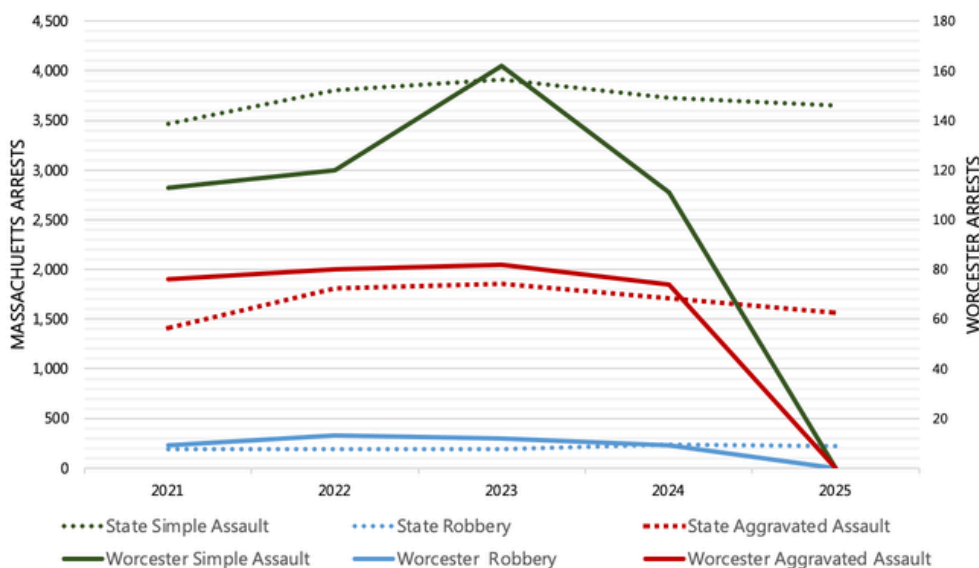
Gang Activity in Worcester

23
Street Gangs

272
Gang Members
Between the Ages
10-24

Worcester’s gang climate remains largely unchanged, with some national gang ties but primarily local street gangs that engage in more violent activity. Conflicts typically stem from territorial disputes and perceived disrespect, with violence occurring citywide but concentrated in gang-controlled areas. Common gang-related crimes include home invasions, stabbings, robberies, firearms violations, shootings, break-ins, and larceny. Violence among younger members—particularly ages 15 to 17—has increased, with many recent shootings involving this age group. Social media plays a significant role in escalating conflicts, making monitoring by police and community partners critical for intervention.

5-Year Trends in Youth Arrests (ages 10-24), 2021-2025



Changes in Youth Arrests for Simple Assault, Robbery, and Aggravated Assault*

NIBRS data from Worcester is not available for 2025.

Arrests for simple assaults from 2021-2025 in...

- Massachusetts increased 5%
- Worcester decreased 2% (2021-2024)

Arrests for robberies from 2021-2025 in...

- Massachusetts increased 20%
- Worcester increased 0% (2021-2024)

Arrests for aggravated assaults from 2021-2025 in...

- Massachusetts increased 11%
- Worcester decreased 3% (2021-2024)

Source: National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS)

Further analytical work is needed to make an association between Shannon programming and changes in arrest trends in focal communities.

Information contained in this report is from funding applications, reports supplied by the site, MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, US Census, MA Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development, and Office of Grants and Research / Research Policy and Analysis Division. Special thanks to the Statewide Research Partner, Northeastern University, and the Crime and Justice Policy Lab of the University of Pennsylvania, for preparing this brief.