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### SWOT Analysis of Comprehensive Anti-Gang Strategies (CAGS)

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# **SWOT Analysis of Comprehensive Anti-Gang Strategies (CAGS)**

**Jenelle A. Howard**

**May 2018**

**Dual Degree Paper**

**Submitted to the faculty of Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the department of IDCE.**

**And accepted on the recommendation of**

**Ramon Borges Mendez, Chief Instructor**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **Evaluation of CAGS**

**Jenelle A. Howard**

Worcester has faced many challenges with violence among youth in underserved areas. Over the past couple of years there has been an increase of violent behaviors on the East-Side of Worcester. This dual degree report will evaluate a program that was developed to help with combating youth violence on the Eastside of Worcester. Comprehensive Anti-Gang Strategies (CAGS) is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the amount of \$327,312 for two years. This evaluation of CAGS will include an analysis using the SWOT framework to help analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that CAGS may be facing. A review of literature focuses on similar programs in the US and the implementation of the program. Data was gathered through interviews of the partners of the grant and a detailed observation of the program from the writer of this paper. The goal of this paper is to take an in-depth look into CAGS to assess the value of the program and determine its sustainability into the future. The paper will conclude with recommendations from this writer with the goal of preserving the program.

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## **DEDICATION**

This paper is dedicated to my mother; Cherrille Howard, grandmother; Maxine Stewart, my twin sister; Jeanine Howard and my little brother; Craig Wilson, Jr. Also, to the rest of my family and close friends. These people have motivated me and kept me focused throughout my three years at Clark University. They have not only supported me through this process, but throughout my entire life. Words cannot describe how grateful I am for them and what they have done for me on my journey. I will forever be thankful and in debt to the people who love me dearly.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I will first and foremost thank the Lord above for the strength she has instilled in me. I will forever be grateful and in debt to you. Thank you to Friendly House for giving me the opportunity to work for CAGS and be an impactful force during the development and implementation on the program. Thank you to Professor Laurie Ross for encouraging me to take the role as a case manager and outreach worker for CAGS, it has greatly impacted my life in a positive way. And thank you to Professor Ramon Borges- Mendez for his continued encouragement.

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**Acronyms and Abbreviations:**

**CAGS:** Comprehensive Anti-Gang Strategies

**WCAC:** Worcester Community Action Council

**WPS:** Worcester Public Schools

**WPD:** Worcester Police Department

**OJJDP:** Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

**SSYI:** Safe and Successful Youth Initiative

**W.E.M.S:** Worcester East Middle School

**WYVPI:** Worcester Youth Violence Prevention Initiative

**SWOT:** Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats



## Introduction

Worcester, Massachusetts is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city in New England, population being just over 183,000 and exhibits several established risk factors of youth and gang violence. Of this population 22.4% live in poverty compared to the States 11.4% (Data US, 2017). In many of the poverty afflicted neighborhoods we see gang violence. The public-school system in Worcester is ranked at a level 4, which means that they are a lower performing district (School and District Profiles, 2017). The amount of youth attending Worcester schools that are English Language Learners or English as their second language is high and limited English proficiency presents challenges for both education and employment fulfillment (Eastside grant, 2016). In December 2017, Worcester's unemployment rate was at 3.3% which was below the states average at 3.5% (U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). Worcester's Youth Violence Needs Assessment completed an assessment in 2014 and found that youth ages 16-24 are 39% of the unemployed, despite comprising only 16% of the city population. Also, that, unemployment is persistent among young men of color and since this assessment much hasn't changed (Ross & Foley, 2014).

Worcester's school discipline rate reflects and increases these challenges. Out-of-school suspensions in Worcester are higher than the state rate; 4.6% vs. 2.8% in 2016-2017 and over 6% of Worcester boys face such punishment each school year (School and District Profiles, 2017). Suspension are especially common at schools in gang-impacted neighborhoods and among Latinos, who face challenges due to language and cultural differences. Too many of the youth, especially those of color, meet the definition of "at-risk" or "proven-risk"(Eastside grant, 2016).

Due to these major issues partners in the city came together to create a program to support youth ages 12-18 on the East Side of Worcester. Comprehensive Anti-Gang Strategies (CAGS) was created to help combat some of these behaviors within the city, focusing on the community-based anti-gang strategies and strengthen coordination of existing resources and activities that will support the young men of Eastside. The goal through this program is to work with up to 50 young men between the ages of 12 and 18 from East Middle, North High School or one of the city's alternative school programs, focusing on their positive development and growth. In doing so we hope to reduce gang and youth violence. Youth that are selected to be on this list for employment have to meet the criteria created by case managers and outreach workers. They may be students who have been involved in school-related arrest, have out of school suspensions for violent-related incidents, are chronically absent or tardy, are suspected or confirmed to be in a gang, have a sibling in a gang or on the SSYI list, and if in middle school be at risk of not starting 9<sup>th</sup> grade on time due to missing school because of suspensions and/or chronic absenteeism/tardiness.

As a program, the case-managers, outreach workers, partners and supervisors work together. They strive to provide leadership skills, relationship building, mentorship, goal setting, better grades and attendance at school, and better school involvement; whether it be participating in a sport, club or any other interest they may have.

When engaging with parents and guardians, case-managers and outreach workers are responsible for communicating the details of the program and why their child could benefit from participation. This communication will lay out the opportunities for him so

that he is able to be successful in many different aspects of his life and avoid problem distractions.

It is our duty to not only engage the youth, but also their families. The importance of this engagement can make or break the relationships that are being built. This paper focuses on evaluating CAGS using a SWOT analysis and interviewing partners on the grant, my supervisor and co-worker, as well as my own observations. Further, I will be looking into the grant that the city applied for, programs similar to CAGS and ways to improve the program for future success. To determine whether the program is needed and could be sustained.

## Literature Review

A gang is defined by the US Department of Justice as: (1) an association of three or more individuals; (2) whose members collectively identify themselves by adopting a group identity, which they use to create an atmosphere of fear or intimidation frequently by employing one or more of them (FBI, 2011).

Over the past decade, there has been an average of 30,700 gangs nationally. Following a yearly decline from 1996 to a low in 2003, annual estimates steadily increased through 2012 (Egley, Howell & Harris, 2014). Larger cities and suburban counties are the main locations of gangs, accounting for roughly two-thirds nationwide. Smaller cities accounted for just around 27%, and rural counties accounted for just over 5%. While larger cities and counties reported higher numbers of gangs, there is also variation within each area type. More than half of suburban counties and over 30% of larger cities reported 10 or fewer active gangs in their jurisdictions. Majority of agencies

in smaller cities and rural counties reported fewer than five gangs in their jurisdictions (National Gang Center, 2012).

Over the past decade, there has also been an average of 770,000 gang members nationally. The most recent estimate from 2012 was approximately 850,000 gang members nationally, which represented an 8.6% increase from the previous year. Larger cities and suburban counties remain the primary locations of gang members; 80% nationwide. Smaller cities accounted for approximately 16% of gang members, and rural counties for less than 3% (National Gang Center, 2012). While larger cities and suburban counties reported higher numbers of gang members, there is also an immense amount of variation within each area type. In the larger counties one and five reported more than 1,000 gang members, compared with about one in ten suburban counties. Around one-quarter of the smaller cities and rural counties reported fewer than 25 gang members (National Gang Center, 2012).

In 2009, larger cities and suburban counties accounted for the majority of gang-related violence and more than 96% of all gang homicides. During 2009-2012, cities with 100,000 or more persons saw gang-related homicides increase by 13% (Youth.gov, 2014). Between 1998 and 2009, gang members were overwhelmingly male with less than 10% of total gang members being female. In 2008, the majority of reported gang members were adults, however two out of every five gang members were under the age of 18 and there has been a steady increase over the years (Youth.gov, 2014). The frequency of youth under 18 in gangs was higher in smaller cities and rural communities where gang problems were less established, compared to the larger cities. Between 1996

and 2008, gang members were more likely to be Hispanic/Latino and African-American/black than other race/ethnicities (Youth.gov, 2014).

Gangs habitually target youths because of their vulnerability and susceptibility to recruitment tactics, as well as their likelihood of avoiding harsh criminal sentencing and their willingness to engage in violence. Several jurisdictions experienced an increase in juvenile gangs and violence which often attributed to increased incarceration rates of older members and the aggressive recruitment of juveniles in schools. Youth gangs are becoming more violent and increasingly serve as a way for members to engage in illegal money-making activities, such as drug and firearms trafficking (Office of the United States Attorneys, 2009).

With these gang statistics and visual trends nationally, partners in the community of Worcester decided to complete an assessment of the city as a whole. The city of Worcester already had a program targeted for older young men in the communities who were gang involved or associated with gang members. However, the younger population was being over looked and law enforcement in Worcester saw an increase of violence among young men of color in communities, especially on the East Side and there were no direct services on that side of town. Young men would have to travel to other sides of the city, which could potentially put themselves and others in danger.

CAGS was created to be a primarily preventive program, which means that the “programs or activities designed to prevent people from joining gangs. Prevention often focuses on young persons”(National Institute Justice, 2011). CAGS can also be described as an intervention program meaning that they “seek to draw gang members and close associates away from the gang lifestyle”. Many programs that are intervention based

involve law enforcement coordination with community- or faith-based organizations to offer education, job training and community service opportunities as incentives to quit the gang while still holding those receiving services accountable for continued delinquent or criminal activity (National Institute Justice, 2011). The target population are proven-risk youth; meaning that these have a high probability of being gang involved or being associated with a gang, whether it be through a siblings, peers or family involvement.

CAGS focus on young men ages 12-18. Some of the youth are not gang involved, some may have friends, family or peers that are gang related. With these youths there is a focus on keeping them on the right track and getting them involved in programs, organizations and activities outside their normal environment. No more than five of the young men that are served are already gang involved and with them the approach is different. Because they are already involved the attempt is to intervene, providing them with outlets and resources that help them think about other ways to be actively engaged in their community in a positive way.

CAGS is funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) grant through the federal government. The eligibility requirements for programs that were applying for the grant were as follows: eligible applicants were limited to states (including territories), units of local government, federally recognized tribal governments (as determined by the Secretary of the Interior), and nonprofit organizations (including tribal nonprofit organizations), (U.S. Department of Justice, 2016). With the eligibility requirements the submission of the grant had to meet other criteria that is mentioned in the official document from the U.S Department of Justice.

The Office of Justice Programs released a bulletin in December of 2010, that shared demographic characteristics of gang members; 50% Hispanic/Latin, 32% African-American/black, and 11% Caucasian/white, more males than females. What attracts young people to gangs are for protection, fun, respect, money and because a friend was in the gang (Esbensen, Deschenes, and Winfree, 1999). Risk factors for joining gangs include individual; antisocial behavior, alcohol and drug use, mental health problems, victimization, and negative life events; family, school, peer group, and community (Howell & Egley, 2005). OJJDP's Comprehensive Community-Wide Approach to Gang Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression program was designed to implement and test a comprehensive model for reducing youth gang violence (Howell, 2000). The OJJDP Comprehensive Gang Model "embraces the concept of effective use of the social controls inherent in various social institutions. As part of this approach, individuals, families, the community as a whole, agencies, and organization are reminded that they have a stake in supporting positive behaviors and in taking a firm stance against illegal activities, including gang crime and violence, substance abuse, and illegitimate behaviors" (OJJDP, 2014). These groups must work collaboratively while carrying out their distinctive functions to ensure positive adolescent involvement.

Many organizations applied for the grant, and only a few received the funding. One program that has a similar structure or implementation as CAGS and received the OJJDP grant. This program is called G.R.E.A.T; The Gang Resistance Education and Training. "The program is an evidence-based national and international gang and violence prevention program that has been building trust between law enforcement and communities for almost 30 years. G.R.E.A.T. is intended as an immunization against

delinquency, youth violence, and gang membership. It is designed for children in the years immediately before the prime ages for introduction into gangs and delinquent behavior” (GREAT, 2016). This program was one of the only OJJDP programs to have a formal evaluation, and data proving its successes.

The OJJDP website also mentioned that in 2011, they supported the national Boys & Girls Clubs of America (BGCA) organization of Atlanta, GA, to help local affiliate clubs prevent youth from joining gangs, intervene with gang members in the early stages of gang involvement, and divert youth from gangs into more constructive activities. The program reflects a long-term collaboration between OJJDP and BGCA to reduce problems of juvenile gangs, delinquency, and violence. The national organization provides training and technical assistance to local gang prevention and intervention sites and to other clubs and organizations through regional training sessions and national conferences (Howell, 2010). Each year, dozens of new gang prevention sites, gang intervention sites, and a targeted reintegration sites are added to the many existing programs implementing these strategies across the country (GREAT, 2016). Even though this is mentioned on the site, there isn't much information regarding any specific program names. Because the program seems similar to CAGS in many ways, I felt it would be beneficial to be able to get more information on them, however when going to the linked site it no longer exists. Upon more research I was unable to find any specific program(s) for the BGCA in Atlanta focused on gang violence prevention or interventions.

Programs like CAGS and others funded by OJJDP are needed because over the past couple of years there has been an increase in gangs and gang members. As mentioned before, in the mid-90's there was a decrease in gangs and gang membership,



however in the early 2000's gangs and their memberships increased substantially. ([National](#) Gang Center, 2012).

Programs like CAGS have been popping up all throughout the Nation with the support of OJJDP federal funding, however there is very little data reporting on the programs successes. The reported data that does exist is specific to certain programs in specific communities. These programs show success; however, each youth gang and each community are unique, finding similar groups and communities for comparison is difficult. The measurement problems also plaque gang research. ([Howell](#), 2000). The proof that these types of programs are effective is mainly through personal observations and experience from the staff (Howell, 2000).

## Methodology

To analyze CAGS, I used the SWOT analysis framework. It is used for identifying and analyzing the internal and external factors that can have an impact on the viability of a project, product, place or person. It is commonly used by business entities, but it is also used by nonprofit organizations and, for individual/personal assessment. (Rouse, Pratt, & Tucci, 2017).

SWOT stands for strengths; internal characteristics of nonprofit or company that give it an advantage over others. Weaknesses; internal characteristics of nonprofit or company that give it a disadvantage compared to others. Opportunities; external elements that nonprofit or company could use to its advantage. And finally threats; external elements in the environment that could cause trouble for the nonprofit or company. This analysis is an important tool to give an organization information and a better idea of a strategic direction for the organization, as well as an idea of the issues the organization

will face. This tool should be used to empower a nonprofit and make it more sustainable if used correctly (Hay, 2017).

I felt the SWOT analysis would be an effective tool for observing CAGS because it is used to help managers think about everything that could potentially impact the success of a new project. CAGS is a pilot program in the City of Worcester. There is no other program similar to the structure of CAGS, however there are programs in Worcester that serve a similar population. A SWOT analysis can help narrow down what is going well, what are the needs of the program, what are weaknesses and possible threats to the program.

With this analysis in mind, I held conversations with some of the partners asking questions focused on the strengths of the program, weakness, opportunities that the program has and any threats the program may face. During this time, we discussed roles of each partner, changes they would like to see and any partners they would like to add.

As a case manager and outreach worker for CAGS I have personal experience and a connection with the program, so I will be also sharing my personal observation of the program. Once Friendly House received the grant, I applied and was offered the position in January of 2017. As the first hired case manager and outreach worker it was my responsibility make sure that the partnerships were developed, and that role of the case manage, and outreach worker was clearly understood by all the partners.

As a practitioner and also as an employee of CAGS I wanted to understand the program from different points of view. Being an insider, my observation of the program is definitely skewed because I want to believe that the work I am doing is impacting the lives of the young men I serve. Creating the SWOT analysis chart I had to be careful

when it came to opinion base vs. factual information. Listening to partners talk about their experience and things they would change or keep the same helped me shape the different sections of the SWOT that I did for CAGS. Also, interviewing Laurie Ross who our research partner is not only, but a professor at Clark helped me formulate questions to think about while creating the chart. Questions such as, where are we as a program? Where do we want to go? How can we reach the point we want to go? And how do we follow and evaluate our success? This analysis can also be a start to the development a strategic plan for CAGS.

## The Case

The Worcester Police Department along with a few other partners such as; Clark University, Friendly House and Worcester Public School just to name a few received a major grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) in the amount of \$327,312 for Comprehensive Anti-Gang Strategies program. Under the program, the department along with their community partners use a multidimensional approach that focuses on prevention, intervention and targeted gang enforcement. Worcester Public Schools with the help of the police department identified up to 50 high risk youth ages 12-18 on the Eastside of Worcester to participate in the program. The grant allowed the City of Worcester to hire outreach workers and case managers to connect with the identified youth and their families, creating an individual service plan for each. CAGS also provide subsidized wages for youth seasonal employment; during the school year and summer through the Worcester Community Action Council (The City of Worcester, 2016).

The Eastside Grant broke down the reasoning behind the need of the program. Research partners at Clark University completed the Worcester Youth Violence Needs Assessment using US OJJDP's Comprehensive Gang Model Community Assessment Guide (CMG), which addresses five core strategies: (1) community mobilization, (2) opportunities provision, (3) social intervention, (4) suppression, and (5) organizational change and development, also providing an overview of the assessment process; (National Gang Center), in preparation for the launch of the Worcester Youth Violence Prevention Initiative in the summer of 2015.

This assessment found a number of spatial and temporal patterns in youth crime. Mapping showed that less than 3% of the city was considered gang turf, based off of arrest patterns of youth charged typical gang-related crimes (Ross & Foley, 2014). It showed that crimes in Worcester were clustered in three zones: Main South and parts of the Eastside centered on public and subsidized housing. The zones identified neatly overlap many of the lowest-income and most-underserved neighborhoods in the city, reinforcing the need to target youth and gang violence prevention and intervention resources to address youth unemployment, sparse mental health services, and other opportunity gaps (Ross & Foley, 2014).

Other findings from the assessment included confirmation that violence revolves around a relatively small group of mostly black and Latino gang-affiliated young men who are already involved in the justice system. Risk factors driving violence include family instability, economic stress, childhood trauma, generational gang involvement, poor neighborhood conditions, punitive school discipline, unmet mental health needs, and substance abuse. Specific needs/gaps were identified in the needs assessment and

strategic planning process that was completed during the assessment, including more persistent and substantial outreach to targeted youth, jobs for high risk youth, and violence intervention resources on the Eastside for youth who cannot now cross gang turf boundaries to participate in jobs and other programs that are mostly based in Main South (Ross & Foley, 2014).

According to the Worcester Police Gang Unit, 20-25 gangs have typically operated in the city, with small territories mostly confined to three broader zones. In the Main South area there is an affiliation called ‘Kilby’ (or 3-strips’) which is a merger of multiple smaller gangs in that area, while central-east gangs including Providence Street Posse (PSP), and Plumley Village East (PVE) similarly merged under the umbrella of ‘Eastside’. This shift transformed the character of Worcester’s gang problem from smaller neighborhood gangs of individuals with common associations and histories into ‘super gangs’ formed for protection, regardless of history or past associations, and with less incentive to refrain from violence (Ross & Foley, 2014).

The neighborhoods that ‘Kilby’ and Eastside ‘represent’ generate an inconsistent percentage of the shootings and shots fired calls-for-service. Other suspected factors are gangs’ increased access to firearms, increased involvement in home invasions and robberies, continued lack of economic opportunity, lack of mediation/mental health services for youth, and a recent willingness by proven-risk youth and gang members to participate in shootings despite being on probation, bail or other court status. Worcester Police estimate over 1,000 “gang members” in 2015 and have seen an increase in the past 2 years, with more than half of them being under 25, which adds to the way gang

members interact and use new forms of connecting; such as social media (Ross & Foley, 2014).

When conducting this research, the partners from Clark University recognized that the Eastside of Worcester was suffering and did not have much programming to support the need. According to the Worcester's Police Department crime reports Worcester's Eastside contains several violent crime hot spots; Oak Hill, Vernon Hill, Bell Hill, Grafton St, and Plumley Village, which two local gangs claim turf in these areas. Youth from this side of town face barriers accessing services downtown or in Main South due to gang boundaries (Eastside grant, 2016).

Another indicator of potential violence is high rates of suspension or expulsion from schools. In 2017, the rate of out-of-school suspensions for young people of color is higher; especially for boys of color. According to the *Early Childhood Development: An Office of the Administration for Children and Families*, there is a stark racial and gender disparities that exist in the suspension and expulsion practices, with young boys of color experiencing this form of discipline at a higher rate than any other children in learning programs (Early Childhood Development, 2017). The Rennie Center, a leading national education think-tank located in Boston, also found that students excluded from school due to suspensions are more likely to drop-out of high school (Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy, 2010). The Eastside grant stated that there is a need to prioritize the Eastside for strategies for earlier intervention, increase youth's protective factors and make a concerted effort to divert young people from the criminal justice system. Also, that, previously the average gang member involved in gun/knife violence was between that ages of 20-22 and now there is a trend in younger school-aged

individuals, ages 17-18, that are engaged in violent behavior, which has increased the risk at schools where these younger individuals may still be attending (Eastside grant, 2016).

There have been attempts to create programming around these issues and the age range of young boys of color on the Eastside. The first attempt was a funded collaborative effort called the Senator Charles E. Shannon Community Safety Initiative (Shannon). “Shannon is a ten-year multi-sector partnership that aims to reduce gang violence and to increase the education and employment possibilities for high-risk youth and young adults” (Massachusetts Commonwealth, 2018). The Shannon initiative provides prevention programs, social intervention programs, opportunity provision, suppression, organizational change, and community mobilization, which follow the US OJJDP’s Comprehensive Gang Model Community Assessment Guide (Eastside grant, 2016).

The second collaborative effort that works within the Comprehensive Gang Model Community Assessment Guide framework in Worcester is the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI). Funded by the MA Executive Office of Health and Human Services, it is an outgrowth of Shannon that allows partners to focus attention on a list of 150 young men ages 17-24 who are considered to be ‘proven-risk’ because they are most likely the young men in the community to be victims or perpetrators of gun or knife violence. The list of young men is drawn from several sources including Juvenile Probation, WPD Gang Member List, WPS School Protocol list, Department of Youth Services (DYS), and the WPD Violent Crime Victim/Suspect list. (Eastside grant, 2016).

In Fiscal Year 2016, a component to target the Eastside was suggested through SSYI. However, in 2017 the minimum eligible age for SSYI was raised by the state from

14 years old to 17 years old, this created a barrier for providing social intervention services for younger gang involved, proven-risk or at-risk youth. Nonetheless, the positive results of SSYI indicated that these proven practices focused on the Eastside could start to reduce gang involvement and gang violence with youth in the Eastside schools. The combination of the high need on the Eastside, barriers to serve younger youth (ages 12-18), and the proven efficacy of CGM and the SSYI model has led the Shannon/SSYI Steering Committee to direct this funding opportunity for comprehensive anti-gang approaches for high and proven risk youth ages 12-18 living in Worcester's Eastside neighborhoods (Eastside grant, 2016).

The primary goal of SSYI Project East or CAGS is to reduce gang and youth violence and prevent gang initiation among high risk youth ages 12-18 in Worcester's Eastside neighborhoods. CAGS achieve this by utilizing direct outreach workers and case management for up to 50 youth who are on the Worcester Public Schools (WPS) Gang Protocol List that was started in 1997. The Gang Protocol List is comprised of students suspected to be gang-involved and is developed through monthly meetings with WPS assistant principals and adjustment counselors, WPD Gang Unit Officers, Department of Youth Services, and Juvenile Probation. The youth live on the city's Eastside, and/or attend Worcester East Middle School, North High School or one of the city's alternative school programs. Resources to engage these students were non-existent leaving a gaping need. In response, CAGS was created to provide direct resources for those youth. (Eastside grant, 2016).

The team estimated that there were at least 50 youth who were on the Gang Protocol list at these schools that needed these services. Outreach workers build



relationships, identify initial needs and facilitate program youth's connection to case managers. Case managers develop comprehensive plans for education, employment, behavioral health, and other needs and continuously monitor progress on these plans (Eastside grant, 2016).

The performance measures include collecting all required data. The use of web-based, secure Salesforce database is used for data collection. Research partner customized the database for CAGS. They will maintain a Salesforce database that collects the number of program youth served from program records of the case managers and outreach workers. The data will be broken-down by gender, race and ethnicity. There will be indication of youth who were newly identified during each reporting period, as well as the youth who were carried over from the previous reporting periods. Through Salesforce data collection the research partners will be able to show the percentage of youth with whom the components of the evidence-based components of the CGM were used. The use of official police records will be used to collect data on the number of program youth who offend and/or reoffend. This data will be updated in the database as well; using the official records will help outreach workers and case managers determine if the arrests are new arrests, or if they are rearrests. Also, the percentage of program youth who are victimized or re-victimized in the short and long term will be determined by the research partner; all youth in the program will be tracked on this project measure. The data will come from official police records, school official reports, case manager reports, and outreach worker reports (Eastside grant, 2016).

Salesforce will also track behavior change of all program youth in regard to their employment status, school performance, access to behavioral health services and

criminal/gang activity. The data will be gathered from case manager outreach and school records as well as official police reports. Case managers will update Salesforce after contact with a youth. It will also be updated after program meetings to document the performance measures that are discussed. Performance measures of relevant data on a semiannual basis will be submitted through OJJDP's Data Reporting Tool (Eastside grant, 2016). The sub-grantees that work with the Worcester Police Department (WPD) on the CAGS grant are Friendly House, Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC), Worcester Public Schools (WPS), and Clark University.

## Analysis Findings

Based off of my research of the case, conducting a SWOT analysis and interviews from partners of CAGS it seems that there is a need for the program on the Eastside of Worcester. With the growing violence among the younger people, a preventive, social intervention, one-on-one targeted program could definitely make an impact on the community. The partners all shared similar ideas, suggestions and concerns related to CAGS.

- SWOT Analysis of CAGS

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong relationships with youth</li> <li>• Successful Partnerships</li> <li>• Support from parents</li> <li>• Qualified and committed staff</li> <li>• Funded Federally</li> <li>• Impact on youth</li> <li>• Supervisor</li> </ul>	<p>Weakness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of behavioral and mental health component</li> <li>• Not enough hours for the amount of work required.</li> <li>• Turn-over</li> <li>• Family engagement</li> <li>• Better ways to refer youth</li> <li>• Lack of transportation</li> </ul>
<p>Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand to other locations in Worcester</li> <li>• Added partnerships</li> <li>• Finding ways to be sustainable</li> </ul>	<p>Threats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuation of grant money</li> <li>• Other organizations that offer similar services</li> <li>• Recruitment</li> <li>• School discipline structure</li> </ul>

Personal Observation:

While developing this report my role as one of the case managers and outreach workers on the grant has continued. My focus a year into the program is to continue making connections and building with the youth and their families. Making sure that my partner and I are supporting the young men in the best ways possible. It is also our role to reach out to our partners for their support and connections in the community. Which in turn helps us connect the youth and their families with services that they need. We go into the schools on a regular basis to connect with our youth and check in on their performance behaviorally, academically and attendance wise. We also work closes with WCAC to help our youth get job placement and work readiness trainings; if they are of age and met the criteria we set. We have a monthly meeting with all of our partners, were we discuss each youth, their development and set goals to assure their success. On top of this we attend other meetings in the community, as well as court when needed. We also do home visit to meet with parents/guardians if they are unable to come to the Friendly House. As case managers and outreach workers we have a huge responsibility not only to the grant, but to the young men that we serve.

As a case manager and outreach worker there are many challenges that we face when working with our youth and their families. One of the ultimate challenges that they face is the lack of transportation through the grant. Studies show that after-school programs have low attendance in underserved communities because of the lack of transportation offered or the transportation cost ([Afterschool Alliance, 2016](#)). This is one roadblocks where the clients and their families look to us for support, however we don't have the capacity to provide them with the services needed.

Another challenge is getting cooperation from our partnering schools. We communicate with all the schools frequently, however sometimes they do not respond in a timely manner, sometimes they do not respond at all, and sometimes they do not have time to schedule meetings with us as required by the grant. This also makes it hard to engage the youth at their school, which is an important way for us to create a strong connection with the youth.

An additional challenge is the lack of a behavioral and mental health component through the grant. Although we are able to utilize the services from SSYI, we do not have a specific program or service directed at behavioral and mental health for our youth. Because we are at the discretion of another grant, if they lose funding for this service, we lose funding for this service. Some of our youth do need behavioral and mental health support outside of what we can provide, therefore having a targeted program for them would be beneficial. Another challenge is gaining the trust of the young men we serve. Those who are not engaged in the court system are willing to be more open with us and seem to want our help more. Those who are involved in the court system seem to be a

little stand offish at times, especially if they see us interacting at court with our WPD liaison.

Although it isn't the easiest to connect with all of the youth right away, we eventually gain their trust and their willingness to work with us. We do this by attending court dates, sporting events, award ceremonies and art shows. This strong relationship helps us provide the youth with the necessary services. Another strength are the weekly check-ins with our supervisor Danielle Delgado. During these check-ins we discuss the youth; their progress, changes in behavior, any services they may need and future goals when working with the youth. Danielle also hold a position at North High School as the wrap around coordinator. With this position, it has been easier for us to get into the high so that we can work directly with the youth. Having a person at East Middle with a similar role would be beneficial for us, however at this point, it is not a possibility.

Another strength are the relationships that we have built with WCAC, another important partner. We work closely together and focus on job development and work readiness programming for the youth. We work together when it comes to managing the youth's employment. WCAC supports them during the training and employment, while the case managers and outreach workers support the youth before, during and after employment, creating a well-rounded environment for the youth to grow during this experience.

WCAC provides job readiness and placement for 10 youth yearly. Youth have to meet the criteria of improved behavior, grades and attendance to be selected for job placement. If youth work during the school year they are allowed to work up to 12 hours per week completing a maximum of 12 weeks of employment. If they chose to work

during the summer they can work up to 20 hours per week completing a maximum of 10 weeks of employment. Thus far 12 of our youth have completed the trainings and received employment opportunities. This summer 5 more youth will go through training and receive employment.

WCAC provides other services as well; such as High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) classes, which we can connect our youth with who have been expelled from high school. Currently, none of our youth use this service because we have connected them to other programs within the community that allow them to complete their high school career and receive a high school diploma.

### Strengths:

The strengths that were shared during conversations were similar across the partners. The main one was the strength of the case managers and outreach workers of the program. The amount of work that they put into the youth they serve has made an impactful change in their lives. They have two of their seniors going to college and their third senior heading to Job Corps. One of their youth was able to receive his permit through North High School for his improved attendance. Twelve of their youth received job readiness training and job placements through WCAC. More than 5 of their youth have found employment on their own. Due to the trust that has been built among the youth and the workers, the youth are more willing to make significant changes in their lives such as the ones mentioned.

Another strength are the partner relationships that have been built through development of the program and shared resources. The partnership with WPS allows the case managers and outreach workers to enter the schools and work with the youth one on

one in an academic space. This allows the workers to engage with them outside of the home and focus on development and conversations that the youth may not have been comfortable sharing in front of their parents/guardians. The partnership with WCAC has allowed youth to work during the school year and over the summer if they met the criteria of improving their grades, attendance and behavior in the school house. The partnership with the WPD allows partners to receive information on the youth that they work with, whether it be an arrest, a rearrests or if they were a victim of a crime. This allows case managers and outreach workers to connect youth with the necessary services in the community. The partnership with the research partners at Clark helps the case managers and outreach workers to analysis the data so that they understand the impact and see if goals are being met. Since there are regulations through the grant, it is required that our research partners report quarterly on the data collected. Based off of the data collected by the research partner; for the July-December 2017 reporting period; there were 48 young men served. Twenty-nine percent of the youth had a change in gang related behavior. Twenty-two percent of the youth served had short-term employment through WCAC. The youth that have been served shown a 2% increase in attendance. There has also been a slight increase academically based off of the school liaison's collection of report cards monthly. Thus far, the program has shown an impact (Le Roux & Ross, 2017).

The partnership with Friendly House allows a primary location for the grant, office space for the case managers and outreach workers. Also, added services they have to provide such as; the food pantry, teen program and clothing donations. Another strength that is important is the ability for partners to share information with one another

during monthly meetings, each entity is able to compare notes and see where the youth are growing.

Additional strengths are the knowledge that each partner brings to the table. The research partners have been working with the Worcester Youth Violence Prevention Initiative (WYVPI), which is the city's shared agenda to address youth violence comprehensively, holistically, and collectively. They also have experience working with youth in underserved areas in Worcester. The school liaison has served as a teacher in the WPS for 20 years and has vast knowledge of the system and the structure. She has a large network of professionals in the WPS, which helps with connecting case managers and outreach workers with the schools. The staff at WCAC has experience with connecting youth and adults with necessary services to help them successfully obtain work, which was beneficial for the youth that were assigned jobs.

### Weaknesses:

The weaknesses that were shared during conversations were the limited number of hours that the grant allows case managers and outreach workers to work weekly. Friendly House does not have the funds to support full-time positions. Because it is a part-time position, the case managers/outreach workers can work up to 29 hours a week at \$15 an hour, however a full-time position would be more beneficial because of the amount of work that needs to be completed. Another major weakness is the lack of a transportation component within the grant. All partners agreed that because there is no allocation of funds from in the current budget for transportation, the youth served have trouble getting to and from school, work, trainings or any other programs they have been connected with.



The lack of a behavioral and mental health component not only for the youth, but for the case managers and outreach workers is also a weakness. The youth need support and greater access to specialized programs that focus on behavioral or mental health services to connect them with. The grant does not have a partner that supports this component nor is their allocation specific funding for these services. Although it is the responsibility of the outreach workers to find these services, the lack of funding through the grant makes it harder for the youth we serve to access them. The concern is also for the case managers and outreach workers and the lack of clinical support for them. This could include discussing ideas and concerns with a trained clinician or support when it comes to digesting some the experiences the youth share with them about their challenges and every day experiences.

Another weakness is the population that is being served because the youth are at-risk or proven risk. This population is harder to engage, and it takes more from them to trust the people working with them. And even though partners work well together, each entity still has goals they have to accomplish, which can sometimes affect youth receiving services when needed.

### Opportunities:

Opportunities that were shared during the conversations were the potential expansion of the program, similar to the way SSYI is placed around the city. Another opportunity is to get the word out about CAGS and the successes thus far. Some successes include 2 out of their 3 seniors are heading to college in the fall, the other to Job Corps, 75% of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders at WEMS will be going to high school next year school. Over 40% of the young men have improved their attendance, more than half

improved their grades and less than 20% of the youth are court involved (Le Roux & Ross, 2017).

With presentations about CAGS to people in the community such as, city officials and potential donors, there can be connections to potential funding, grantor other types of funding to sustain the program. Furthermore, there is the opportunity to create a sustainability plan going forward. There is an opportunity to learn from the challenges that the program faces, finding ways to overcome them and make the necessary changes to the program.

The final opportunity that was shared was to add partnerships that can help combat areas that the youth need more support in, behavioral and mental health, transportation and job placement, which directly ties into the opportunity to learn from the challenges that are faced. Examples of these partners within Worcester would be LUK or You Inc. for behavioral and mental health support, the WRTA for transportation and the City of Worcester for job placement support.

### Threats:

Threats shared through the conversations were funding, the sense of competition within the city, related to non-profits and the school discipline structure. As of September 2018, the OJJDP grant will expire. Partners see this as a threat because the youth being served will still need the support that has been provided for the last two years. Because there are over 200 non-profits in the city of Worcester, many of them applying for grants there is a threat of not finding the funding because of the competition amongst these non-profits. Organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club and The Worcester Youth Center have programs specific to serving youth who are at risk or proven risk. Even though they

are on different sides of the city, the competition happens when it comes to applying for grants or funding. Donors within the Worcester Community include United Way Foundation and the Greater Worcester Community Foundation. The grants that they offer vary in funding based off of their criteria, such as, the type of program, its effectiveness and who they serve. Organizations also can apply for Community Development Block Grants which is federal funding, however organizations must apply through the city. The city decides how to divide the funding among the organizations that apply for the funding.

The school discipline structure is also a threat because it is hard for partners to understand how the youth are disciplined. Studies show that young men of color suffer from ill-discipline distribution in the school house (School and District Profiles, 2017). This makes it challenging for the case managers and outreach workers to reach the youth at the school and also for the youth to fully trust in an authoritative role; which they have experienced. This also makes it challenging for the case managers and outreach workers to appropriately intervene and provide services that may be needed for the youth based off of why they were disciplined.

#### Changes in the program:

Some suggested changes to the program to help with its growth were having a more in-depth process for adding youth to the program. Previously, youth were selected by the school if they felt the youth were gang involved or had peers that were. Because of this some of the first wave of youth had no gang affiliation or connection, however they did need extra support which has been provided for them. Their sister grant SSYI, has a strict selection process and CAGS can possibly learn from their effective strategy.

Another was modifying the memorandum of understanding; which are agreements that all partners must follow. With more regulated requirements, partners hope that both schools will better engage with case managers and outreach workers. Another change that was widely discussed, is making the case managers and outreach workers positions full-time. This will allow them to spend more time engaging with the youth and their families. Also, allowing them to engage with you in after-school activities more often. And finally adding translators to the program. Because Worcester has a diverse population some of the youth added to the list had trouble speaking English and their parents didn't speak English at all. One case manager speaks Spanish, however that does not cover the wide array of languages and the barriers that they may face when engaging youth and their families.

#### Added Partners:

Partners that should be added in the future are a behavioral and mental health component. This will allow for our youth to get directed services that they need. Studies show that a risk factor for youth gang involvement are mental health problems and antisocial behavior (Howell, 2010). A partner that can help in transportation would also be beneficial because again studies show that after-school programs have low attendance in underserved communities because of the lack of transportation offered or the transportation cost (Afterschool Alliance, 2016). Engaging the youth in school-based programming is shown to be an effective tool of prevention (Howell, 2000). Providing transportation to and from after-school programs will be a much-needed component added.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, if the program is not refunded many of the youth that are served who still need the services will fall through the cracks. The job of the case manager and outreach worker fills those cracks so that certain youth aren't overlooked in some of the most trying times they face in their lives. Families and youth have shared how important these case manager and outreach workers are, and how if they weren't around they do not believe that certain accomplishments and achievements wouldn't have happened in their lives. I do believe that CAGS is a strong program and that with the right funding the program will grow and expand to other sides of the city. Hiring the right people for the job is also important and really makes a difference with the youth that will be served. The program has had many successes thus far, and I can see it continuing to grow and make a significant impact in the community.

Partners believe that the program is having a strong impact and that it should be around in the future. They hold the responsibility of making sure that the right supports are being presented for the young boys and the case managers/outreach workers. Thus far, they are doing a great job and continued communication needs to exist to make sure everyone is on the same page.

With the right plan, we hope that the OJJDP grant can be reapplied. If this isn't possible, we hope that there are other available grants or funding that CAGS can apply for before September 2018.

The program is strong, however there are a few things that can be worked on to preserve the program. Making sure that there is a strong relationship with both schools that are being served. Also, creating a better way to recommend youth for the program, so

that we can make sure that the right youth are receiving the services. Another thing would be to figure out ways to combat the weaknesses and threats of the program, such as; reaching out to partners that could support with the behavioral and mental health aspect. Also, finding ways to engage with the schools differently so that each youth is receiving the services that he may need. This would be helpful when reapplying for OJJDP or any other grant/funding so that potential funders know we have worked to make changes to add to CAGS success. And finally, changing the name of the program. Comprehensive Anti-Gang Strategies doesn't sound appealing to the youth we serve and for the community when it comes to us advertising the program more efficiently.

The professionals, case manager/outreach workers and supervisor are currently strong and work well together. For continued growth of the program the strength of the professional's matter. It can affect the way the relationships with the youth and partnerships if there is not a cohesive bond.

Through completing this paper, it is obvious that partners believe in the program and the difference that it is currently making. Also, through the literature review finding the program G.R.E.A.T was an opportunity to do more research on OJJDP and the possibility for us to reapply for that funding source. To learn more about how to make an effective and strong impact on the community that we serve.

Again, it is obvious that there is an agreement amongst partners; CAGS is an important program on the Eastside of Worcester. We have seen successes since the programs official inception in January 2017 and hope to continue making a difference in the community. It would be a benefit for the program to continue not only for the youth, but also to make a stronger impact on the community that we serve.

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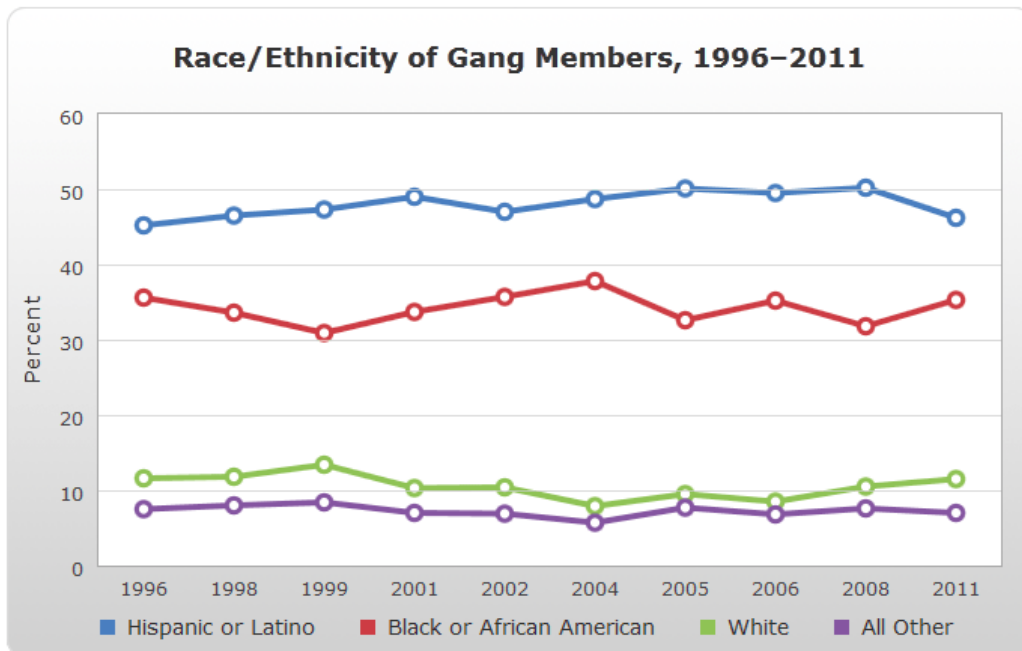
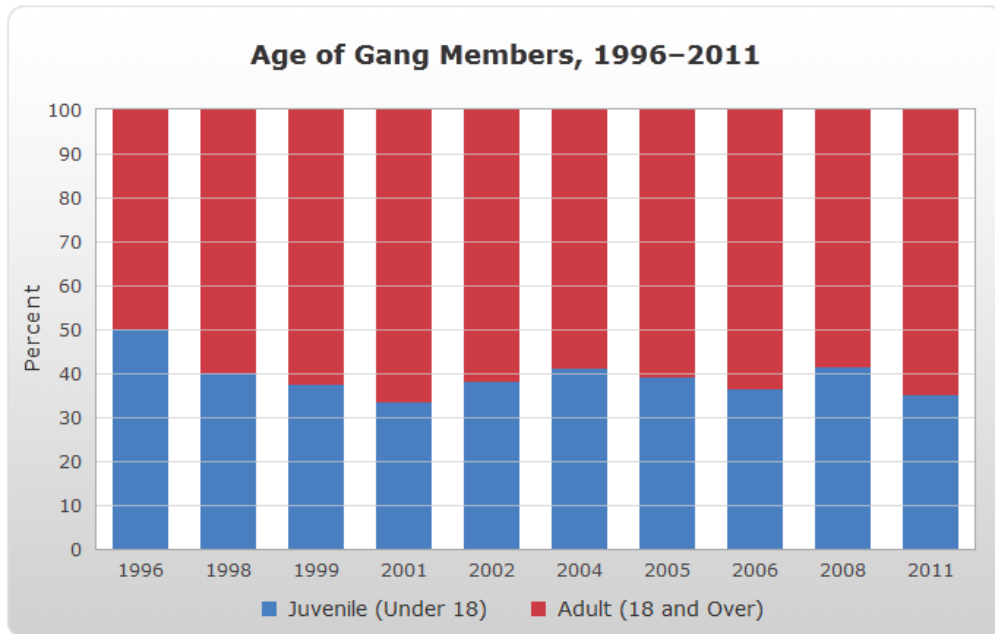
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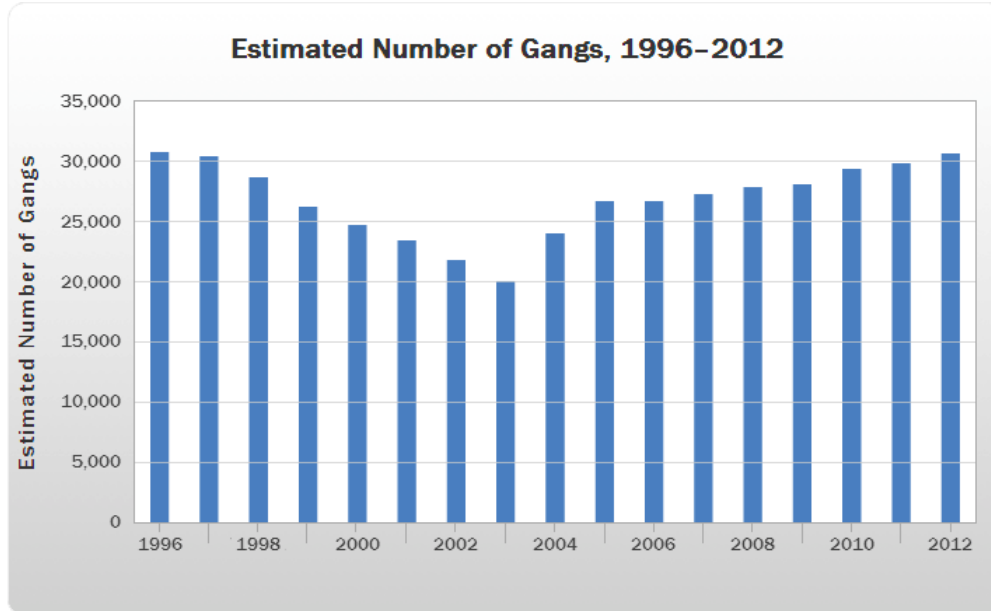
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Appendix A:

**Gang Changes:** From participating jurisdictions during each survey year.





<https://www.nationalgangcenter.gov/Survey-Analysis/Measuring-the-Extent-of-Gang-Problems>

Appendix B:

<https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/231116.pdf>

Figure 2. Gang Prevention and Intervention Strategies



Source: Wyrick, 2006.

## Appendix C:

### **Interviewees and questions:**

- Interviewees
  - Laurie Ross; research partner
- Interview Questions
  - Overall, what are the strengths of CAGS?
  - What are the challenges?
  - What are the opportunities and threats?
  - What are the strengths for the position you currently are in? What are some of the challenges if any?
  - Do you believe that CAGS should be funded again?
  - Do you see CAGS being a program that can be expanded to other parts of the city?
  - If you could bring on any other partner(s), who would they be and why?
  - What changes if any would you like to see?

## Appendix D:

### **Information from Case:**

- **The program objectives are as follows:**
  - Provide comprehensive case management and street outreach to at least 80% of the program youth identified based on the WPS Gang Protocol list.
  - Decrease the number of retaliatory events involving program youth by 35% over 2 years.
  - Decrease the number of program youth who reoffend over the short and long term where 75% have no arrests for new school discipline offenses or police incidents after 1 year, and 90% over 2 years.
  - Decrease number of program youth who are re-victimized in the short and long term, by 25% over 1 year and 50% over 2 years.
  - 75% participants have no out of school suspensions during the school year, show respect to peers; do not engage in bullying or violent behavior in school.
  - 75% of participants achieve a 97% school attendance rate after 2 years.
  - 75% of participants are tardy for fewer than 5 times each year.
  - 75% of middle school participants enter 9th grade 'on time'.
  - Increase number of program youth, ages 14-17 who are employed or have job skills by 25% over 2 years.
- **Project Design/Implementation as follows; directly from the Eastside grant:**

By focusing on Worcester's Eastside neighborhoods and on youth ages 12-18, CAGS address a major geographical, age, and programmatic gap identified in Worcester's Youth Violence Prevention Initiative. CAGS enable the extension of current efforts that have had positive effects in Worcester's Main South neighborhoods to high risk and gang-involved youth in the underserved Eastside neighborhoods. CAGS— like all of Worcester's strategies—is organized by the evidence-based Comprehensive Gang Model. Worcester Police (WPD) will be Law Enforcement Lead. Friendly House will be Lead Street Outreach and Case Management agency. Specialist partners include the Worcester Public Schools (WPS), Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC) for high-tier employment expertise, and Clark University as the research partner. We discuss how CAGS aligns with the Comprehensive Gang Model, with particular emphasis on solidifying the social intervention aspects during the first two years of this effort.

**Social Intervention:** The WPS gang protocol list will be used to identify eligible youth at Worcester East Middle and North High School who are under the age of 18. An outreach worker will be assigned to connect with each identified youth and his family in school, at home and/or at Friendly House. Resistance is expected at first. Program youth are anticipated to have been in and out of juvenile detention and/or alternative education settings. They may have trust, trauma, addiction and mental health issues, so our outreach workers—individuals with credibility among the affected population and the CAGS team—will be supportive, persistent and consistent, using direct contacts, social media, phone calls, texts, home visits and whatever other means are necessary to build trust. We know that many youths require multiple contacts over an extended period before 'sticking' in the program. Outreach notes will reflect all attempts to contact youth and strategic outreach plans will be developed with hard to reach youth. All outreach worker activities will be entered into Salesforce.

Once the outreach worker and the youth begin to develop a relationship and the youth is ready for additional services, the outreach worker will connect the youth with the case manager, who will then serve as the youth's primary advocate. Based on the experience with SSYI over the past three years, it is anticipated that this process can take anywhere from weeks to months to achieve.

The case manager will work with each youth in a client-centric trauma-informed model, to create an individualized service plan (ISP) for each youth based on his particular goals, needs and strengths. Given the vulnerable nature of the population, service plans initially will focus on achievable goals with short-term milestones like getting a driver's permit or even meeting with the case manager regularly. As the youth progresses, the service plan is updated to reflect new goals and milestones. The case manager will facilitate referrals to needed services and supports, including education, employment and behavioral health as well as supports that could help to stabilize the family. The case manager will monitor all other services. Case managers will have weekly meetings with each youth to establish a relationship and monitor progress. All case manager activities and youth service plans will be entered into Salesforce.

Behavioral health support will be offered to youth from intake onward. Outreach workers and case managers who identify youth as being in need of behavioral health services will refer the youth to either school-based supports or to other mental health agencies currently working with SSYI youth.

There will establish an CAGS Intervention Team consisting of the outreach workers, case managers, school liaisons, police liaisons, employment and behavioral health partners, and our research partner. This group will meet once a month to review progress being made with program participants. To aid in resource allocation and progress tracking, youth will be categorized in tiers, from highest risk (not engaging) to lowest (ready to transition out). Each youth's status is updated monthly and when progress is not being made, the team will create plans to deepen engagement with the youth and family. Facilitated by our research partner, intervention team meetings foster information sharing and enable processes to be improved quickly. The meetings provide time for in-house trainings as new best practices emerge. Meetings are also critical for case manager collaboration with specialist partners in education, employment, and behavioral health. Plans and outcomes discussed in intervention team meetings will be tracked in Salesforce.

**Opportunities Provision:** Although the focus for CAGS is on the social intervention domain of the CGM, service plans will include education and employment support. The employment component of this program shall not detract from a youth's educational attainment. However, for the youth who are interested in part-time work, the case manager will conduct an initial assessment of job readiness skills which will be followed by any of the following: job readiness training, subsidized employment and/or unsubsidized employment. Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC) is our employment specialist partner and will facilitate job readiness training and job placement. We have budgeted 15 subsidized employment positions during the summer. Case managers will identify program youth in need of academic support. The case manager will help the youth in setting academic related goals. Case managers will also connect youth to educational services based on his or her goals and needs. Friendly House offers afterschool homework help support.

**Suppression:** In response to an increase in violent crime perpetuated mainly by gang-involved youth, the city of Worcester rolled out the Street Violence Prevention Group (SVPG) program in January 2012. SVPG consists of the immediate deployment of a team of Officers to violent situations and results in more offenders seeing instant ramifications to their actions. SVPG teams are made up from officers assigned to the Gang Unit, Major Crimes, Alcohol Enforcement, and the Vice Squad. Deployment of the SVPG has led to an increase in guns arrests and guns seizures. As well as an uptick in successful clearance of cases of non-fatal shooting where gangs were involved.

Because of its success, we propose expanding this program in order to specifically focus on those high-risk youth on the City's Eastside. While the SVPG's emphasis is on immediate response to street violence, SVPG also can provide targeted deterrence by identifying the high-risk youth in the targeted area, and then,

along with other criminal justice agencies, “pulling” those levers necessary to redirect criminal behavior and subdue gang violence (Braga & Weisburd, 2015). The SVPG provides the “stick” and the community-based support proposed in this application, (youth outreach, case management and opportunities provision), provides the “carrot”.

The SVPG incorporates a monthly meeting of the central Massachusetts law enforcement community. These meetings are regularly attended by: FBI, ATF, MA State Police, Worcester County DA’s Office, US Marshall’s Office, MA Parole, District and Superior Court Probation, local college campus police, housing police and police officials from surrounding towns. The purpose of these monthly meetings is to discuss in detail “justice system” strategies to address gang and violent crime in and around our city. Many of the “lever pulling” strategies, mentioned above, will be developed at these meetings.

**Organizational change:** Due to Worcester’s long-term commitment to implementing the Comprehensive Gang Model, the city was recently selected by Suffolk University to participate in a National Institute of Justice funded study to bolster the organizational change domain of the CGM. Prior research has shown that when violence prevention initiatives fail, it is most often because of lack of organizational change, not necessarily because of specific interventions (i.e. street outreach intervention; targeted suppression) employed (e.g., Tita & Papachristos, 2010). Worcester’s participation in this project will test the effects of a deliberate strategy to strengthen collaboration, leadership, and data collection and sharing using an intervention informed by relational coordination (Gittell and Suchman, 2013).

**Community Mobilization:** CAGS will be a part of larger Community Mobilization efforts laid out in Worcester Youth Violence Prevention Initiative, including community meetings to inform the public about progress on the plan, inviting the public to get involved in prevention efforts in the plan, and involving the community in conducting the next Gang Problem Assessment, which will take place in fall 2018.

**Research partner:** The research partner proposed is Clark University. Researchers at Clark University are currently the research partners for SSI, Shannon CSI, and the Byrne Criminal Justice Initiative. Byrne is focusing similar efforts in Worcester’s other violence crime hotspot of Main South. The research partner will be responsible for co-facilitating intervention team meetings and collecting, analyzing and reporting out data. The data will be collected through Salesforce. Reports on performance measures will be run for monthly meetings, and data will be analyzed on an ongoing basis to monitor performance measures. The research partner will develop a baseline of performance objectives and measures at the start of the grant period. An evaluation will be conducted after year one and year two to measure progress. Dr. Laurie Ross and a graduate level research assistant will comprise the research team.

By including the Organizational Change and Community Mobilization domains of the CGM, it will strengthen coordination of existing resources and

activities to fulfill the objectives of the Worcester Youth Violence Prevention Initiative. City leadership—including the City Manager, Mayor, Chief of Police and Superintendent of Schools—believe that if high risk youth 12-18 living on the Eastside of the city can be diverted from gang activity and the overall safety net in those neighborhoods can be strengthened the violence in the city will go down and all youth—including those at highest risk for gang involvement—will have a greater chance at academic success and overall improved wellbeing.

- **The partners (sub-grantees) are as follows; directly from the Eastside Grant:**

**Friendly House:** Founded in 1920, Friendly House’s mission is to be an “integrating force” for families and neighborhoods. Located on the city’s Eastside, Friendly House is the largest neighborhood-based multi-service center in Worcester. Friendly House provides low-income children and the families in Worcester with a full spectrum of services to meet their critical basic needs with programs that help them move out of poverty and move toward self-sufficiency. It is often the “agency of last resort” for individuals and families in crisis when their needs cannot be met by other organizations. Through its Child, Youth, and Family Programs, Friendly House provides afterschool, summer enrichment, youth development and sports/recreation programs for underserved children youth in the Eastside of Worcester. Friendly House became a partner in SSYI in 2016 due to the need to have case management and outreach functions located on the Eastside. Expanding their scope to work with younger Eastside youth is a logical extension of this partnership. Friendly House has been a key resource for thousands of families living in the city’s eastside for over 90 years. It has key and extensive relationships critical to SSYI East’s effort to outreach and case manage eligible youth ages 12-17. Nearly 90% of the child/youth program participants are at or below the 100% poverty level. Friendly House staff know the youth (and their challenges) we are attempting to engage in SSYI Project East, as the youth they serve primarily attend Union Hill and Grafton Hill elementary schools, Worcester East Middle and North High School. These are all schools that struggle with sub-par performance measures and where the needs of the children for informal education and academic and learning supports are extraordinary.

For CAGS Friendly House will hire an outreach worker and a case manager, both 0.5 FTE. The Outreach Worker will connect with the targeted youth in schools, neighborhoods and homes. Once trust is established, the outreach workers will connect the youth with the case manager. The case manager will complete an intake to assess youth risk factors and needs and develop an Individualized Service Plan (ISP). The case manager and the outreach worker will maintain regular contact with each youth. All activities with and on behalf of each youth will be documented in the project’s Salesforce-based data management system.

Danielle Delgado, Friendly House’s Director of Child, Youth and Family Programs oversee the work of the outreach workers and case managers. Danielle holds a BA in Sociology and an M.Ed. in School Guidance. She has over 15 years’ experience in providing leadership and development staff and at-risk youth in various settings and has the ability to relate well to a diverse, multi-cultural population with various needs.



**Worcester Public Schools (WPS):** WPS has participated in SSYI since 2012. In its role as the partner for education, WPS has served as educational liaison/case manager to evaluate the academic standing of listed youth and to develop an individual educational plan for each receptive youth. The liaison/case manager attends intervention team meetings to discuss individual progress and coordinate with other partners. Other SSYI WPS staff monitor open gym nights for SSYI youth, offer in-school counseling and mentoring, provide career development education services, and supervise SSYI youth who are subsidized school maintenance employees. WPS hired an additional part-time educational liaison/case manager for CAGS. The educational liaison/case manager was selected from a pool of qualified WPS staff who were knowledgeable about the challenges facing students on the Eastside of the city and ideally who had worked with Friendly House.

WPS is an urban school district of 25,000 students (2014-15). The mission of the Public Schools is to provide academic and character-building opportunities to all Worcester youth. Nearly 40% of students are Hispanic, 15% are black, and 8% are Asian. 49% are economically disadvantaged and 48% are not native English speakers. WPS staff receive training in cultural sensitivity and many services are available in various languages. Education of challenged young people like those in SSYI Project East is consistent with this.

CAGS youth are a challenging group for the schools, many having been in and out of school repeatedly. WPS expects to meet this challenge by closely monitoring student progress and by working aggressively with youth who are best served by credit recovery, alternative schools, and other assistance outside regular school programs to create workable education plans.

**Worcester Community Action Council (WCAC):** With a mission "to move people to economic self-sufficiency through programs, partnerships, and advocacy," WCAC and CAGS objectives are compatible. WCAC has provided HiSET/GED and job development programs for 50 years. WCAC's primary target population includes teen parents and their young children, disconnected youth ages 16-24, and the homeless. WCAC has been a long-term partner under both SSYI and Shannon and understands the needs of proven-risk and high-risk young men. WCAC operates 18 self-sufficiency programs in 43 communities serving 75,000 families a year. WCAC maintains an extensive database of employers (ca. 700) who have a history of hiring program participants. The Job Developer/Case Manager contacts targeted employers to develop new partnerships to meet the individual needs of this population.

Aware that CAGS youth have had difficulty maintaining unsubsidized employment due to seasonal hiring's, CORI issues, terminations, or new incarceration, the Job Developer will conduct an assessment of each youth's ability to retain employment, will maintain regular contact with program partners, and will provide follow-up contact to youth and employers.

WCAC staff speak various languages including Spanish and Vietnamese. WCAC provides cultural competency trainings at least once a year for all staff. The SSYI Job Developer/Case Manager is African American and has a history of positive interactions with high-risk youth, gang-involved youth. He has 24 years' experience with high-risk

youth, including SSYI and Shannon and has credibility with this population. WCAC has worked with the SSYI partners under WPD coordination in the past and looks forward to expanding the partnership to serve younger youth on the Eastside.

**Clark University:** Clark University is a liberal arts research university located in the heart of Worcester's Main South neighborhood. Clark is an integral part of the community and, since 1987, has worked with residents, businesses, and other stakeholders to improve the safety and quality of life in the neighborhood. Clark's commitment to the community is evidenced by its significant financial and programmatic investments in the children and families within Worcester.

Laurie Ross, Associate Professor of Community Development and Planning at Clark University, is the proposed research partner. She received her Ph.D. in Public Policy from the University of Massachusetts Boston in 2002 and has spent most of her research career working in Worcester on issues of youth development, youth violence, and youth worker professional education. Dr. Ross has extensive experience providing research and evaluation support on public safety, youth, and community development action research projects in Worcester. She has been Worcester's Local Action Research Partner on the Massachusetts Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) funded Shannon Community Safety Initiative since 2006 and Executive Office of Health and Human Services funded Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) since 2013. Under Shannon, Ross designed and facilitated the comprehensive needs and resource assessment and citywide strategic planning process that led to the creation of the Worcester Youth Violence Prevention Initiative.

Dr. Ross is well qualified to service as the research partner on this grant, having experience as Principal Investigator, Evaluator, and Project Director on numerous public safety and youth violence prevention grants and projects. She designed and maintains the Salesforce project information management system. Ross has a track record of submitting high quality, timely reports to partners and funders. In all of her action-research roles, she has been accountable for a wide range of program outcomes and grant deliverables, including progress reports and evaluation reports. Dr. Ross has developed information-sharing agreements with the WPD and receives regular information about police activity as it relates to gang-involved youth and other youth and young adults most involved in violence in Worcester.

Studying and working with Worcester's high- and verified-risk youth, Ross is sensitive to the community context of SSYI client youth. She directs the HOPE Coalition, an 18-organization youth-adult partnership targeting youth violence, addiction and mental health. In HOPE, she works directly with diverse groups of high school aged youth.

## Appendix E:

**Figure 1: Worcester Youth Violence Prevention Initiative 2016**

**Mission:** To reduce youth violence through policy and system change and by promoting trust, safety, healing and opportunities for Worcester’s most under-resourced youth and families.

Guiding Principles	Community Level Indicators
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Start early and never stop supporting young people and families</li> <li>2. Prevent and treat trauma; promote healing</li> <li>3. Increase youth and families’ access to community resources by addressing barriers</li> <li>4. Foster opportunities for diversion at every decision point</li> <li>5. View the affected population as an asset by involving them in every step of plan design, implementation and evaluation</li> <li>6. Engage community leaders, residents, business owners, faith leaders, service providers, and the high risk population with the message that violence should not be viewed as "Normal" but as a behavior that can be changed.</li> <li>7. Address structural racism via Community Conversations, addressing systemic barriers and creating a community language via Un-Doing Racism workshops for leaders, providers, and the high risk.</li> <li>8. Address features of built environment that contribute to violence</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase in the number of children and youth who are engaged in age appropriate, safe, quality learning and youth development activities</li> <li>• Reduction in the exclusion of children and youth from all educational settings, including early childhood</li> <li>• Reduction in racial/ethnic disparity in youth being excluded from educational settings, including early childhood</li> <li>• Reduction in child abuse/neglect</li> <li>• Reduction in low-level youth arrests</li> <li>• Reduction in racial/ethnic disparity at the point of youth arrest</li> <li>• Reduction in the number of shooting incidents</li> <li>• Reduction in racial/ethnic disparity in victims and perpetrators of shooting incidents</li> <li>• Safety net is more coherent and connected so that essential services including housing, food, medical and mental health care, and education are easily accessible to families and families in high need report less transition and interruption in accessing needed supports and services.</li> </ul>

### Policy Change: Employment, Health, Education, and Housing

Coalition Building:  
Early Childhood Network  
Youth Resources Network

Training: Police, Educators, Physicians, Youth Workers,  
Outreach Workers on Trauma and Brain Development;  
Youth Development; Structural Racism; Implicit Bias;  
Deescalation

Violence Prevention:  
Increasing Accessibility of Public Spaces (e.g. schools and parks)

Early Childhood Intervention: Co-responder Model at point of Trauma. Co-location of early childhood mental health in primary care settings;

Adolescent & Young Adult Intervention  
Relationship Building, Violence Interruption, Neighborhood-based Diversion

Juvenile Justice and Criminal Justice Diversion

Employment

School Climate

Behavioral Health & Healing Spaces for Boys and Men of Color

Suppression / Reentry