Youth and families thriving in safe and healthy neighborhoods, vibrant with opportunities for personal, spiritual, educational and economic growth

March, 2016
Introduction

In his first two years as Mayor, Martin J. Walsh has demonstrated strong leadership and commitment to violence prevention and public safety, in addition to the foundational issues of social and economic justice, equal opportunity and second chances for those who have made mistakes. Mayor Walsh has taken significant steps to elevate and prioritize a multi-disciplinary approach to violence prevention that emphasizes opportunities and pathways away from violence.

Mayor Walsh understands that youth violence is a complex social problem that requires a multifaceted response. Poverty, dysfunctional families, and lack of education and opportunities are intertwined with substance abuse, trauma, mental health issues, and the availability of guns. A continuum of care to address the fundamental causes of violence—not just the symptoms—is needed. In addition, neighborhood safety concerns must be addressed and offenders held accountable for their actions. A comprehensive, multi-agency strategy will include elements of prevention, intervention, enforcement and reentry.

An initiative of the Obama administration, the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention (National Forum) provides select cities with resources for planning and capacity building, an opportunity to inform and lead nationally, and the potential to leverage additional support of federal government and private funders. Boston was privileged to have been chosen as one of the six charter National Forum cities in 2010.

This Plan will document the tremendous impact that the National Forum has had in Boston, and will lay out the current Boston Model and action planning for the future. Like the original forum plan, it is intended to serve as a living document that can be amended as needed to reflect real-time issues, circumstances and challenges that may arise.
Background – The National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention in Boston

The City of Boston was selected by President Barack Obama’s Administration to participate in the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention in 2010. The City of Boston has a long and rich history of collaboration, community involvement, and innovation to address youth violence. Indeed, many nationally recognized initiatives and programs were born in Boston and have been replicated across the country, such as Streetworkers, Child Witness to Violence, Operation Ceasefire, and Operation Night Light.

In total, six cities were initially asked to share their knowledge and experience, and to develop comprehensive community-based plans to prevent youth and gang violence. Through this process, these cities have become a network for youth violence prevention activity and innovation. Four additional cities were added in 2012, and five more in 2014.

Participation in the National Forum has provided us with an opportunity to reflect upon and articulate the Boston approach, as well as share lessons learned with other cities facing similar challenges. In addition, it has been an opportunity to engage in ongoing dialogue with federal funding agencies and weigh in on their policies and priorities.

On the federal side, the National Forum is led by the Department of Justice (particularly the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, or OJJDP), with Department of Education, Labor, Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and others as partners. On the Boston side, the leadership team has been comprised of representatives from the Mayor’s Office, Boston Police Department (BPD), Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC), Boston Centers for Youth and Families (BCYF), Boston Public Schools, Jobs & Community Services, and a few other key partners. In addition, numerous county, state and federal agencies and community organizations have been heavily involved in the National Forum Working Group (See Appendix for current list of members).

Boston’s Plan was presented in April 2011 at a Youth Violence Prevention Summit in Washington DC. It built on the strong foundation of community collaboration and partnership that exists in the City. It was balanced, multi-disciplinary, data driven, and person and place based. The written Plan was always intended as a fluid document that would evolve over time as our needs and challenges change.

The original Plan was comprehensive in nature, covering a host of current and proposed efforts across the spectrum of prevention, intervention, enforcement and reentry. Goals were:
1. Enhance communication and information sharing across all sectors;
2. Enhance coordination and alignment of resources and service provision across all sectors;
3. Increase civic engagement focused on youth violence reduction across all sectors; and
4. Continue to push the envelope on innovative strategies and programs to prevent and reduce youth violence.

Since presenting the original plan in 2011, significant progress has been made. We are doing a better job coordinating and aligning our resources; we are sharing more information; we have stronger partnerships than ever before; and we are delivering higher-quality services to more youth and families. Major strides have been made in strategic alignment of multi-agency initiatives as well as agency/department-specific efforts. In addition, there is better coordination with related collaborations, such as the Youth Violence Prevention Funders Collaborative. And the original plan guided strategic, collaborative resource development, resulting in new funds to support innovation.

In addition to these overall improvements, there have been many specific benefits from the Forum—technical assistance, peer-to-peer learning experiences, access to additional grant funds and resources, and the opportunity to be part of a learning community of cities that informs national policy.

**Specific Outcomes/ Accomplishments:**

- Continuous declines in Part One Crime and arrests
- Forced us to assess and articulate issues and priorities.
- Has increased information sharing and communication.
- Has increased alignment and coordination across agencies regarding programming, initiatives, and resource allocation.
- Opportunity to showcase efforts, participate in national dialogue and inform policy
  - National Summits and Working Group convenings, monthly calls, newsletters, hosting federal team site visits, and the new Faith-based and Law Enforcement communities of practice for information sharing.
  - *White House Champions of Change* – Andrea Perry (YouthConnect) and Emmett Folgert (Dorchester Youth Collaborative) recognized in April 2012.
- Provision of capacity building funds through National Forum capacity grants
$517,243.01 in National Forum capacity grants have been awarded to the City of Boston via the Boston Police Department. These funds have supported:

- Consultant contract with Root Cause for the Mayor’s Office of Public Safety Initiatives planning process – to be discussed at length later in this report
- Full-time violence prevention analyst
- Expansion of Positive Behavior and Intervention Systems (PBIS) to six additional Boston Public Schools
- Procurement of a case management system for Boston Centers for Youth and Families streetworkers
- Fair and Procedural Justice training for Boston Police Department
- Training for clergy who do Operation Homefront home visits with police to at-risk students referred by teachers
- Violence prevention-themed summer Peace Camp for 9-12-year-olds across the city, including a special needs section
- Community engagement supplies for Coffee with a Cop and Flashlight walks
- Travel expenses for National Forum convenings, peer to peer visits, and other training/professional development conferences for working group members.

✓ Participation in the Forum has helped to leverage new grant awards for violence prevention:

- The **Defending Childhood Initiative (DCI)** grant—$2 million in federal funds to prevent, reduce and treat children’s exposure to violence—was awarded shortly after the National Forum plan was presented.
- The City of Boston received $2 million through the **Community-Based Violence Prevention Demonstration Program** for Violence Interrupters, community mobilization and Operation Ceasefire in Mattapan;
- Boston was recently awarded a $252,062 **Youth Violence Prevention Enhancement** grant to continue the planning work we are doing under the Forum, as well as linking more directly with the Defending Childhood Initiative and Community-Based Violence Prevention Demonstration Program.
- $10K Grant from **Target Corporation** in the summer of 2011 to fund youth-led research project at the Burke High School.

✓ The National Forum is very closely aligned with the **Defending Childhood Initiative**, with significant overlap in leadership, working group members, and a shared mission.

- The National Forum site coordinator and DCI coordinator are on the **Statewide Defending Childhood Initiative** planning process, which met throughout 2015 and submitted a plan of action to OJJDP. This plan
includes significant Boston-specific action steps that are related to training and policy improvement.

☑ The federal team has provided numerous Forum-specific resources to cities in the form of Technical Assistance and priority access to support services.
  - *Research and resources on juvenile reentry* was provided by Development Services Group, Inc. Received in December 2015, this information has been very valuable to our juvenile justice partner, the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, as they are thinking through potential reforms to their current juvenile reentry initiative.
  - Juvenile justice expert *Bryan Stevenson*, Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative, presented to a high-profile delegation in 2014, including members of Mayor Walsh’s Cabinet and staff, as well as the BPD, BCYF, YouthConnect, BPHC, and state partners in Juvenile Justice reform.
  - *Peer to peer exchanges* – Boston delegates traveled to Chicago (2011 and 2012) and Memphis (2012), and Boston hosted Salinas (2010) and Memphis (2014).
  - Technical Assistance by the Criminal Justice Institute via the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA) to assist with mapping and needs assessment regarding *Crisis Reentry strategy* (Fall 2012 - Winter 2013).
  - Procurement of two *VISTA volunteers* to work for a year on the Circle of Promise per Forum partnership (2011/2012).

☑ For four years in a row, *HUD’s Center for Faith-Based & Neighborhood Partnerships* has provided a two-day capacity building training for non-profit agencies in Boston (2012-2015).

☑ Technical Assistance by consultant to review, assess and make recommendations regarding *strategies to reduce truancy* (June 2011).

☑ Better coordination with the *Youth Violence Prevention Funder Learning Collaborative*. This Collaborative has done tremendous work over the past few years in developing key principles, goals and objectives, outcome measures, and metrics for service provision. They are convening and educating private, corporate, and family foundations, and philanthropists to understand and promote their potential role in funding violence prevention activities. In addition, they are attempting to channel investments where they are most needed, both programmatically and geographically. High-level City representatives are co-chairs of their working groups.
Current State of Youth Violence

This past year showed continued declines in crime and homicides, along with a significant number of guns taken off the street. Statistics for 2015 through the end of December showed a 9% decrease in total Part One Crime, a 3% decrease in violent crime, a 25% decrease in homicides (lowest number in 16 years, with a total of 40), and 786 guns taken off the street.

Arrests continue to decline as well—15% fewer than in 2014—the lowest number of arrests in ten years. In Boston, we are reducing crime without locking people up. Arrests are down because we are diverting young people away from the criminal justice system. Partnerships between police and non-profits, clergy and community leaders are providing opportunities and alternatives for youth and building relationships and trust in our neighborhoods. This demonstrates an intervention and prevention strategy, not a reliance on enforcement. And the homicide clearance rate has greatly improved – 72% clearance in 2015. We believe this is due to an increase in community cooperation, in addition to improvement in investigations.

Despite these positive outcomes, there have been challenges, and the City and partners have risen to meet them. Overall shootings (fatal and non-fatal) increased by 14%. This increase is driven by multiple shootings—incidents where more than one individual was shot. We believe this is associated with the involvement of younger perpetrators, who shoot indiscriminately and are not deterred by firing into crowds and the prospect of hitting innocent bystanders.

In addition, police-youth relations continue to be tested in the wake of the Ferguson decision and other high-profile incidents and protests. The BPD is committed to strengthening its relationship with youth, and continues to work diligently to conduct outreach and engage with youth in positive activities, dialogues and programming. The BPD continues to be at the forefront nationally on positive community engagement.

On May 18th 2015 Boston was recognized by the White House as one of “Ten Cities Making Real Progress Since the Launch of the 21st Century Policing Task Force”:

Boston, MA
Under the leadership of Mayor Walsh and Commissioner Evans, the Boston Police Department prioritizes relationships with youth and the community as the key to building trust and creating safe and thriving neighborhoods. This starts with an emphasis on daily interactions on the streets and in school classrooms; includes proactive prevention and diversion for at-risk youth and their families; and provides pathways away from violence for those who are ready to make a change. The Boston Police Department is proud to be part of the City’s participation in both My Brother’s Keeper and the National Forum on
Youth Violence Prevention – two Presidential initiatives that understand the need for comprehensive collaborative approaches to complex problems. The BPD has strong partnerships and collaborations with many other agencies, non-profits, and community based programs. From the vast array of year-round district activities with youth to the support for homicide survivors and victims of domestic violence; from the home visits and referrals of at-risk youth to social workers to the youth dialogues with community partners; from Coffee with a Cop to flashlight walks with residents; from Shop with a Cop to the Academy training officers to better interact with youth; and from reentry programs for returning offenders to school safety days with special needs populations; the BPD is working every day to build and strengthen relationships with the community.

Office of Mayor Martin J. Walsh, Boston, MA

Commissioner Evans participated in a panel discussion at the White House on community policing/ community engagement in last July; Mayor Walsh and Commissioner Evans participated in United States Attorney General Loretta E. Lynch’s “Attorney General’s Summit on Violent Crime” on October 7th, 2015, in Washington DC. And on December 21st, we learned that the BPD is featured on the President’s Task Force on 21st Century Policing Implementation Map on the COPS Office website.

Boston’s approach to addressing youth violence has evolved significantly over the years, becoming more comprehensive and creating partnerships across many agencies and departments. We have also become more sophisticated in problem analysis and performance measurement, using data and information to drive response and inform innovative practices.

The BPD’s Boston Regional Intelligence Center (BRIC) informs the City and other partner agencies on emerging crime trends and pertinent intelligence information. The BRIC is an award-winning Fusion Center and an invaluable tool for the Boston Police Department and the Metro region. The BRIC serves as the central point for the collection, synthesis, analysis and dissemination of strategic and tactical intelligence to law enforcement, intelligence, first responder and private sector partners; it also assists the federal government as a partner for national security. In addition, the BRIC houses the Real Time Crime Center, ShotSpotter (acoustic gun detection technology), and links to the Probation Department’s GPS monitoring system.

Over the last ten years, the amount of gun violence in Boston has remained well below the highs of the early- and mid-1990s. For the past ten years, Part One crime in Boston has been steadily decreasing. However, despite our efforts and the considerable progress we have made in many areas, youth violence—particularly gun violence—remains a significant problem (see chart below).
Given the nature of the problem, “gang violence” and “gun violence” are so closely intertwined with “youth violence” in the City of Boston that they have in effect become one and the same in terms of analysis and solutions.

The prevalence and extent of exposure to violent crime and gun-related homicides disproportionately harms the City’s youth population. The age group of those affected most by youth violence in Boston (as either victims or offenders) is 12-24, with some exceptions for slightly older individuals. BPD data shows that in 2015, 42% of shooting victims (including victims of firearm homicides) were 18-24, and 4% were under 18.iii

Long-term trends present challenges that have remained consistent over time:

- **Impact players** -- The vast majority of violence is caused by a small number of “impact” offenders. What is often lost in this statement is that the vast majority of adults and youth in our neighborhoods are doing the right thing every day.

- **Geographic concentration** -- Boston is a city of distinct and varied neighborhoods, and within some of these neighborhoods lie persistent, disproportionate concentrations of violence and activity referred to as “hot spots.” In other words, violence is concentrated within small sections of inner-city neighborhoods. Conversely, almost 89% of Boston street segments and intersections never experienced a single non-fatal shooting incident between 1980 and 2008.iv
- **Guns** -- The number of guns and their accessibility on the street continue to be a problem. According to the most recent Boston Youth Survey—administered bi-annually to Boston high school youths—39% of youth reported that it would be “very or fairly easy” to get a gun.

- **Gangs** -- Gangs and gang-related activity continue to be major factors in youth exposure to violence in Boston. In Boston, most gangs are neighborhood/ street-based, as opposed to nationally affiliated gangs. Constantly changing dynamics, loose organizational structure, lack of traditional geographic territories, and unpredictability of many of the personalities involved, make it challenging to predict eruptions of violence.

- **Retaliation** -- Retaliation plays a role in the escalation of violence, with the victims and offenders often being somewhat interchangeable based on where they are in the cycle of retaliation. It is important to break this cycle, and much work is being done on this through law enforcement partnerships with local youth serving organizations, other city agencies and social services.

- **Reentry** – Reentry is closely intertwined with youth violence, due to relationships and connections between returning offenders and youth and gangs in our neighborhoods. High-risk returning offenders contribute significantly to gun and gang violence in the City as they are often unsupervised and resume criminal activity upon release. Suffolk County House of Correction (SCHOC) releases 250-300 offenders per month to Boston, about 70% of whom return to Boston’s most violent areas. The hot spots to which they return have elevated social risk factors. Returning inmates face many barriers to pro-social behavior, including Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks, a lack of employment readiness, low levels of literacy and education, inadequate housing, mental health and substance abuse issues, and minimal, unstructured support. Parental imprisonment can lead to short- and long-term adverse outcomes for children through the trauma of parent-child separation, inadequate parenting, economic strain, and stigma/labeling.

In 2015/2016, recent trends suggest similar but slightly nuanced challenges that must be met:

- **Younger participants** in gun violence
  - More likely to shoot indiscriminately, into crowds
  - Resulted in increase in shootings with multiple victims/ collateral damage
  - Gang infiltration and recruitment in middle schools and elementary schools
  - Increased trend of involvement of kids who are NOT on the radar of law enforcement, making proactive threat assessment difficult
  - Lack of family structure, lack of expectation of responsibility from a young age
  - Lack of positive role models leads disenfranchised youth to gravitate to a gang and then be negatively influenced by older criminally involved gang members

- Increase in **women and girls** as victims of and involved with gang/gun violence
- Persistent **hot spot neighborhoods** over multiple generations
- Long-term impact of **trauma**, including multiple exposures, has a lasting effect on communities and individuals
- Use of **social media** perpetuates and escalates violence
- **Gangs** are more transient, no longer traditional geographic boundaries
- Availability of **guns** is a significant problem
- **Opioid crisis** and associated social ills are hurting already vulnerable children and families
- **Human trafficking/ sexual exploitation** continues to be intertwined with gang violence
- **Police-community tensions** exist related to high-profile incidents nationally

These current trends and challenges are of great concern to Mayor Walsh, and therefore have informed the focus of the Mayor’s Office of Public Safety’s planning process (to be discussed at length later in this document).

### The Current Boston Model for Youth Violence Prevention and Reduction

The current Boston model of youth violence prevention is innovation-based in a culture of collaboration. Mayor Walsh and his team bring a new way of looking at seemingly intractable problems, and are building on the strong foundation Boston has in place to take youth violence prevention to the next level. Partnership and coordination has become the way of doing business in Boston (see diagram below). Mayor Walsh is leveraging this culture, along with research, analytics, and fresh thinking, to identify and explore new areas for innovation.

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**Leaders** value:
+ data, research and analysis
+ outcome measures / results
+ information sharing
+ coordination and collaboration
+ relationships with community

*from city agencies, other government agencies, non-profits, business community, etc.

**Programmatic/ Front line workers** have shared understandings regarding:
- positive youth development
- public health approach
- impact of trauma
- meaningful employment
- wrap-around services
- belief in second chances, change is possible
- teamwork and partnership

**Community Expectations:**
- even low rates of violence are unacceptable
- need for balance of strategies: combining fairness, accountability and opportunity
- need for continued focus on inequity and social justice
- agencies should share information and work together

**Significant assets:**
> city, county, state, federal and private resources
> engaged business/ foundation community
> array of existing programs/ initiatives and services
> long standing partnerships and collaborations at many levels
> experience with innovation/ thinking outside the box

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*Partnership and Collaboration is the norm in Boston*
In Boston, we are also working from a public health perspective in approaching youth violence prevention. The following is a description of “A Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention,” provided by the Boston Public Health Commission:

A public health approach to violence prevention recognizes that people do not live their lives in isolation; that they affect and are affected by interactions with other people, environments, and systems, namely friends and family, school/workplace/other communities, and society as a whole. Effective programming addresses these multiple spheres of influence and acknowledges social determinants of health, such as race, poverty, and gender. Additionally, public health takes a population-level approach, seeking to prevent and intervene on multiple levels, addressing the general population; those at higher risk; and those who have been exposed to, victims of, and/or perpetrators of violence.

Violence does not affect populations in our society equally; public health approaches to violence prevention use a racial and social justice lens to avoid perpetuating these inequities. In Boston, the 2008 rate of non-fatal shootings and stabbings for Black males ages 20-24 was more than 32 times the rate for White males of the same age. This and other inequities are largely based on a history of oppression and current structural barriers that afford communities of color fewer opportunities and fewer resources than white communities. Structural injustices underlie all forms of violence; social determinants of health are important considerations to make when examining why one community is experiencing violence over another.

Public health also takes a multi-disciplinary approach to violence prevention. It is important to better understand the connections between common causes for youth violence and other forms of violence. Children and youth are too often impacted by exposures to multiple forms of violence; and a consequence of working in discipline specific silos is that we are unable to see and address how types of violence overlap and interact. If we recognize that other forms of violence are symptoms of the same problem, we can prevent a wider array of forms of violence by addressing the common root cause. In particular, it is valuable to link other forms of violence, such as domestic violence and sexual violence to gun and knife violence by drawing the connections to gender norms, power, and control, especially for disenfranchised groups.

Youth violence is a complex social problem that requires a multifaceted response built on prevention, intervention, enforcement and reentry. In Boston, we are very fortunate to have significant strengths and resources in place to address this problem:
• Committed leadership -- Mayor Walsh’s prioritization of youth violence prevention
• Strong history of partnership and collaboration
• Tested relationships across agencies and organizations at many levels
• Proven success in innovation in youth violence reduction
• Array of proven programs and initiatives
• Shared commitment to youth violence reduction
• Strong and resilient city
• Significant financial resources at the City level, as well as the private sector

The City of Boston and partner agencies have a long history of multi-agency, cross-sector collaborations in youth violence prevention. Boston has been part of the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention since its inception, and we are very fortunate to also be both a Defending Childhood Initiative (DCI) site and a Community-Based Violence Prevention Demonstration Program site.

Led by the Boston Public Health Commission, the DCI project focuses on identification, prevention and treatment to children exposed to violence. Massachusetts is one of three states creating a statewide DCI plan; Boston representatives from DCI and the Forum are also part of the Core team for Massachusetts’ participation in the Defending Childhood State Policy Initiative.

BPD is the lead agency in the Community-Based Violence Prevention Demonstration Program — a federally funded multi-agency initiative that provides Violence Interrupters, community mobilization and targeted intervention in the Mattapan neighborhood of Boston.

Boston is also participating in My Brother’s Keeper, President Obama’s initiative to improve life outcomes for Black and Latino youth and young adults—specifically those graduating from high school ready for college and career—to reduce youth violence and provide a second chance.

Numerous federal, state and city-funded efforts are focused on violence prevention and promoting well-being for city residents.

Boston was recently acknowledged by Attorney General Loretta Lynch for our reentry efforts for those most at risk of returning to violence. Two federally funded reentry programs are coordinate by the BPD: 1) the Boston Reentry Initiative, which targets the highest-risk inmates returning from the Suffolk County House of Corrections, providing them with case management and a wide range of program supports; and 2) Overcoming the Odds, which does the same for those returning from the state Department of Correction.

The BPD is the lead agency in the state-funded Shannon Community Safety Initiative—a multi-agency initiative that provides targeted services and interventions for at-risk/ gang-involved youth from 5 hot-spot locations. The BPD is also the lead agency, along with the BPHC, in the
state-funded *Safe and Successful Youth Initiative*—a multi-agency initiative that intervenes with those most likely to use firearms.

The Boston Public Health Commission, Boston Police Department and Boston Public Schools are on the advisory board for the *Youth Violence Prevention Funders Learning Collaborative*. This collaborative aligns funders to focus investments and track outcomes in targeted areas and strategies.

The City and its partners will continue to coordinate and align these multi-agency initiatives for maximum impact (see diagram below).

**Coordination and Alignment**

In addition to these multi-year, multi-agency initiatives, Mayor Walsh’s administration has initiated several new, innovative strategies and initiatives that will continue to support youth violence prevention either directly or indirectly:

- The **Mayor’s Office of Public Safety Initiatives** was created to address public safety and violence in the City of Boston from a centralized office that reports directly to the Mayor. The mandate of this office is to examine and recommend solutions for the root causes of violence, such as access to illegal guns, trauma among young people, and quality of life
issues such as economic development, access to education, and pathways to careers. The office works closely with community stakeholders in developing collaborative broad-based strategies for addressing violence.

- **Integration of StreetSafe with Boston Centers for Youth and Families:** With the support of The Boston Foundation, Mayor Walsh launched a strategic initiative that builds upon the Boston Centers for Youth and Families’ (BCYF) Violence Interrupters program and the Boston Foundation’s innovative StreetSafe Boston Initiative. The Boston Foundation pledged $3.1 million in funding for this effort over three years, which will allow for the integration of the StreetSafe program into a city-wide expansion of on-the-ground outreach to youth at risk of violent crime, in coordination with the Boston Police Department and the Mayor’s Public Safety Initiative. Through this effort, the City will create an integrated strategy that applies to all neighborhoods, with a focus on the top 45 gangs. The Violence Interrupters program will target at-risk, proven-risk, and high-risk individuals ages 14 to 24, and will grow from five existing BCYF Violence Interrupters, to a fully-staffed program including 16 Violence Interrupters, two Senior Violence Interrupters, one case manager, and one outreach coordinator, and partnerships with programs that offer wraparound services such as job training and trauma support. Each of Boston’s 19 housing developments will have a Violence Interrupter assigned. The Violence Interrupters will complement BCYF’s Streetworkers program, bringing a total of 48 individuals in Boston communities providing on-the-ground community support for at-risk youth.

- **CEASE Boston** formed to lessen the harm inherent in the illegal sex industry by reducing the demand for paid sex. Through initiatives targeting sex buyers the CEASE Network aims to cut the illegal sex trade by 20%, in every city it operates in, within two years.

- **Operation Exit Trades Pre-Apprenticeship Program**—representing a partnership between the Mayor’s Public Safety Initiative and Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) Boston—is designed as an intensive training program to prepare participants for entry into an apprenticeship in the building trades. Through Career Readiness and Occupational Skills Training, encompassing classroom, peer-to-peer mentorship and hands-on learning experiences, Operation Exit provides the knowledge and skills required for participants to apply for and enter into a state-registered Building Trades apprenticeship program. In addition, coordinated case management and placement services are provided to assist participants in achieving their career goals.

- Boston joined the **100 Resilient Cities** (100RC) Initiative to find ways to infuse the principles of resilience into all aspects of local planning, ensuring the city’s ability to weather and recover from the physical, social and economic crises that are increasingly prevalent in the 21st century. The City will engage those stakeholders, resilience experts and 100RC staff in drafting the plan. As part of the process, Mayor Walsh hired the City of Boston's first Chief Resilience Officer (CRO), a new position created to lead city-wide resilience building efforts to help Boston prepare for, withstand and bounce back from the 'shocks' (i.e., catastrophic
events like floods, infrastructure failure and acts of terrorism) and 'stresses' (i.e., slow-moving disasters like persistent racial and economic inequality, family and community violence, and lack of affordable housing and unemployment) that are increasingly part of 21st-century life. Boston's resilience initiative includes a unique focus on social and economic resilience in a city affected by historic and persistent divisions of race and class, along with a clear eye toward potential shocks the city may be exposed to. Disparities in health, economic and educational outcomes threaten community cohesion and weaken Boston's overall resilience.

- The Mayor's Office of Recovery Services (ORS) is the first-ever municipal-based office to focus on specifically on the issue of recovery services. The Office of Recovery Services will be under the oversight of the Boston Public Health Commission and will work to improve existing addiction and recovery services and create a continuum of high-quality services for those battling addiction, help those fighting addiction navigate the city's available resources, and advocate for treatment options. The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation’s report “Recovery Services in the City of Boston, a Blueprint for Building a Better System of Care” will guide this work.

- **Trauma Recovery Centers** -- As a result of a new mayoral initiative to improve coordination and care services for residents affected by violence, the Boston Public Health Commission created eight Trauma Recovery Centers at community health centers in the neighborhoods most affected by violence. The trauma recovery teams are for residents impacted by violent or other traumatic events, with services available on an on-going basis after the short-term crisis response needs are met. The teams are staffed with a trauma-trained clinician and a trained community health worker, who coordinate community prevention, response, care, and longer-term recovery services designed to promote positive protective factors, focus on positive social and emotional development, reduce traumatic stressors and decrease traumatic reactions.

- **Enhancing Potential Inspiring Change (EPIC)**—a new program run by YouthConnect and funded by John Hancock—serves approximately 50 at-risk 11-14 year olds (and their families) per year. The focus of the program is to reduce risky behaviors to increase positive decision-making skills, while creating opportunities to increase self-awareness and confidence through the acquisition of leadership and work-readiness skills. EPIC started in early July of 2015, with some kids attending Camp Harbor View or Mattapan Teen Center. Case management for the EPIC families also began at this time, with all families having at least an initial home visit to start discussing needed supports for the family. Bi-weekly career awareness and leadership workshops took place starting in late September at the six designated schools and will continue throughout the 2015-2016 school year.

- **Regional Gun Summits:** Mayor Walsh has convened two regional gun summits that have generated concrete action steps aimed at stemming the flow of illegal guns, including academic research, policy and outreach to legal gun owners. These summits brought together mayors, municipal officials, law enforcement, subject matter experts, and
community partners to discuss leadership commitments to combat gun trafficking through regional partnerships. Mayor Walsh also implemented a successful gun buy-back program.

**Community Policing** is a key component of the City’s violence prevention model. The Boston Police Department has been a leader in Community Policing nationally for over 20 years. Beginning in the early 1990’s with the core concepts of partnership, prevention and problem-solving, the men and women of the BPD have expanded and evolved their efforts in keeping with this philosophy of Community Policing. Today, the BPD has extensive partnerships and collaborations in each of its eleven districts, in addition to many citywide programs.

Under the leadership of Mayor Walsh and Commissioner Evans, the BPD is building on this strong foundation to push the boundaries even further, prioritizing relationships with youth and the community as the key to solidifying trust in our neighborhoods. This starts with positive interactions on the streets and in school classrooms; includes proactive prevention and diversion for at-risk youth and their families; and provides pathways away from violence for those who are ready to make a change.

Examples of successful prevention and intervention activities of the Department include:

- **YouthConnect**: a partnership with Boys & Girls Clubs of Boston to place social workers in police stations and specialized units to work with at-risk youth and their families.
- **Operation Homefront**: home visits by police and clergy to at-risk youth identified by school personnel.
- **School Police Unit expansion**: increased number of officers and expanded into elementary schools.
- **Family Justice Center**: co-locating police investigative units with agencies that offer victim and survivors a full array of support and services in one location.
This year, Commissioner Evans created a **Social Justice Task Force**, comprised of community leaders and advocates to advise him on ways to improve the department and strengthen community trust.

**Training** of recruit officers includes interaction with a panel of community partners, community service projects, community policing case studies, trauma training and procedural justice.

**Workforce Development and Employment** is another key component of the City’s violence prevention model. The City’s Office of Workforce Development (OWD) is focused on actively promoting meaningful educational and employment opportunities for Boston residents. OWD has made it a priority to advocate for innovative workforce development policy and programming that provides career ladders for upward mobility for our city’s most economically vulnerable populations.

The City broke its **youth summer jobs** goal in 2015, working with partners in the private sector and government to hire 10,360 young people—173 more than last year. Among city-wide efforts, the City of Boston worked with approximately 200 community-based organizations, partnered with the Boston Private Industry Council to engage new businesses, and joined the Youth Violence Prevention Funder Learning Collaborative to engage funders to support meaningful employment opportunities for Boston's youth.

**Youth Options Unlimited (YOU) Boston** is central to the City’s workforce development and employment strategy. YOU Boston provides a unique combination of intensive case management and career development services through a continuum. They work with Boston’s youth and young adults ages 14 to 24, specializing in serving young people from neighborhoods with the highest level of poverty and violence, and those reentering the community from incarceration. The majority are gang-involved with safety issues or have court involvement history. A team of case managers, career development specialists, and team leaders, working as a coordinated service team with each young person, will do whatever it takes to ensure our young people gain the tools necessary to progress and succeed.

The **Youth Violence Prevention Funder Learning Collaborative** is a network of businesses, foundations, government agency funders, and key experts formed to share knowledge, identify funding gaps, and promote dialogue to help funders and businesses coordinate and strategically align their efforts to increase their impact on youth violence in Boston. The Collaborative takes a public health approach to youth violence prevention and is focusing its initial efforts to ensure adequate funding support to five communities along the Blue Hill Avenue corridor: South End/Lower Roxbury, Dudley Square, Grove Hall, Bowdoin/Geneva, & Morton/Norfolk. Unique to Boston, this collaborative is now a national model. Philadelphia representatives visited Boston specifically to learn about the collaborative in hopes of replicating it in their city.
**Education:** In hiring the new Boston Public Schools Superintendent, Mayor Walsh demonstrated his commitment to reform and excellence in the public school system. Superintendent Chang and his team are working to extend learning time, close the achievement gap, redesign high schools, and expand advanced placement opportunities. He has also prioritized social emotional learning and wellness. Mayor Walsh also created a Chief of Education position in his Cabinet to work with Boston Public Schools, charter, and Catholic schools; philanthropic organizations; and colleges and universities to build collaborations for reform and improvement.

Through these and other efforts, Boston is seeking to ensure that all needs are met across the spectrum of early prevention through reentry throughout all neighborhoods of need, as shown in the diagram below.

**Filling in the Spectrum of Needs**

![Diagram of spectrum of needs]

Many city, county, state and non-profit agencies are working together to fill the spectrum of need, and this work will continue. (See Appendix for list of Partners) There are far too many to name specifically in this document, but by strategy area they are providing—and will continue to provide:
|   | Early prevention – outreach and services via early childcare, community health centers, hospitals, and education systems.  
|   | Early identification of those at risk  
|   | Home visitation programs  
|   | Service provision  
|   | Parent support | Resident engagement and empowerment  
|   | Outreach  
|   | Mobilization  
|   | Support  
|   | Messaging/ marketing campaigns |
| 3. Civic Engagement – involvement, investing resources  
|   | Faith-based community  
|   | Corporate/ business community  
|   | Colleges and universities  
|   | Health and hospitals  
|   | Private foundations and philanthropists | Economic and community development – to break the cycle of poverty, unemployment and underemployment  
|   | Economic and infrastructure investment  
|   | Supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs |
| 5. Education  
|   | Universal early childhood education  
|   | High quality neighborhood schools  
|   | Social emotional learning and wellness  
|   | Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports  
|   | Safe school climate  
|   | Connections to after school activities and enrichment programming  
|   | Drop-out prevention  
|   | Re-engagement | Employment  
|   | Workforce development  
|   | Transitional employment (stipended)  
|   | Meaningful youth employment – summer and year round, with wrap around supports.  
|   | Cultivating CORI friendly employers – for youth and adults |
| 7. Mental health and social service support – for those at-risk, as well as high-risk/proven risk  
|   | Trauma informed systems of care  
|   | Trauma response capability citywide/ neighborhood based  
|   | Crisis response  
|   | Outreach and de-escalation  
|   | Case management and advocacy  
|   | Counseling and mental health services  
|   | Positive youth development programming and activities – out of school time  
|   | Programming and activities for adults  
|   | Parent and family support programming | Targeted enforcement and prosecution for violent offenders/ high impact players and active gangs (in terms of firearm violence) |
| 9. Enhanced supervision for high risk offenders  
|   | Probation, Parole, DYS | Reentry – transitional services for returning offenders  
|   | Adult – SCHOC and DOC  
|   | Juvenile – DYS  
|   | Advocacy regarding CORI reform and jobs |
| 11. Legislation and Advocacy – to address current and emerging issues impacting youth violence  
|   | Mayor’s Gun Summits, legislation and city ordinances |
Moving Forward – The Mayor’s Office of Public Safety Initiatives Action Planning

With Youth Violence Prevention Enhancement grant funds, we are supporting the continuation of a facilitated process of action planning for the Mayor’s Office of Public Safety Initiatives (begun with National Forum capacity grant funds), in concert with a roll-out of a neighborhood-specific campaign based on the learning and successes of “Our Mattapan” – one of the components of Boston’s Community-Based Violence Prevention Demonstration Program. In addition, we will be coordinating with the Defending Childhood Initiative to identify additional training or other collaborative opportunities, and providing additional training to Boston Police on trauma and procedural justice. (See Appendix for DCI summary and accomplishments to date.)

Planning Process:
Mayor Walsh has articulated a multi-pronged approach to promote public safety that aims to provide employment, education, behavioral health, and substance abuse services to the following three groups: reentry population, at-risk youth, and survivors of human trafficking. The diagram below illustrates the initial visualization of the Mayor’s public safety priorities in terms of populations, services, and the issues that need to be addressed within this context (i.e., trauma and guns).

In 2015, using Forum Capacity grant funds, we launched the Planning Process for the Mayor’s Office of Public Safety Initiative, led by Dan Mulhern, who is charged with leading efforts and strategies to reduce violence in high-crime neighborhoods in a more coordinated and efficient manner. The following diagram illustrates the planning process:
The planning process is being guided by a small working group to help frame and inform internal research, participate in discussions of key questions and examination of external research, and facilitate consensus on the decisions that will shape future collaboration around youth violence prevention. With a common understanding of the landscape, the goal is to maximize the resources that each member brings to the table to improve the overall outcomes for the City’s residents. The planning process consists of three phases, as illustrated in the diagram below:

**Phase One:** Data collection, research, mapping of needs and services

**Phase Two:** Action planning, decision making regarding discreet number of priorities to reduce and prevent youth violence

**Phase Three:** Implementation of priority strategies/projects or initiatives.

Building on a foundation of existing efforts for at-risk youth, survivors of human trafficking/s sexual exploitation, and returning offenders.

The working group consists of key stakeholders who share a commitment to and have responsibility for a specific aspect of the Mayor’s public safety goals, especially those departments supporting the most disengaged youth people. This working group is responsible for developing and implementing action plan recommendations to advance collaboration. Consultant Margaret Leipsitz from Root Cause is leading this planning process with funding originally from the National Forum capacity grant, and now from the Enhancement Grant. Her work is being managed by the Boston Police Department and Mayor’s Office of Public Safety Initiatives.

The Boston Public Safety Initiative working group will continue to serve as the backbone of this process and, if needed, will engage others from additional City departments to help implement the activities outlined in the action plan. There have been and will continue to be a series of working group meetings in which Root Cause leads the group through discussions to establish specific roles for working group members in piloting the changes that have been recommended. Root Cause works between each meeting to coach members on executing the changes that need to be made to implement the action plan.
As stated earlier, the City of Boston has considerable resources and multiple initiatives. The planning process in which we are engaging is intended to focus efforts around a small number of priorities. It is not meant to be a comprehensive strategy for the entire city. We believe that the current parallel planning / implementation processes already underway (i.e. My Brother’s Keeper Action Plan, Addiction and Recovery Services in the City of Boston, a Blueprint for Building a Better System of Care, 100RC Plan, etc.) are to be built on and leveraged to braid and blend efforts and outcomes to create a mosaic of comprehensive strategies and supports to prevent youth violence, improve well-being and improve quality of life for all residents.

The federally developed *Shared Framework for Reducing Youth Violence and Promoting Well Being* is being used to guide this work. As the *Shared Framework* states: “[V]iolence is neither acceptable nor inevitable.” We are in complete agreement with this statement and see it as our duty to prevent violence and to strengthen communities to provide support and resources to youth and families. This framework is completely in line with the work being done in Boston under the National Forum, Defending Childhood Initiative, Community-Based Violence Prevention Demonstration Program, My Brother’s Keeper, the Youth Violence Prevention Funders Learning Collaborative, and various other multi-agency initiatives and programs. (See Appendix for more information on the framework and how we are aligned.)

**Progress:**
Phase One of this process—research mapping on the three identified target populations—is complete. In addition to the raw tallies, the Root Cause consultants reported in greater detail on each population group including the following possible characteristics: 1) age, 2) race, 3) gender, 4) educational attainment, and 5) neighborhood (for those returning to the community residence before incarceration or planned residence).

After completing research on each of the key populations, Root Cause used existing data to map opportunities available to each population in the priority areas: 1) Meaningful Employment/Job Training, 2) Substance Abuse Treatment, and 3) Behavioral Health Services. The National Forum Working Group was very helpful throughout this process, providing insight and information as well as connecting Root Cause staff to data sources.

**Results from Phase One Research**
The diagram below shows the definition of the three groups of populations and four types of services providers.
During Phase One an interactive planning tool was also developed. To understand the depth and breadth of opportunities available to the three groups of priority populations, Root Cause administered a survey to service providers across the city that classify under one (or more) of the four priority service areas. Approximately 350 organizations received the survey, of which approximately 100 responded. The data collected in the survey includes:

a. Program Name, Contact Information, and Description
b. Annual Capacity
c. Ages served
d. Primary Population Served
e. Primary Services Offered
f. Eligibility Requirements

This data was entered into a master spreadsheet tool that can be searched by population or services provided. (See Appendix for PowerPoint presentation summarizing the data.)

In addition, numerous focus groups with youth and other key stakeholder groups were facilitated to ensure critical voices were informing the process. (See Appendix for summary focus group findings.)

**Results from Phase Two**

During Phase Two, using landscape information/research and data collected in Phase One as a starting point, Root Cause worked with the Mayor’s Office of Public Safety working group composed of leaders from multiple City departments to identify priorities for action to advance a coordinated approach to support residents who have been incarcerated, victims of human trafficking, and teens and young adults who are at high risk of being involved with violent activity. Led by Dan Mulhern, Director of Mayor’s Office of Public Safety, this small working group includes:

- Chris Byner, Interim Executive Director, Boston Centers for Youth and Families
- Jen Maconochie, Boston Police Department/ National Forum Site Coordinator
- Catherine Fine, Boston Public Health Commission, Violence Prevention Division
- Sam DePina, Boston Public Schools Department
- Kim Pelletreau, Mayor’s Office of Jobs and Community Services/ YOU Boston
- Cornell Mills, Reentry Coordinator for City of Boston
- Conan Harris and Gina Patterson, Mayor’s Office of Public Safety
- Atyia Martin, Chief Resiliency Officer for the City (recently added)

As prioritized by the Working Group, Root Cause used the planning tool data specific to reentry services to convene three focus groups to help inform the City’s development of an Office of Returning Citizens. The goal of the focus groups was to further understand the services available to returning citizens, to identify the biggest barriers, challenges and successes this population faces, and to determine how the City can support the work of the service providers who serve this population. Root Cause worked in partnership with the Suffolk County Sheriff’s Office on this, and also supported research used by City representatives for a visit to Washington DC.

Also, as prioritized by the Working Group, Root Cause began work to use data to support CEASE Network to convene service providers involved with victims of human trafficking. They also began to use data to support the Office of Recovery Services to convene service providers in relation to the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation report. Root Cause is also supporting the Boston Public Health Commission in development of an overview of the City’s trauma response and support services.
During this process, we have continued to assess new and expanded opportunities for the Defending Childhood Initiative team to train partner agencies, front-line staff, and/or community on trauma informed work. And we have continued to assess technical assistance needs for moving the action plan forward. The small group making these decisions is a subset of the National Forum Working Group, and was informed by the federal convening in Baltimore during November 2015. Phase Two is now complete, and we are moving forward with Phase Three – implementation of the priorities set in Phase Two.

Priorities set during Phase Two for Implementation in Phase Three – to be completed in 2016:

1. Creation of an Office of Returning Citizens to assist the entire population of returning citizens (not just highest risk) successfully return to Boston neighborhoods.
2. Facilitate a process with the Office of Recovery Services to prioritize recommendations of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts Foundation report to improve access to services and treatment for substance abusers.
3. Connect CEASE Boston with the Defending Childhood Initiative, with the goal being a trauma training for human trafficking service providers.
4. Articulate the City’s comprehensive trauma response and trauma support services.
5. Replicate the successful “Our Mattapan” social norms campaign in a new neighborhood of Boston, integrating the voices of youth, returning citizens and survivors of human trafficking. This campaign will also be coordinated with My Brother’s Keeper, to ensure that positive images of young men of color are central to the campaign.
6. Coordinate processes and communication between Boston Public Schools and the MA Department of Youth Services (DYS) to ensure smooth and successful educational transitions for youth who are detained and/or committed to DYS.
7. Explore a proactive youth-led social media strategy to counter violent and retaliatory activity online that is contributing to violence in the community and schools.
8. Explore the potential for a training of clergy, by clergy and non-profit partners such as the Peace Institute, regarding trauma-sensitive funerals, wakes, etc. for homicide victims.
9. Continue to provide opportunities for training and capacity building for project partners using grant funds and National Forum Technical Assistance opportunities:
   a. Procedural justice training for police;
   b. Trauma training for police (in concert with the State DCI plan and local DCI efforts);
   c. Fifth annual two-day capacity building training for non-profit agencies by HUD’s Center for Faith-Based & Neighborhood Partnerships; and
   d. Bringing the Children of Incarcerated Parents training workshop to Boston.

Root Cause will dedicate the majority of their grant-funded time and resources to assisting the City agencies complete priorities 1-4. City representatives will complete priorities 5-9 with minimum support from Root Cause.

As mentioned previously, the initiatives, strategies and programs listed in the Current Boston Model section above will continue. These Priorities for Phase Three are specific to the action planning being done for the Mayor’s Office of Public Safety Initiatives.

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Long-Term Sustainability

Participation in this Forum provided us with an opportunity to reflect upon and articulate the Boston approach. It has given us a chance to answer the question, “What is the way of doing business in Boston?” Our approach includes collective ownership and accountability for problems and solutions, a focus on changing behavior by providing opportunities and leveraging sanctions, and a sense of fairness and hope for the future.

Our goal remains the same: to prevent and reduce youth violence. This will be achieved through continued collaboration and partnership, and a mutual belief in the following core operating principles:

- Comprehensive and balanced approach
- Public health approach to address root causes, intervene at multiple levels and spheres of influence, increase community assets and opportunities
- Multi-agency and multi-disciplinary partnerships
- Information sharing and communication across sectors
- Central role of family and neighborhood / community
- Data- and research-driven decision making
- Person-, place- and group-based strategies
- Aligned and coordinated resources to ensure maximum impact
- Capacity building within agencies, systems and communities to identify and address issues
- Ownership of public safety and violence prevention by all stakeholders, recognizing that safety is key to the long-term success of the City—it is the moral thing to do as well as the smart thing to do.

The key strategies, programs and initiatives discussed in this document are intended as a big picture overview of what has worked and what is working in the city. It is the culmination of decades of partners working together to address youth violence. Experience, relationships and investments have gotten Boston to a place of strength in being able to address youth violence. Indeed, partnership and collaboration is the way of doing business in Boston.

Together, we can achieve these desired outcomes:

1. Sustained reductions in youth violence, victimization, trauma and exposure to violence
2. Sustained reductions in human trafficking and sexual exploitation
3. For youth and families, human trafficking survivors and returning offenders, increased:
   - Academic achievement
   - Employability
   - Community connection
   - Resiliency to trauma
- Healthy behaviors
4. Improved quality of life in our neighborhoods, particularly those with a history of violence and associated risk factors
5. Stronger families and communities
6. Improved relationships between the community and partners
7. Increased capacity of organizations and systems to identify, intervene and serve at-risk individuals earlier
Endnotes


ii The federal definitions used in this document for Prevention, Intervention, Enforcement and Reentry are as follows:

   **Prevention**: action taken before a crime action is contemplated or under way, to reduce the occurrence of crime, increase community safety and improve individual well-being. Action agents may range from local residents to church and/or business organizations to a range of local and state education, health, housing and welfare organizations, as well as local and state police.

   **Intervention**: action taken to ameliorate or interrupt potential crime-related activity, usually where the crime has not actually been committed. Action agents may include trained street outreach workers, community center staff, school counselors, volunteer mentors, youth service corps leaders, mental health professionals and others.

   **Enforcement**: action to intervene in a crime activity to disrupt it, within the bounds of law, or to investigate a crime and secure arrest, prosecution, and appropriate disposition of the offender(s). Action agents include state and local police, court system personnel, probation, parole and jail/prison personnel, and district and US attorneys.

   **Reentry**: action taken to facilitate a successful transition for offenders or delinquents being released from prison or other secure facilities.

iii Boston Regional Intelligence Center Data (2016)


v Results from the 2008 Boston Youth Survey have not been published yet.

vi Many returning citizens choose to serve their full sentence within their correctional facility in lieu of probation or other supervision to avoid having to be monitored once released.


xiv Focus groups were held with: Youth in Department Youth Services facilities; Families involved the Department of Children and Families; Young people employed by the City’s Department of Youth Engagement and Employment; Key stakeholders from: Boston Centers for Youth and Families, Boston Public Health Commission, Office of Health and Human Services, Boston Private Industry Council, Boston Reentry Initiative, MA Department of Corrections, Suffolk County House of Corrections, and the Family Nurturing Center of Massachusetts.
City of Boston

National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention Plan

Appendix

National Forum Working Group, convenes monthly

- **Site Coordinator: Jen Maconochie, Boston Police Department**
- Dan Mulhern, Mayor’s Office of Public Safety Initiatives
- Gina Patterson, Mayor’s Office of Public Safety
- Chris Byner, Boston Centers for Youth & Families
- Samuel DePina, Boston Public Schools
- Catherine Fine, Boston Public Health Commission
- Inez Foster, Mayor’s Office of Intergovernmental Relations
- Kim Pelletreau, Youth Options Unlimited Boston
- Kara Hayes, Suffolk County District Attorney’s Office
- Laura Prescott, Department of Youth Services
- Martha Wyatt, US Attorney’s Office
- Andrea Perry, YouthConnect
- Deborah Azrael, Harvard School of Public Health
- Margaret Leipsitz, Youth Violence Prevention Funders Learning Collaborative
Appendix

Partners in Multiple Initiatives

City Government
- Mayor’s Office
- Police Department
- Health and Human Services
- Boston Centers for Youth and Families
- Boston Public Health Commission
- Boston Public Schools
- Jobs and Community Services
- YOU Boston
- Inspectional Services
- Housing
- Development

Federal, State and County
- US Attorney’s Office
- MA Department of Correction
- MA Probation
- MA Parole
- MA Department of Youth Services
- MA Department of Children and Families
- Department of Mental Health
- Suffolk County DA’s Office
- Suffolk County Sheriff’s Office

Private and Non-Profit Sector
- Corporations such as State Street, John Hancock, Target
- Foundations - members of the YVPFLC
- YouthConnect
- MassHousing
- Colleges and Universities
- Faith-based partners - Ten Point Coalition, BMA, St. Peter’s, etc.
- Boys & Girls Clubs
- YMCAs, YWCA
- Neighborhood based non-profits such as Teen Empowerment, Dorchester Youth Collaborative
- Trade unions
- Local businesses

Community
- Safety Task Forces
- VIPs
- Neighborhood Watches
- Neighborhood and Civic Associations
- Residents
- Advocacy Groups
- Youth Groups
Defending Childhood Initiative

- Initiative of the Boston Public Health Commission’s Division of Violence Prevention, in partnership with Child Witness to Violence Project at Boston Medical Center
- Funded by the Department of Justice and Boston Children’s Hospital
- Boston is one of eight sites across the country
- Goal: Prevent and reduce the impact of exposure to violence in homes, schools, and communities for children to 17 years old.

Strategic Plan:
- Supporting healthy and resilient families
- Promoting health relationships and youth engagement
- Advocating for trauma informed policies
- Increased access to evidenced-based mental health services
- Increasing provider and organizational capacity in trauma-informed approaches

Accomplishments:
- Funded 11 Family Nurturing Programs, reaching 185 families
- Trained and funded 20 peer leaders at community youth programs in healthy relationships
  - Reached over 200 youth with their community prevention projects
- Created The Halls, a 90 minute youth –created, webseries to engage to promote healthy teen relationships
  - Over 55,000 episode views
  - BPHC peer leaders reached over 2,000 adults and teens during community screenings
- Boston Police checkbox for “child present”
- Health care reform
- Developed a three-day Trauma Awareness and Resilience Training for Youth Workers and Home Visitors and training over 260 providers since January 2014.
- Lead Trauma Informed Early Education and Care System Breakthrough Series Collaborative at 6 centers
- Trained over 120 clinicians from 20 organizations in evidence based mental health treatments
- Funded 2 health centers to provide services to children exposed to violence and launched Mayor Walsh’s Trauma Response and Recovers Teams at 8 community health centers in August 2014.
Appendix

Shared Framework

The Shared Framework to Reduce Youth Violence and Promote Well-Being (Shared Framework), which was developed by CDC and OJJDP, is designed to facilitate understanding and collective action by those whose efforts influence and contribute to safe and nurturing families and communities. The Shared Framework sets forth a unifying paradigm and common language for those working to reduce youth violence and help children and youth thrive. It describes values, action principles, and a theory of change that is built on three decades of research and practice. The Shared Framework can serve as a tool for all those seeking to bring about productive change and to sustain what works and is being used to help OJJDP sites, CDC grantees, and federal, state, and local partners of the initiatives broaden and enhance their efforts.

The Shared Framework was used to guide and shape Boston’s Violence Prevention Plan. In reviewing key elements of the Framework listed below (please note this is not a comprehensive representation of the model, see online Prezi presentation for entire Framework), it is evident that Boston’s current model and approach, specific action planning process and sustainability statement are very much aligned with this collective federal tool.

-----------------------------

Shared Framework for Reducing Youth Violence and Promoting Well Being

Vision: Safe, healthy and thriving children, youth, families and communities

Values:

- We value all children and youth.
- Violence is neither acceptable nor inevitable.
- All children and youth deserve equal access, equity, and fairness, freedom from harm, and nurturing and supportive families and communities.
- Professionals, youth and families alike bring strengths, perspectives and resources.
- We are all responsible for results and to work together for collective impact.

Principles for Action

1. Multiple Influences
2. Embrace Positive Youth Development & Well-being
3. Trauma Informed Approaches
4. Comprehensive Spectrum of Evidence-based Strategies
5. Differential Impact on Populations
6. Involve Stakeholders from Various Sectors
7. Train Professionals Who Interact with Youth
8. Make Effective and Appropriate Use of Data
9. Long term Investment & Support

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10. Allocate Efforts and Resources on Potential Impact and Outcome

**Comprehensive Strategies**

- Aftercare - Reentry - Transition to Adulthood
- Primary Prevention/Promotion and Well-Being
- Secondary Prevention & Early Intervention
- Confinement & Placement
- Residential & System Involved Care -- Alternatives to Confinement/Placement
- Community-Based Intervention: Low-Risk & Status Offenders

**Multiple Influences in a Child’s Life**

- Societal
- Community
- Relational
- Individual

**Outcomes**

- Short-term outcomes
- Intermediate Outcomes
- Long-term
Research findings from Phase One of Planning Process regarding Populations

Research Methodology

Research Design

• The goal of the data collection was to create a general overview on population and available services

• The data collection process included two components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Collection</th>
<th>Advisory on Data Collection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collected data on key populations from existing sources.</td>
<td>• National Forum Working Group members advised process to provide feedback on data sources and identify gaps.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Distributed a survey to 150+ service providers.</td>
<td>• Interviews and focus groups were conducted with key populations and content experts.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Qualitative sources will inform discussions of the key questions and ideas for further research.</td>
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Research Design

Identified data sources and data points to collect
Conducted calls with data informants to gather qualitative and contextual data
Developed and administered a survey to over 150 service providers
Created a landscape of high-needs populations and available services

Research Design - challenges

- Challenges faced during data collection:
  - Inconsistent availability of current data
  - Inconsistent reporting and sharing on data points
  - Weak data storage and analysis systems
  - Varied definitions and interpretations of key populations and services
  - Fluctuations in service provider data due to changes in funding
  - Lack of longitudinal data collection
Key Preliminary Findings

Reentering Youth and Adults

**Preliminary Findings**

**Gender and Age**
- Men outnumber women 4:1 within the reentering population.
- 43% of the reentering population is 19-30 years old.

**Education**
- Nearly half (46%) of the reentering population did not finish high school.
- Only 3% of the reentering population has any college experience.
- Only 36% of the reentering population had earned a high school diploma.

**Race**
- Almost half (49%) of the reentering population consists of African American youth and adults.
- African American youth make up 71% of the DYS population.

**High-Crime Neighborhoods**
- The largest number of arrests/bookings happens in Dorchester and Roxbury.
- They are also the neighborhoods that are most frequently listed as places of residence for those arrested.

At-Risk Youth

**Preliminary Findings**

**3rd Grade Reading and Math MCAS Scores**
- Nearly 65% of 3rd graders scored below proficient on ELA/Reading test and nearly half scored below proficient on Math test.

**10th Grade Reading and Math MCAS Scores**
- Nearly 25% of 10th graders scored below proficient on ELA/Reading test and nearly 36% scored below proficient on Math test.

**Chronic Absenteeism Rate**
- 21% of students in BPS are chronically absent (missing more than 10% of the school year).
At-Risk Youth - continued

Preliminary Findings

Racial Disparities in School Discipline

- Black youth make up 35% of BPS enrollment and 53% of total disciplined students.
- In contrast, White youth make up 13% of BPS enrollment and 5% of total disciplined students.

Disparities in School Dropout

- Dropping out of BPS happens most frequently in 9th and 12th grades.
- African American and Hispanic/Latino youth make up 85% of BPS students who drop out.

Opportunity Youth and Education Levels

- The majority of Opportunity Youth (72% in 2009 and 76% in 2011) have at least a high school diploma or GED. Opportunity Youth are young people ages 16-24 who are neither in school nor employed.
Survivors of Human Trafficking

Preliminary Findings

- There has been a 23% increase in the number of trafficking victims served between 2013 and 2014.

- There has been an increase in the number of cases investigated from 48 to 54 from 2013 to 2014.

Available Services

Preliminary Findings

- There is a shortage of addiction services available that specifically serve youth under 18 years old.
- There is a shortage of addiction support services that specifically support survivors of human trafficking.

- There is a shortage of education services focused on reentering youth and adults.
- There is a shortage of education services that specifically support survivors of human trafficking.

There is a shortage of all services that have explicit program durations of 1-3 years. Most programs and services last 0-12 months, or are provided on an ongoing/as needed basis.
High Level Summaries:

Reentering Adults and Youth

• Total number of people reentering the community from BRI, HOC, DOC, or DYS, 2014-2015

2,958
(2014-2015)

• Total number of people on probation

Adults: 8,765
(June 2015)

Youth: 230
(June 2012)

Data received in June 2015.

Reentering Adults

Reentering Adults by Gender, 2014-2015

Reentering Adults by Age Group, 2014-2015

Gender: n=5693; Age: n=4900. These charts include data from BRI, DOC, HOC, and Adult Probation.
Reentering Adults

Reentering Adults by Race, 2014-2015

- African American: 49%
- Caucasian/White: 30%
- Hispanic/Latino: 19%
- Asian: 1%

Reentering Adults by Education Level, 2014-2015

- College Degree: 44%
- Some College: 19%
- GED: 34%
- High School Diploma: 1%

Race: n=5620; Education: n=1935.
Reentering adults by race includes BRI, DOC, HOC, and Adult Probation. Reentering adults by education level includes BRI, DOC, and HOC only.

Reentering Youth

Reentering Youth by Race

- African American/Black: 61%
- Hispanic/Latino: 25%
- Caucasian/White: 8%
- Other: 5%

Reentering Youth by Education Level (DYS Only)

- GED + some post-graduate: 76%
- GED: 11%
- High School Certificate of Completion: 1%
- High School Diploma: 1%
- No diploma: 1%

Race: n=377; Education Level: n=148.
DYS data spans from 1/1/14 – 6/29/15. Youth probation data is from 6/2012.
Reentering Youth

Reentering Youth by Gender (DYS and Youth Probation)

Reentering Youth by Age Group (DYS Only)

Gender: n=378; Age group: n=148.
DYS data spans from 1/1/14-6/29/15. Youth probation data is from 6/2012.

Reentering Youth by Gender (DYS and Youth Probation)

Reentering Youth: DYS Data

% Youth in DYS for Gun Offense, 2014-2015

DYS Youth by Parenting Status, 2014-2015

Parenting: n=148; Gun Offense: n=148
## At-Risk Youth: BPS Performance Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dropout Rate</strong></td>
<td>854</td>
<td>Number of students who are considered to be a dropout. A student is considered to be dropout at the end of the school year if he or she is not in school, has not graduated, and has not transferred to another school system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Chronic Absenteeism Rate</strong></td>
<td>12,580</td>
<td>Any student missing more than 10% of school (i.e. less than a 90% attendance rate) for the 2013-2014 school year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Discipline Rates</strong></td>
<td>3378</td>
<td>The disciplines that BPS students received for the offenses committed, as reported by school districts in the School Safety Discipline Report (SSDR).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total BPS students: 57,592

## At-Risk Youth: Opportunity Youth

### Number of Opportunity Youth by Education Level, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Dropout</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED/Certificate of High School Completion</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 year of college</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+ years of college</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree or Higher</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Number of Opportunity Youth by Education Level, 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School Dropout</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED/Certificate of High School Completion</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Diploma</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 1 year of college</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1+ years of college</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associates Degree</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree or Higher</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2009: n = 11764; 2011: n = 9097
# Data on Survivors of Human Trafficking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stat</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
<th>2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trafficking Victims Served</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cases Investigated</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffickers Prosecuted</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals to SEEN (Support to End Exploitation Now)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3,000 men solicit sex on a single website in one 24-hour period. 83% of women enter the sex industry before the age of 25.

Data is as of 04/30/15.
# Recommendations for Key Populations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Develop education programs that align with population needs before and after release from incarceration.</td>
<td>• 50% of reentering youth and adults have not completed their high school education. Yet, only 20% of survey respondents who provide education services reported working with reentering youth and adults.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Create targeted interventions for youth in grades 9 and 12 in order to prevent dropout.  
• Develop academic and social supports for the most vulnerable students that begin in elementary school and continue through high school. | • According to the BPS dropout data, the highest levels of drop out occur in grades 9 and 12. |
| • Develop alternative school discipline policies and procedures that would reduce disproportionate discipline practices targeting Black and Latino students. | • According to the BPS discipline data, Black and Latino students in BPS are disciplined at disproportionately high rates. |

## Recommendations on Availability of Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Develop and expand the availability of addiction support services for youth under 18 years old</td>
<td>• 0 survey respondents who provide addiction support services focus exclusively on youth under 18 years old.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop more programs and services that provide longer-term supports for participants.</td>
<td>• Of the 232 program services represented in the survey, only 15 (less than 1%) report that their programs are designed to be 1+ years in duration.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Recommendations on Availability of Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Rationale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Collect more data on the parenting status of reentering youth and adults.</td>
<td>• In the Public Safety Planning Process, parenting status was initially identified as an important piece of data on key population groups. However, this information is not readily available from most data sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strengthen connections across the City about available resources.</td>
<td>• The lack of a centralized hub with information on the services available for the City’s residents made it challenging to collect the most accurate, up-to-date information on services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Overview of Focus Groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Key Takeaways</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Parents**         | 8 parents who had DCF involvement (Family Nurturing Center) | • Need the system to believe that “I “am capable of being a good parent  
  • Reform of the DCF/child welfare system  
  • Address the issue of domestic violence and trauma – need services to cope with these root causes  
  • Areas of greatest need: accessibility to services (housing, behavior health and substance abuse), support working with BPS, collaborating with systems who are also involved in their children’s lives |
| **Youth**           | 10 teen (Mayors Peer Leaders) | • Peers are the greatest influence, should have more peer mentor/leadership programs  
  • Grandparents play a significant role raising young people & they need more guidance in supporting teens  
  • How teachers think about students influence success and failure  
  • Need to have more drop in activities - teens don’t have anywhere to go, need positive teen friendly spaces to hang  
  • Marijuana is the most used drug, schools look the other way  
  • Need for more creative outlets and access to creative careers  
  • Areas of greatest need: Jobs, organized sports, positive social media messages to reduce feelings of sadness & isolation |
| **DYS Committed Youth** | 7 boys | • Positive relationships with teachers are a big source motivation and incentive to make right choices (many felt they had learning issues that held them back)  
  • Family and friends are the biggest influencers  
  • Would like to see an increase in organized competitive sports  
  • Areas of greatest need: time management, dealing with peer pressure, jobs, access to organized sports, academic support |
| **Service Providers working with Returning Citizens** | 30 service providers represented across 3 focus groups | • Systems need to be client-oriented  
  • Collaboration of service providers is key for success – need to know what services others are offering through a regularly updated and maintained database  
  • Competition for funding works to reduce collaboration, The City should work on more centralized/coordinated funding  
  • Areas of greatest need: counseling, mentoring/peer support, knowing how to access services, support for family |
| **Returning Citizens** | 12 returned citizens | • Needs for first week: meeting basics (housing, food, clothing)  
  • Needs for first few months: building stability (education, vocational training, long-term social reintegration)  
  • Needs for first year: focusing on mind and body (continuous learning, self-empowerment, self-confidence)  
  • Need for public awareness about success stories (break stereotype)  
  • Need to work on reentry plan while still incarcerated  
  • Areas of greatest need: counseling, mentoring/peer support, knowing how to access services, support for family |