

Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) Evaluation: *2018–19 Final Programmatic Report*

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Contents

	Page
I. Introduction	1
II. SSYI Impact on Violent Crime in Massachusetts (2007–2017)	1
SSYI Impact on Violent Crime Victimization and Violent Criminal Offenses	4
III. SSYI Cost-Effectiveness.....	4
Combining Effects to Compute Cost-Effectiveness or Cost-Benefit	6
IV. Understanding SSYI Client-Level Experiences and Outcomes.....	8
Client Criminal Histories	8
Client Experiences and Personal Outcomes	11
V. SSYI Program Implementation	17
Community and Program Context.....	18
SSYI-Affiliated Community Service Provider Capacity and Collaboration	25
VI. Discussion	34
VII. References	36
Appendix A. Technical Appendix.....	38

Exhibits

	Page
Exhibit 1. Violent crimes including rape, aggravated assault, homicide, and robbery – Victimization rates per 1,000 population ages 14 to 24 in SSYI and non-SSYI cities.....	3
Exhibit 2. Violent crimes including rape, aggravated assault, homicide, and robbery – Offense rates per 1,000 population in SSYI and non-SSYI cities.....	3
Exhibit 3. Annual program costs for fiscal year 2017–18 across all SSYI sites (in USD).....	6
Exhibit 4. Cost-benefit results of SSYI on violent crime in SSYI-funded cities	7
Exhibit 5. SSYI status of individuals in CORI data (<i>n</i> = 827)	9
Exhibit 6. Races and ages of individuals in CORI data (<i>n</i> = 827)	9
Exhibit 7. Average number of violent and non-violent offenses in CORI data (<i>n</i> = 827).....	10
Exhibit 8. Percent difference in average number of offenses in CORI data (<i>n</i> = 827).....	10
Exhibit 9. Mean number of arraignments from 2012 to 2019 in CORI data (<i>n</i> = 827)	10
Exhibit 10. SSYI Theory of Change.....	11
Exhibit 11. SSYI client survey participation for all surveys, by SSYI-funded city.....	12
Exhibit 12. Services and supports clients want from SSYI that are not currently available (Survey 1, <i>n</i> = 150).....	13
Exhibit 13. Areas of life most important to SSYI clients over the next 12 months (Survey 2, <i>n</i> = 125)	13
Exhibit 14. SSYI clients’ stated needs to reach their goals (Survey 3, <i>n</i> = 74)	14
Exhibit 15. Reasons for clients’ most recent contact with the SSYI program (<i>n</i> = 126; 74)	15
Exhibit 16. Client relationships with SSYI staff (Survey 1, <i>n</i> = 155, 154, 154; Survey 3, <i>n</i> = 74)	16
Exhibit 17. Changes in SSYI clients’ lives since joining the program (Survey 3, <i>n</i> = 73).....	17
Exhibit 18. Responses to organization survey, by SSYI-funded city	26
Exhibit 19. Respondents’ organizational history, staff, and role in SSYI, by SSYI-funded city.....	27
Exhibit 20. Number of organizations providing services to SSYI clients, by SSYI-funded city.....	28
Exhibit 21. Services provided across all SSYI-funded cities, by service type	28
Exhibit 22. Average number of SSYI-affiliated partnership, by SSYI-funded city	29
Exhibit 23. Average level of partnership reported across service domains, by SSYI-funded city.....	30
Exhibit 24. Perceptions of services and collaboration among SSYI-affiliated partners.....	30

Exhibit 25. Trust and respect among SSYI-affiliated partners	31
Exhibit 26. Capacity and motivation among SSYI-affiliated partners	32
Exhibit 27. Client information sharing among SSYI-affiliated partners	33
Exhibit 28. Collaboration among SSYI-affiliated partners	33
Exhibit 29. General involvement among SSYI-affiliated partners	34

I. Introduction

The American Institutes for Research (AIR), in partnership with WestEd, has served as the state evaluator for the Safe and Successful Youth Initiative (SSYI) since 2013. SSYI is a multifaceted, community-based strategy that combines public health and public safety approaches to eliminate serious violence among proven-risk, urban youth ages 17–24. SSYI sites altogether serve more than 1,000 youth at any given time in Massachusetts communities that include Boston, Brockton, Chelsea, Fall River, Haverhill, Holyoke, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, New Bedford, Pittsfield, Springfield, and Worcester.¹ In the earliest studies of SSYI, the AIR-WestEd research team found that the intervention was associated with a reduced level of victimization from violent crime in SSYI communities² and a reduced likelihood of incarceration for SSYI participants.³ An economic analysis conducted in the two largest program sites, Springfield and Boston, found that each dollar invested in these SSYI sites was associated with societal cost savings of as much as \$7.35 in 2013 dollars.⁴

In 2018, AIR-WestEd was awarded a new contract by the Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to continue to evaluate the impact of SSYI. This report discusses the findings from the first phase of the evaluation. Specifically, this report documents findings related to (1) SSYI’s impact on community-level violent crime and victimization, (2) the cost-effectiveness of SSYI’s impact on violent crime, (3) SSYI clients’ outcomes and experiences, (4) SSYI program implementation and context, and (5) SSYI-affiliated service provider capacities and collaboration in each SSYI community. The next phase of the evaluation, beginning in 2020, will examine the case management histories of SSYI clients to understand program dosage and client outcomes, and review life histories of male SSYI participants in the context of decisions to offend and desist from crime and violence. The new phase will also begin to examine the transition of SSYI programming focused on females at proven risk for violence.

II. SSYI Impact on Violent Crime in Massachusetts (2007–2017)

In order to examine community violent crime trends in SSYI and non-SSYI comparison cities from 2007 through 2017, the research team collected victimization data available through the Massachusetts State Police’s CrimeSOLV data system. Within CrimeSOLV, participating jurisdictions can input data and run reports from their National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) data. In addition, because the cities of Boston and Lawrence do not report

¹ North Adams became an SSYI grantee in 2019.

² See Petrosino, A., Turner, H., Hanson, T., Fronius, T., & Campie, P. E. (2014).

³ See Campie, P. E., Vrinotis, M., Read, N. W., Fronius, T., & Petrosino, A. (2014).

⁴ See Bradham, D. D., Campie, P. E., & Petrosino, A. (2014).

incident-level crime data to CrimeSOLV,⁵ AIR collected monthly victimization data directly from the police departments in these cities.⁶ We estimated the impact of SSYI on two community-level outcomes: (1) victimization rates per 1,000 population for violent offenses (murder, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery) for victims ages 14 to 24, which encompasses the eligible SSYI population; and (2) offense counts per 1,000 population for violent offenses across all ages to examine violent crime more generally.

To estimate the impact of SSYI on violent offenses and victimization, we used a difference-in-differences (DID) design in a panel data framework. A DID model compares the difference in outcomes before and after a “treatment” in participating cities—in this case, cities with SSYI funding—against the difference in outcomes in cities with relatively high crime rates that did not receive SSYI funding during the same time period,⁷ controlling for other factors (see Appendix A).

Exhibit 1 shows violent crime victimization rates per 1,000 population for SSYI cities and the comparison group of non-SSYI cities. As shown in the exhibit, the rates of victimization were decreasing for both groups, but the decrease after 2011 was steeper in SSYI cities compared with non-SSYI cities. The DID model assumes that, in the absence of SSYI, the post-2011 difference between victimization rates in SSYI and comparison cities would have been similar to the pre-2011 difference. However, if the difference between the two groups narrowed after 2011 compared with pre-2011, then this can be attributed to the SSYI program. For example, Exhibit 1 shows that prior to 2011, the per 1,000 victimization rates in SSYI cities was approximately 25 on average, compared to around 13 in non-SSYI cities, suggesting a difference of 12 points. After 2011, the per 1,000 victimization rates in SSYI cities dropped to approximately 20 on average, compared with approximately 11 in non-SSYI cities, suggesting a difference of 9 points after 2011. The DID model suggests that the SSYI impact can be estimated as a reduction of almost 3 victims per 1,000 population across all SSYI cities.

⁵ Boston and Lawrence do report annual Summary Reporting System (SRS) data. These SRS data include offense counts for 10 Part I (violent) crimes. NIBRS collects incident and arrest data on 52 Group A offenses and arrest data only on 10 Group B offenses. See <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/cjis-link/srs-to-nibrs-the-path-to-better-ucr-data>.

⁶ Summary violent criminal offense data for Boston were not available for 2007 through 2012, so we imputed the number of violent offenses from a linear regression model using cities, victimization rates, population, and years as inputs. Additional detail is provided in Appendix A.

⁷ Comparison cities included the 29 cities with the next highest rates of violent crime beyond SSYI-funded cities (A-Z): Cambridge, Chicopee, Dennis, Erving, Everett, Fairhaven, Falmouth, Fitchburg, Gardner, Greenfield, Hadley, Leominster, Malden, Methuen, Nantucket, North Adams, Northampton, Provincetown, Quincy, Revere, Salem, Somerville, Southbridge, Taunton, Ware, Webster, West Springfield, Winchendon, and Winthrop.

Exhibit 1. Violent crimes including rape, aggravated assault, homicide, and robbery – Victimization rates per 1,000 population ages 14 to 24 in SSYI and non-SSYI cities

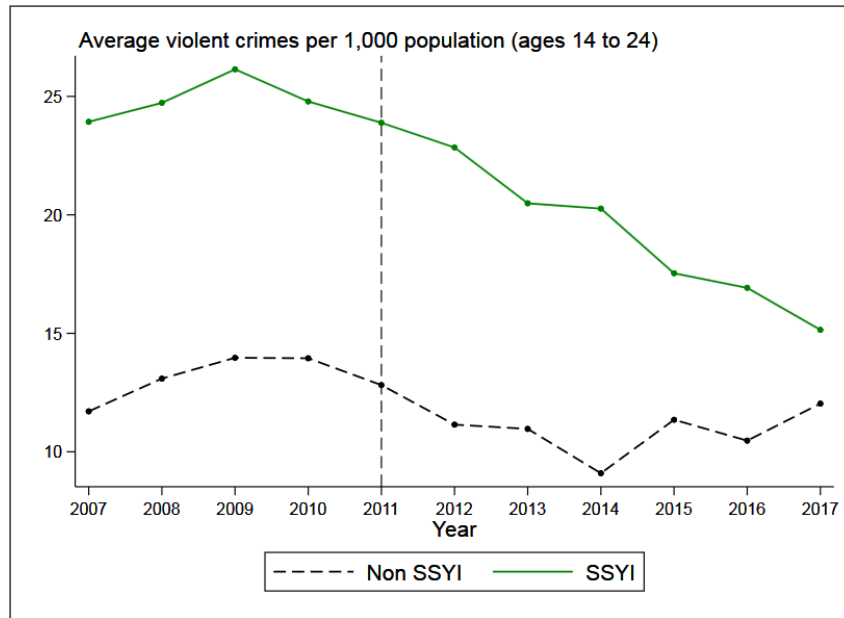
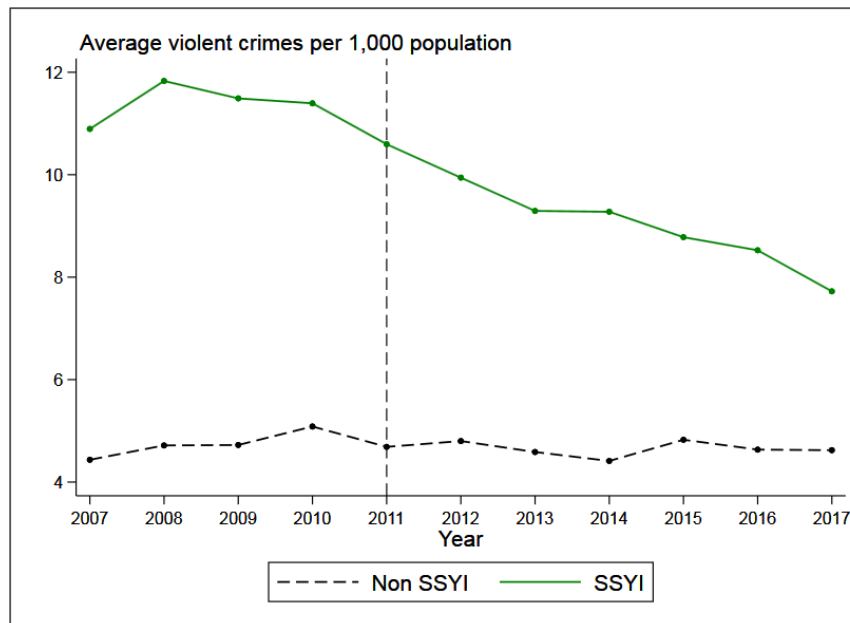


Exhibit 2 plots similar trends for the rates of violent criminal offenses, again comparing SSYI cities to the group of comparison non-SSYI cities. Similar to the victimization analysis, we see that offense rates remain relatively stable in all non-SSYI cities while offense rates in SSYI-funded cities show a greater overall decline, with a more rapid decrease after 2011.

Exhibit 2. Violent crimes including rape, aggravated assault, homicide, and robbery – Offense rates per 1,000 population in SSYI and non-SSYI cities



SSYI Impact on Violent Crime Victimization and Violent Criminal Offenses

Once the visual trend for SSYI's impact was confirmed, we produced formal estimates of SSYI's impact. There are multiple efforts occurring in SSYI cities that may impact crime and victimization rates. The research team isolated the SSYI impact through a DID model using a linear regression controlling for changes in (1) per capita income, (2) unemployment, (3) labor force, (4) opioid-related deaths, and (5) the number of police personnel.⁸ Results from the DID regressions show that, between 2012 and 2017, cities receiving SSYI funding, compared with the non-SSYI comparison cities, reduced annual violent offenses by 2.2 per 1,000 population ($p < 0.01$) and annual victimizations by almost 3.2 per 1,000 population ($p < 0.05$).⁹ These estimates suggest that, controlling for other economic-, demographic-, and criminal justice-related factors, in addition to overall time trends and city-level effects, SSYI led to a strong and significant positive impact on reducing violent offenses and victimizations.

*Between 2012 and 2017, cities receiving SSYI funds saw annual violent offenses decrease by as many as **2.2 offenses per 1,000 population** and annual violent crime victimizations decrease by almost **3.2 victimizations per 1,000 population**.*

III. SSYI Cost-Effectiveness

In addition to conducting an evaluation of SSYI success in reducing violent crime incidents and victimizations, the research team examined the program's effectiveness from a cost perspective. Both a cost-effectiveness analysis and cost-benefit analysis in this context answer the following question: For each dollar spent on running the SSYI program, how many incidents of crime can be averted? For this analysis, we combined information on SSYI program costs with effect estimates calculated using data from CrimeSOLV and the Boston and Lawrence police departments. In addition, the research team conducted a cost-benefit analysis that assigned a monetary benefit to program "effects," which in this case reflected the cost avoided through a decrease in crime incidents, and related system involvement, or victimization.

To inform the cost-effectiveness analysis, the team first needed to define the cost perspective—that is, determine who bears the costs of the SSYI program and who benefits from it. Because the study's outcomes of interest involve crime incidents and justice involvement, which directly influence the institutional costs (or costs to society), the team represented the

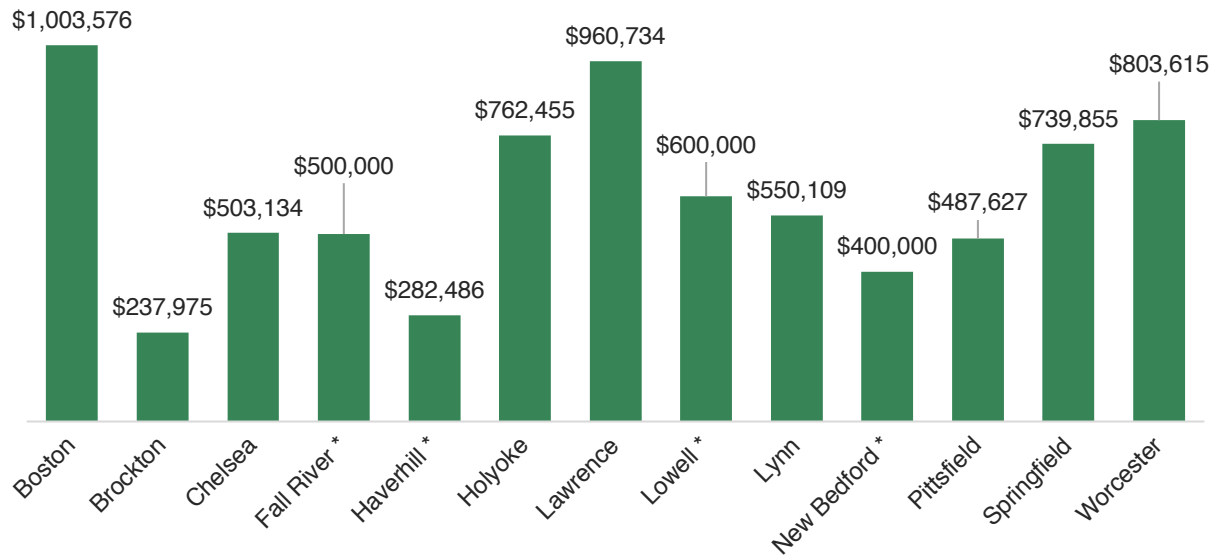
⁸ To measure these factors, we collected data between 2007 and 2017 on city-level annual population counts from the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute Population Estimates Program; city-level per-capita income from the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis; county-level unemployment rates and labor force statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Local Area Unemployment Statistics; the number of police per-capita from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Uniform Crime Reports; and county-level, per-capita opioid-related deaths from Massachusetts State Statistics.

⁹ All outcomes were measured for the 14–24-year-old population.

perspective of institutions or society in this study. Specifically, the team calculated the costs of executing the SSYI program borne by the police departments or the fiduciary agencies, and the benefits to the criminal justice system or to society of reducing crime. It is reasonable, however, to believe that participating in the SSYI program and avoiding incarceration also will have a cost (and a benefit) for the SSYI program participant. For example, additional benefits may include increased employment and earnings, while additional costs may include time spent participating in the SSYI program—time that instead could have been spent on income-generating activities. To include the participants’ perspective, the team would need an estimation of program impact on other outcomes, such as employment and earnings; such estimation is currently beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, to be consistent with the “benefits” defined under this study (i.e., lower crime victimization and lower incarceration), our analysis considers only the costs borne by institutions.

We collected data on SSYI operational costs for fiscal year 2017–18 from SSYI cities following a cost ingredient approach. A cost ingredient approach breaks down the overall program costs into specific cost components tied to program activities, such as personnel, administrative costs, rent, office expenses, and so forth. This included all implementation costs incurred directly by the primary grantee, all of who are police departments, and the subcontractors that provided activities under the SSYI program as well as costs met through in-kind resources. For the purpose of cost-benefit analysis, we were interested in understanding the complete value of resources spent including the dollar value of volunteer staff or in-kind expenses/donations even if these were not a part of the accounting expenses. We circulated a cost ingredient Excel template to each of the SSYI cities. We received complete data from 9 out of 13 sites. For the remaining four sites (Fall River, Haverhill, Lowell, and New Bedford), we used the SSYI funding amount from EOHHS instead of actual expenditures. Because actual expenses are likely to be higher than the SSYI funds, our overall cost estimates might be a slight underestimate of the true program expenditure. Exhibit 3 shows the annual expenditures on SSYI programs for all 13 funded sites.¹⁰

¹⁰ Haverhill was not included in the full cost-benefit analysis, as it was in its first year of funding and still in the process of starting up its SSYI program.

Exhibit 3. Annual program costs for fiscal year 2017–18 across all SSYI sites (in USD)

Note: (*) For these sites that provided incomplete or inconsistent cost data, the SSYI funding amount was used for analysis.

As seen in Exhibit 3, Boston and Lawrence had the highest program costs (\$1,003,576 and \$960,734 respectively), while Brockton and Haverhill had the lowest program costs (\$237,975 and \$282,486 respectively). For the nine sites that provided complete expenditure data, we also compared these expenses against the SSYI funding amount received from EOHHS. Site-specific SSYI funding amounts were generally found to be between 62% (in Lawrence) to 82% (in Pittsfield) of all program costs, with the remainder coming from other sources including volunteer personnel, borrowed space, and in-kind matches. Combining overall costs across these 13 sites, SSYI program costs in 2017–18 were \$7.8 million.

Combining Effects to Compute Cost-Effectiveness or Cost-Benefit

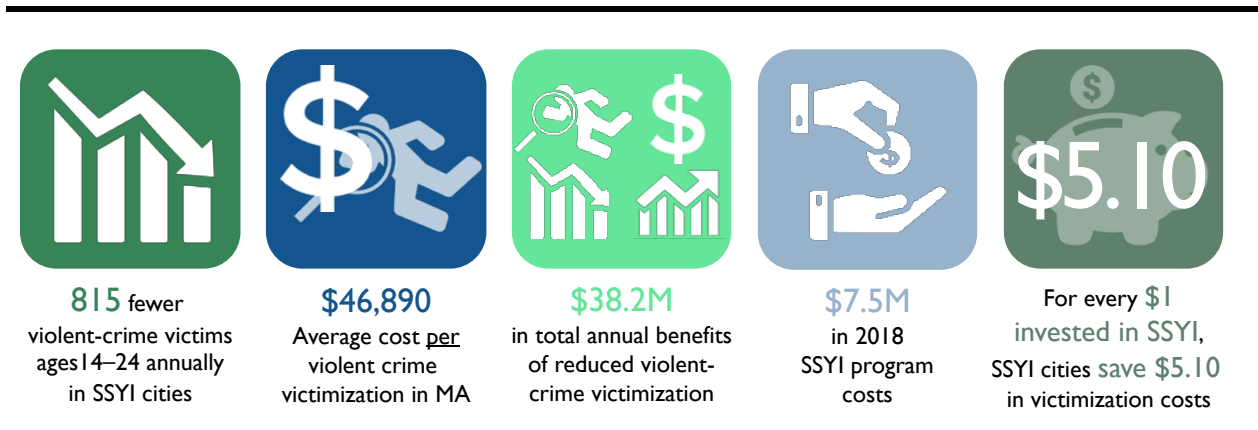
To analyze the return on investment from the SSYI program, we estimated cost savings resulting from reduced violent offenses and victimizations as described above. To estimate a monetary value for these benefits, we extracted information from existing studies that estimate the total cost of violent crimes as well as costs specific to the Massachusetts criminal justice system. For example, Shapiro & Hassett (2012) analyzed the costs of violent crimes and estimated the savings and benefits that accompany reductions in such crimes. Their study used a sample of eight major American cities including Boston. The direct costs accounted for in their analysis included medical costs borne by surviving victims, municipal spending on police, courts and corrections costs, and the foregone productivity of victims and of criminals while incarcerated. The authors found that, in Boston, a 25% reduction was estimated to produce \$27 million in savings for the city government (Shapiro & Hassett, 2012). Similarly, a 2007 study estimated the direct costs of violent crimes committed by high-risk youth in Philadelphia

(Cohen & Piquero, 2009). To estimate these costs, the study included three components of the costs of individual crimes—victim costs, criminal justice costs (including police, courts, and prisons), and lost productivity of offenders who are incarcerated. Combining these different estimates from studies along with a robust methodology, McCollister, French, and Fang (2010) presented a comprehensive unit cost estimation of violent crimes in 2008 dollars at the national level. Further, estimates from a report by the Vera Institute showed that the average cost per inmate in Massachusetts was \$55,170 in 2015, which was 1.7 times the national average of \$33,274 (Vera Institute, 2015).

After adjusting the estimates from McCollister et al. (2010) to convert national costs to Massachusetts costs and further converting costs to 2018 dollars, preventing a single crime in Massachusetts would result in savings to the criminal justice system of \$740,642 for murder, \$49,984 for rape, and \$26,101 for robbery¹¹. In addition to savings for criminal justice costs, we also added savings from reduced crime victim and offender career costs.

To summarize the estimation of SSYI’s return on investment (ROI), SSYI led to 815 fewer annual violent offenses in people ages 14 to 24 (estimated above in the DID model with rates converted to counts). This results in annual cost savings of \$38,199,005, against program expenditures of \$7,549,079.¹² The ratio of cost savings to expenses suggests that each dollar invested in SSYI led to societal savings of approximately \$5.10 in cities with SSYI (see Exhibit 4).

Exhibit 4. Cost-benefit results of SSYI on violent crime in SSYI-funded cities¹³



¹¹ To convert 2008 costs to 2018 values, we used the CPI method, where 2018 costs=2008 costs X CPI 2018/CPI 2008. To convert national costs to Massachusetts-specific costs, we used the 2018 national and state-specific median wage from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

¹² This represents program costs for all SSYI-funded sites except for Haverhill. Haverhill was not included in crime reduction analyses because it was not funded until 2019, and possible program effects on crime were not applicable.

¹³ For the ROI analysis, we used victimization counts instead of offenses to estimate the cost-benefit ratio. This was due to the fact that crime costs in the literature are almost always estimated based on victimization counts. Also, the victimization data we collected are more accurate than the offense data, because we had to impute missing offense data for Boston and Lawrence before 2010.

IV. Understanding SSYI Client-Level Experiences and Outcomes

In addition to examining the cost-effectiveness of SSYI, the most direct means of understanding the impact of SSYI is by studying the client-level recidivism and the well-being outcomes of those who engage with the program. For this study, the research team analyzed the offending outcomes of SSYI participants compared with those of non-participants in each community who have similar offending histories to those of participants. To do so, the team examined data from the Massachusetts Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) system. The research team executed a data-sharing agreement with the Commonwealth’s Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) to access these data for individuals identified for the SSYI program since 2016 in 10 of the 12 cities with SSYI funding.¹⁴ The research team then examined offending behaviors from entry into the program through April 2019. These results are discussed below.

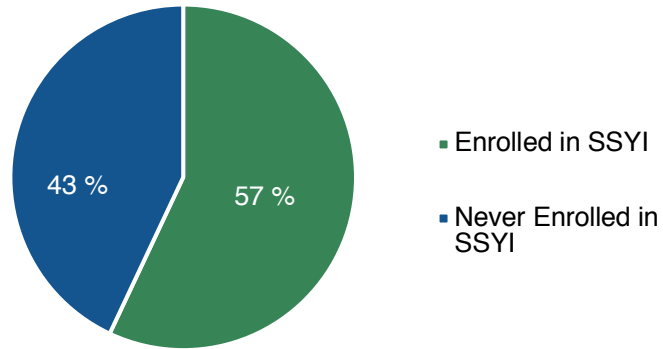
Client Criminal Histories

CORI records were obtained for individuals in each SSYI city by first working with local police to identify those young men on the SSYI list. Within each list, program staff at each site then identified the young men who (1) had enrolled in the SSYI program and (2) had never enrolled in the SSYI program despite being on the list. A secure, password-protected Excel workbook was used by police and program staff to enter personally identifiable information that was only accessible by the study director and DCJIS, who extracted the CORI records used for analysis. The rest of the research team did not have access to this information. All information was de-identified in all subsequent analyses but connected to each SSYI program using a site identifier. The resulting CORI records present lifetime offending history (within Massachusetts) for each individual, using a unique identifier to match case records to individuals over time. This case history allowed the research team to look at offending patterns over time and provided a means to compare offending patterns between those enrolled and not enrolled in SSYI services.

The CORI dataset that DCJIS returned to the research team was anonymized and reviewed to remove any data entry errors by SSYI program staff or police prior to analysis. The “cleaned” dataset contained 827 individuals identified for SSYI who were categorized as either enrolled in SSYI or never enrolled in SSYI (see Exhibit 5).

¹⁴ Lawrence and New Bedford were unable to provide their SSYI lists for this part of the evaluation.

Exhibit 5. SSYI status of individuals in CORI data (n = 827)



Demographic characteristics were similar across the two groups, with those enrolled in SSYI somewhat older than those who never enrolled in the program (see Exhibit 6). Among all White individuals identified in the dataset, the largest group was enrolled in SSYI programming, whereas Black individuals were less represented in the enrolled category as compared with other categories. Less than 5% of individuals were classified as Hispanic. About 25% of individuals were classified as “unknown race” in the CORI dataset. It should be noted that Massachusetts, like most states, does not have a consistent basis for the collection of race and ethnicity data from individuals involved with the justice system. As a result, the CORI data shown here are not meant to provide a complete or accurate picture of race or ethnicity. This is made apparent by the fact that these racial demographics do not generally reflect the population demographics for any of the SSYI cities, which are predominately White and, in some cases, have a Hispanic majority.

Exhibit 6. Races and ages of individuals in CORI data (n = 827)

SSYI status	Average age	Most common age	White	Black	Hispanic
Enrolled	21.93 years	23	25%	46%	4%
Never enrolled	21.58 years	22	13%	62%	5%

The type of crimes reflected in the CORI arraignment histories were somewhat similar for individuals in the two groups over time. However, those enrolled in SSYI committed fewer offenses during the timeframe when SSYI was in operation compared with those identified for SSYI but never enrolled (see Exhibit 7).¹⁵ The lone exception was for firearm-related offenses, where SSYI clients were responsible for a larger average number of offenses over the implementation time period. Firearm-related offenses in the CORI dataset are predominately associated with non-violent, technical, or status offenses, such as carrying a firearm without a permit or possessing a firearm in violation of probation/parole conditions.

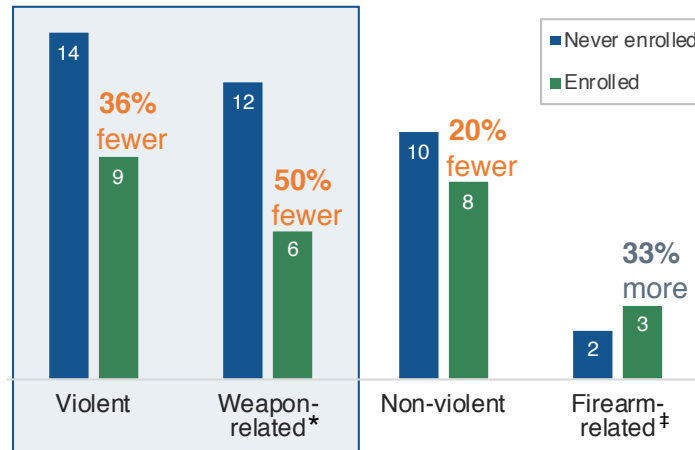
¹⁵ Multiple offenses can be contained within a single arraignment, so the total number of offenses are greater than the total number of arraignments.

Exhibit 7. Average number of violent and non-violent offenses in CORI data (n = 827)

SSYI status	Violent	Non-violent	Weapon-related ¹⁶	Firearm-related
	2013–2019	2013–2019	2013–2019	2013–2019
Never enrolled	14	10	12	2
Enrolled	9	8	6	3

The percent difference between the mean number of offenses between 2013 and 2019 is shown in Exhibit 8.

Exhibit 8. Percent difference in average number of offenses in CORI data (n = 827)



‡These are technical violations involving a firearm, not violent offenses.

Independent samples mean testing reveals that individuals who were eligible but not enrolled in SSYI during the program implementation period from 2012 to 2019 experienced an 8% higher number of arraignments, on average, than SSYI clients, and this difference was statistically significant (Exhibit 9).

Exhibit 9. Mean number of arraignments from 2012 to 2019 in CORI data (n = 827)

SSYI status	Mean Number of Arraignments
Never enrolled (n = 359)	18.1448
Enrolled (n = 468)	16.7286

F score = 4.970, t statistic: -2.8313, significance: .017 (p < 0.05)

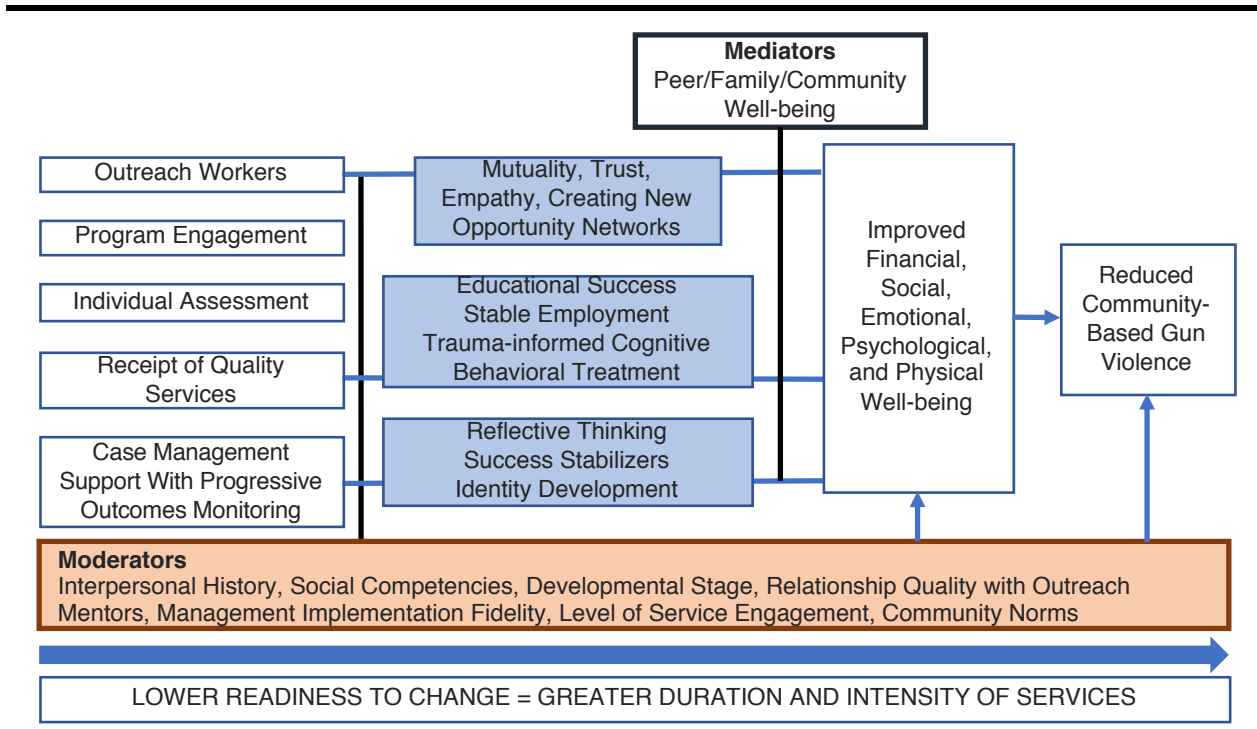
*After 2012, clients enrolled in SSYI had **36% fewer violent offenses**, including **50% fewer weapon-related offenses**, and **20% fewer non-violent offenses** than did young men identified for the program who never enrolled.*

¹⁶ Weapons are defined in the CORI dataset by police to include myriad objects, from knives and fists to furniture and bottles. Firearms are the least common type of weapon associated with violent crime.

Client Experiences and Personal Outcomes

In addition to criminal justice outcomes, the research team examined each SSYI participant’s self-reported experiences with the program and their feelings of physical, social, emotional, and financial well-being. These domains relate directly to the SSYI theory of change and the evaluation questions for the study (Exhibit 10).

Exhibit 10. SSYI Theory of Change



The research team collected client self-reports on their experiences with the SSYI program and changes in their personal well-being as a result of the program, through a series of three brief, mobile surveys administered over a 9-month period (from December 2018 through August 2019). The surveys were anonymous but linked to individual SSYI cities. The research team worked closely with the SSYI sites to develop the survey administration process, including offering the young men a small financial incentive for participating. This section discusses the survey results of as many as 155 SSYI participants from 11 of the 12 SSYI sites in the study (see Exhibit 11).¹⁷

¹⁷ Clients in all SSYI-funded sites, with the exception of Haverhill, which began SSYI implementation in June 2018, were invited to participate in the survey. However, the researchers received no responses from clients in New Bedford.

Exhibit 11. SSYI client survey participation for all surveys, by SSYI-funded city

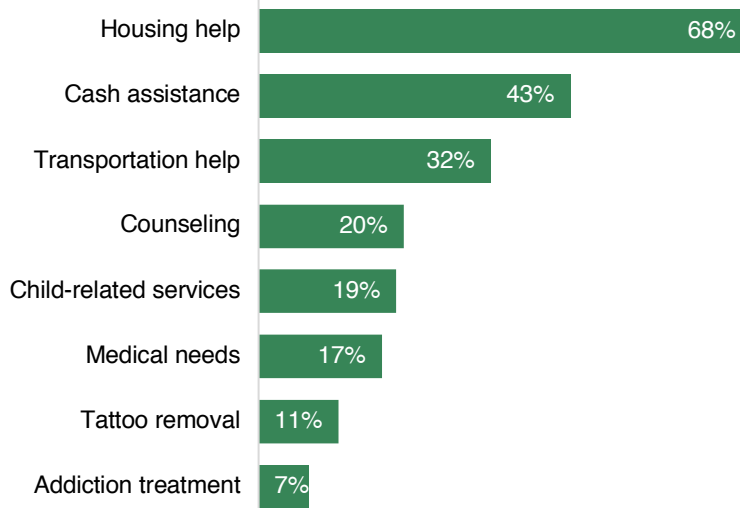
City	Survey 1 (December 2018– March 2019)	Survey 2 (March–June 2019)		Survey 3 (May–August 2019)	
	Completions	Completions	Retention Rate ¹⁸	Completions	Retention Rate ¹⁴
Boston	23	12	52%	13	108%
Brockton	5	5	100%	2	40%
Chelsea	16	16	100%	17	106%
Fall River	9	11	122%	0	0%
Holyoke	21	22	105%	4	18%
Lawrence	10	10	100%	6	60%
Lowell	8	2	25%	2	100%
Lynn	21	17	81%	13	76%
New Bedford	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Pittsfield	4	0	0%	N/A	N/A
Springfield	27	28	104%	17	7%
Worcester	11	3	27%	0	0%
Total	155	126	81%	74	59%

Client Circumstances and Motivations

The surveys represented a unique opportunity to hear directly from the young men about their lives, including their current personal, economic, and social circumstances as well as motivations for engaging in SSYI. For example, the surveys revealed that more than two-thirds of the young men were seeking housing help (reported by 68% of 155 respondents) and about 4 in 10 were seeking cash assistance (43%, see Exhibit 12). This finding echoes the results of a subsequent survey, which found that 44% of 126 respondents did not have stable housing, instead often moving from place to place (26%) and sometimes not having a place to spend the night (18%). Further, nearly three-quarters of respondents to that survey said they either barely had enough money (37%) or did not have enough money (35%) to pay their bills.

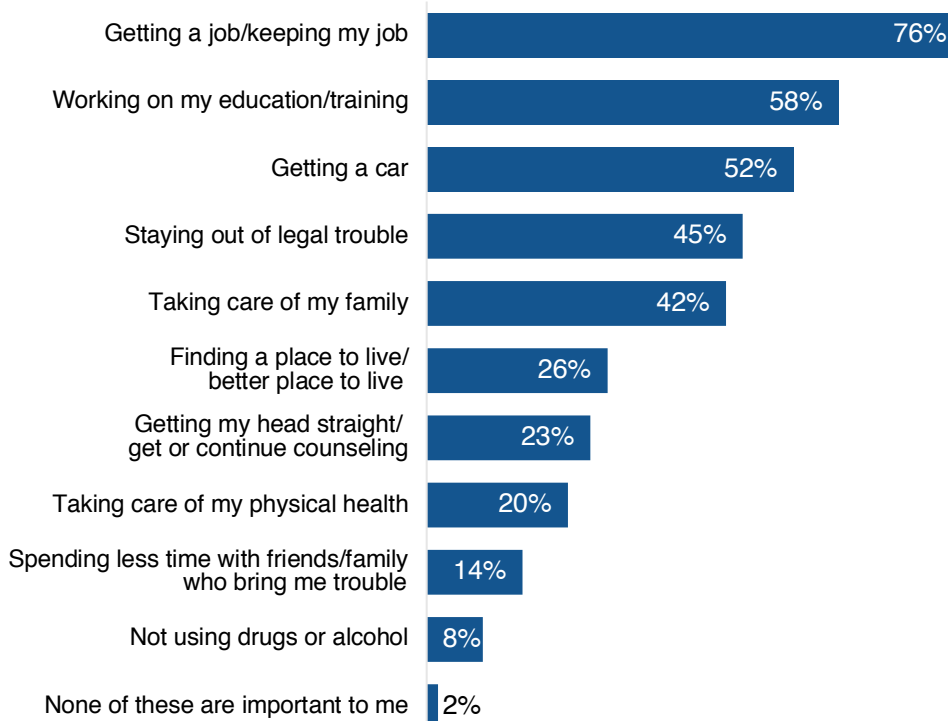
¹⁸ Only clients that took the first survey were eligible to take the second survey and only those that took the second survey were eligible to take the third survey. Retention rates total greater than 100% for some sites because a clients' previous survey may not have been complete enough for inclusion in analysis but nonetheless qualified them for the subsequent survey.

Exhibit 12. Services and supports clients want from SSYI that are not currently available (Survey 1, n = 150)



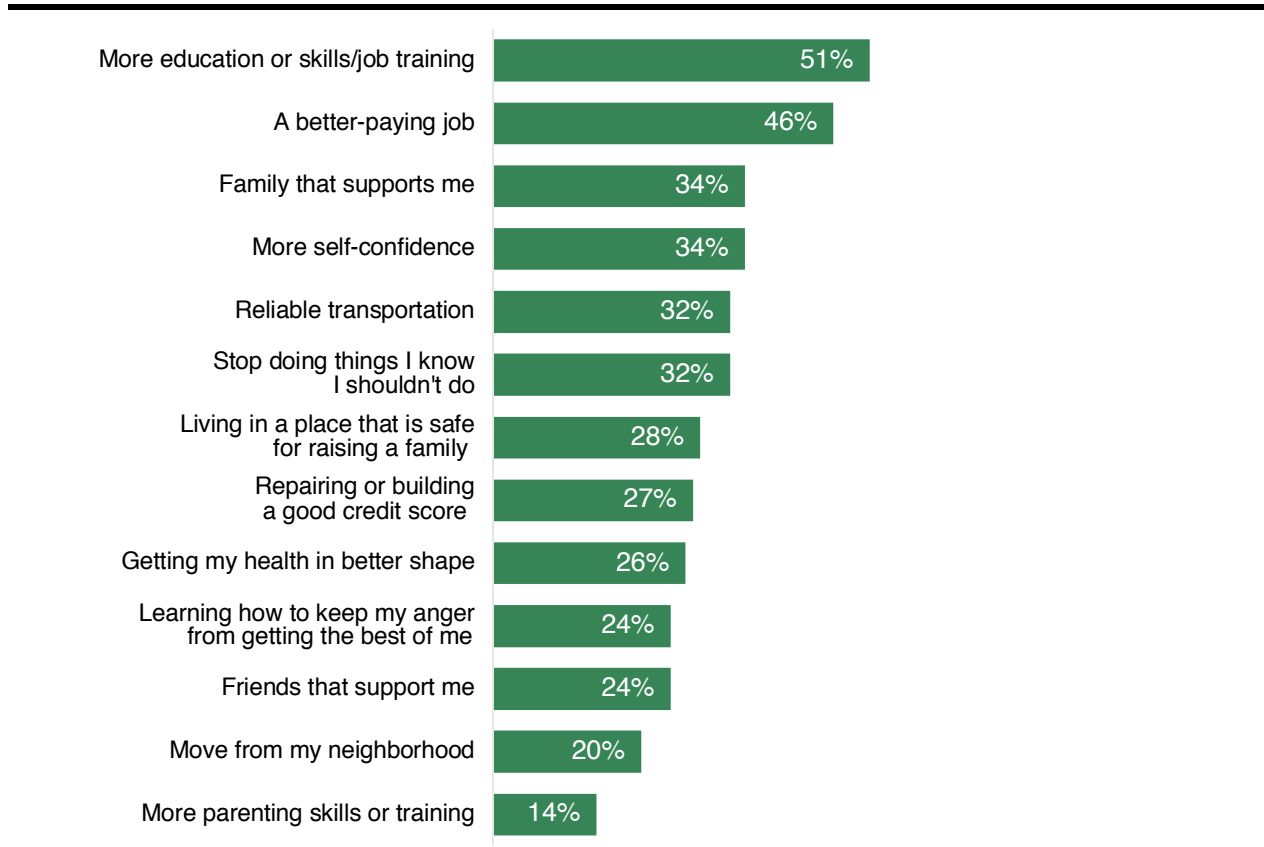
Clients personal, economic, and social circumstances also tied into the areas of life these young men reported they were focused on and the goals they set for themselves. For example, more than three-quarters of respondents to the second survey (76%) revealed that getting or keeping a job was most important for them over the next 12 months, followed by working on their education and/or training (58%) and getting a car (52%; see Exhibit 13).

Exhibit 13. Areas of life most important to SSYI clients over the next 12 months (Survey 2, n = 125)



These responses were corroborated by the 74 respondents to the third survey when asked what they needed most to reach their goals. Of that group, more than half (51%) said they needed more education, skills, and/or job training and nearly half (46%) said they needed a better paying job (see Exhibit 14). This survey also revealed some of the internal and interpersonal needs of these young men. For example, more than one-third of respondents said they needed family that supports them (34%) and more self-confidence (34%) to reach their goals.

Exhibit 14. SSYI clients’ stated needs to reach their goals (Survey 3, n = 74)



Program Engagement

The surveys also explored clients’ enrollment in and engagement with the SSYI program. Results indicate that most respondents joined the program in 2018 (50%), but nearly another third have been in the program since 2016 or earlier (31%). Most respondents were active in the SSYI program, with 8 in 10 reporting weekly contact with SSYI staff and nearly all (95% on survey 1 and 90% on survey 2) reporting contact within the past 2 weeks.¹⁹ As expected, participants reported that the most common point of contact they had through their experience in the SSYI program was with the outreach workers (91%) and case managers (46%). This holds true when asked about their most recent interactions with SSYI staff (see Exhibit 15); however, over time,

¹⁹ Respondents were not asked to disregard contact related to the client experience survey in answering this question on surveys 1 and 2.

as expected, contact seemed to shift away from outreach workers toward case managers. Of the service provision staff with whom clients were most frequently in contact, job placement staff were the most common (32%), followed by education-oriented staff (28%), and staff offering therapeutic services for mental or behavioral health concerns (24%). Unlike the decrease in contact with outreach workers and increased contact with case managers over time, clients’ levels of contact with employment, education, and health staff remained fairly consistent over time. Other reasons clients interacted with SSYI staff or the program generally included picking up paychecks and just being at the SSYI program building.

Exhibit 15. Reasons for clients’ most recent contact with the SSYI program (n = 126; 74)

Reason	Survey 2 respondents	Survey 3 respondents
Outreach	41%	19%
Case management	28%	45%
Job training	20%	23%
Education	32%	26%
Counseling	17%	11%
Other	20%	32%

Regarding participants’ general circumstances and motivations, when asked specifically why they participated in SSYI, more than 4 in 10 said it was because they wanted to change their behavior (44%). Nearly one-third said they participated because they wanted a job (30%) and 10% of respondents reported family motivation to participate. Interestingly, concerns about the police were not a prime motivator (3%).

Relationships With Staff

Across the surveys, respondents demonstrated their positive relationships with SSYI staff (see Exhibit 16). For example, nearly three-quarters of all respondents to survey 1 (73%) said they trust SSYI staff “a lot,” while another quarter (25%) said they trust staff “a little bit.” Less than 3% of respondents said they don’t trust SSYI staff at all. In addition, nearly 6 in 10 survey 1 respondents (59%) said SSYI staff helped them get things turned around when something goes wrong and another 40% said staff tried to support them. Perhaps most encouraging, nearly 6 in 10 respondents to survey 3 (58%) said that the SSYI staff person that first reached out to them about SSYI became like a mentor, or someone they go to for guidance. Further, an additional 45% said that that staff person became a friend.

Exhibit 16. Client relationships with SSYI staff (Survey 1, n = 155, 154, 154; Survey 3, n = 74)

Satisfaction With SSYI

Consistent with clients' positive relationships with staff, survey respondents expressed overall satisfaction with the SSYI program generally. When asked about their most recent interaction with SSYI, an overwhelming 98% and 97% of respondents across surveys 2 and 3, respectively, said they had a positive feeling after the interaction. In the third survey, more than one-third of respondents (34%) said they would not leave SSYI if it got in the way of other priorities in their lives. An additional 49% said if they did leave SSYI depending on other priorities, they would not be happy about it. Interestingly, when asked about the perception of SSYI among other young men they know who are not involved with SSYI, one-third of respondents to survey 2 (34%) said those individuals wished they could be part of SSYI, while fewer than 1 in 10 (6%) said those people thought SSYI was a waste of time.

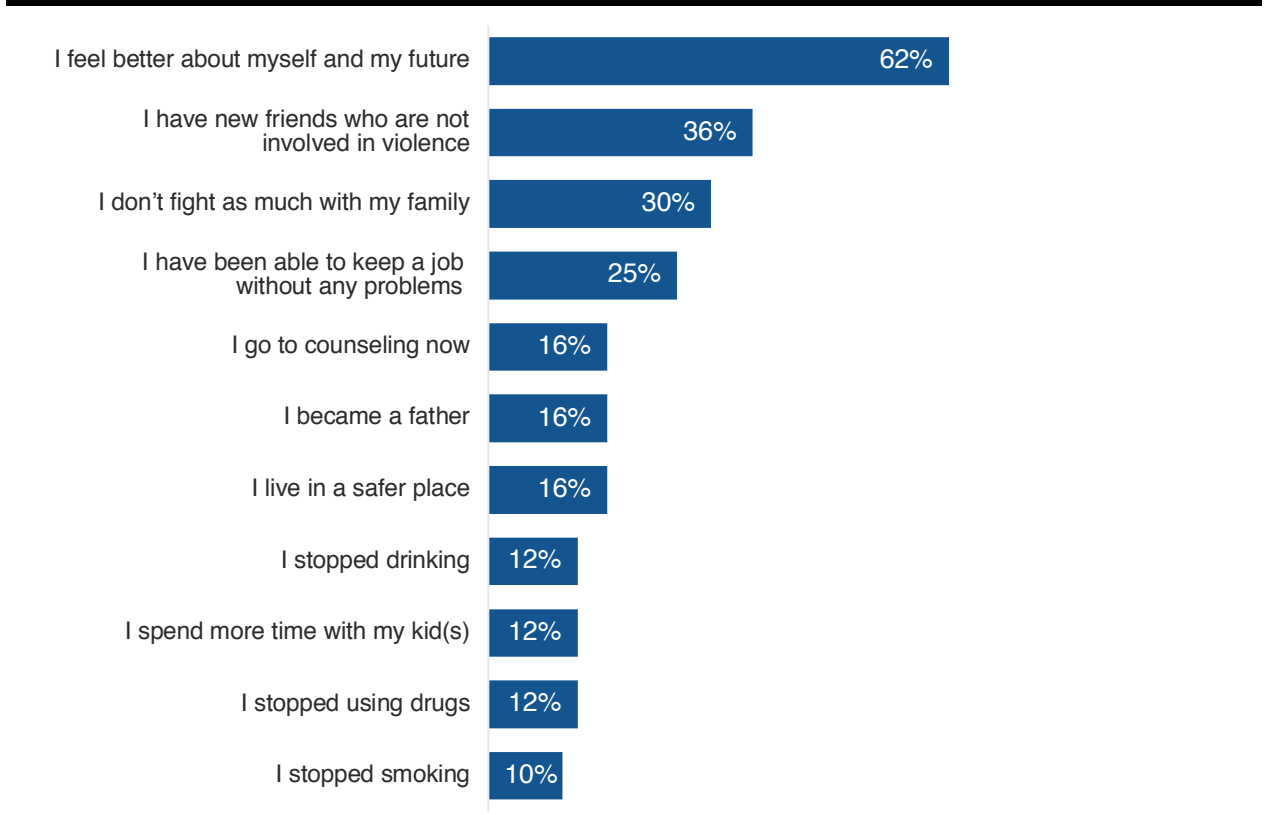
Impact of SSYI

In addition to documenting clients' perceptions of the SSYI program and staff in their respective cities, the surveys provided an opportunity to learn more about the direct impact of SSYI program involvement for clients. Each of the three surveys looked at this impact across various domains of clients' lives. For example, in examining the impact of SSYI on clients' financial situations, 4 in 10 respondents to survey 1 (40%) said SSYI has helped "a lot" to meet their financial needs and another 43% said SSYI has helped "a little." On a personal level, nearly three-quarters of respondents to survey 1 (73%) said SSYI "regularly" motivated them to set new goals for themselves and another 26% said SSYI "sometimes" motivated them. Similarly, although not tied directly to participating in SSYI, more than half of all respondents to survey 3 said they felt like they had control over their future (54%) and nearly half said they had the skills needed to reach their goals (49%).

The final survey inquired about specific changes in clients' lives since they joined SSYI (see Exhibit 17). The most common change reported was that respondents felt better about themselves and their futures (62%). More than one-third of respondents said they had new friends who were not involved in violence (36%) and 3 in 10 respondents said they did not fight as much with their family (30%). Together these responses validate and are supported by other

survey findings showing that more than half of all survey 2 respondents (54%) said their life had gotten better over the past month of being in SSYI, while less than 1 in 10 (9%) said their life had gotten worse.

Exhibit 17. Changes in SSYI clients’ lives since joining the program (Survey 3, n = 73)



V. SSYI Program Implementation

To better understand the context in which SSYI exists and is implemented, the SSYI evaluation included a set of activities to collect multidimensional data on SSYI communities, as well as the organizations, staff, and partnerships that support SSYI’s implementation. These activities included interviews, site visits, and survey data collection. The following section briefly describes these activities and their goals and provides findings from the interviews, site visits, and survey data collection that occurred between fall 2018 and spring 2019.

SSYI is a model for violence prevention that exists within the context of 13 communities across Massachusetts. The needs, strengths, and challenges of these communities lead to program implementation that varies considerably across sites. For example, some sites may have the capacity to support SSYI clients through a centralized hub of services that limits their external partnerships while other sites might be dependent on the availability of community-based organizations who are able to provide services to SSYI clients. In order to systematically

document these variations, the research team developed a series of interview and site visit protocols to capture a standard set of data from all sites. These interviews were conducted with SSYI program leads, law enforcement partners, outreach and case management staff, and community partners, to the extent they exist and are involved in core SSYI components.

In addition to the site visits and semistructured interviews, the research team surveyed SSYI partners and related community organizations to better understand how organizations work with one another to engage with and deliver services to SSYI participants in order to improve their lives. The survey included a battery of questions designed to collect information on the organizations' characteristics, prevalence and strength of collaboration between partners, and extent of communication and information sharing across multiple domains among partners. The following sections first present the qualitative findings from the site visits and interviews, and then the findings from the survey data collected among SSYI organizational partners.

Community and Program Context

To update and build new knowledge about how the SSYI program is implemented within each funded city, we conducted interviews during half- or full-day site visits. These interviews typically involved the program lead or manager, outreach staff, and case managers. Law enforcement partners were also interviewed in several sites. The interviews and site visits yielded rich contextual data on how SSYI operates within each site as well as the characteristics and attributes of SSYI staff who work directly with clients. In addition, several sites provided program materials (e.g., policy and procedures manuals) that are used to guide SSYI implementation. Although the detail and availability of written program implementation materials varied across sites, such materials were referenced to add detail to qualitative findings. All qualitative data collected through site visit observations, interviews, and document review were summarized into a coding matrix designed to respond to the following evaluation questions:

1. What are some key factors that relate to successful outreach to potential SSYI clients?
2. When thinking about the SSYI program model, what gaps are evident within the site that may affect clients' success? What strengths exist within the site that may promote clients' success?
3. What components of the model are key to clients' success at the site?

These questions are addressed by first presenting an overview of the SSYI model across sites, and then by examining the common and unique attributes of the SSYI model within sites that may contribute to participant outcomes.

SSYI Implementation Model Within Sites

The SSYI implementation model, as noted above, is flexible by design and varied across sites. In terms of the organizational model, sites generally fell into one of two categories: a self-contained model with the majority of services provided on-site by a centralized provider, or a decentralized collaborative model with services provided across several community partners. The self-contained model typically involved a community-based hub that provided several SSYI service components in-house or collaborated with external providers who came to the location to provide services. For example, Roca and United Teen Equality Center (UTECE) were considered self-contained models in which nearly all components except for certain mental health services were provided within the organization's facility. Similarly, Lawrence's Family Development Organization (FDO) offered a self-contained model—referred to as SISU—at a satellite campus in Lawrence. These sites typically had multiple spaces within a facility that were used for education, job skills training, vocational classes, and recreation for SSYI clients. A decentralized model typically required several community partners in order to address the individualized needs of clients. For example, cases managers often referred clients to education, employment, and behavioral health partners. The reason for decentralized services varied by site. Some sites lacked the capacity to provide centralized services. Other sites— notably in the larger cities—needed to decentralize services in order for clients to have access to services while avoiding neighborhoods affiliated with rival street organizations. Regardless of organizational model, the majority of sites were serving the target population.

Police Role Within Sites. The police partner formally serves as the fiscal agent for the SSYI grant; however, the police role includes additional responsibilities related to programming. Generally, sites used one of two approaches to the role police play within SSYI. The first, is a siloed approach. In some sites the police partner was exclusively responsible for developing and vetting the SSYI list, but otherwise did not collaborate with SSYI partners for program services. This approach may be intentional to ensure the police do not unintentionally disrupt client and case manager activities (e.g., patrol staff dropping in on case management meetings) or it may be due to historical distrust between police and community partners. In other sites it was a capacity issue in that there was not a dedicated SSYI police lead (e.g., the role was handled through shift work and overtime). While a siloed approach is not necessarily problematic, multiple sites did suggest that one way to improve is to ensure police staff who oversaw SSYI were a positive liaison for community partners.

The other approach for police in some SSYI sites is one of a more integrated partnership. In this case, police have a liaison or broader group of officers who engage with community partners in ongoing information sharing to support SSYI. For example, police in some sites provide informal intelligence about escalating street issues that involve SSYI clients to allow community partners to intervene before criminal activity occurred. In some sites, police regularly showed up at the

program location and interacted with program partners, or in more limited cases, SSYI clients if encouraged by site staff.

Overall, sites reported either a positive or improving relationship with police within the context of SSYI. The primary challenge discussed by some police contacts is the institutional culture shift away from an approach focused primarily on suppression to an approach that allowed for more prevention, as well as buy-in from police leadership in some sites. It was clear from the interviews and site visit observations that police in the majority of sites were genuinely interested in positive outcomes for SSYI clients as well as a strong relationship with program partners. Certain sites had police liaison turnover that disrupted preexisting relationships between police and SSYI partners, but generally any intentional shifts within police leads were viewed as a step in the right direction.

*Program staff reported either a **positive or improving relationship with police** within the context of SSYI.*

Outreach and Case Management Services. Within SSYI there are two roles common across all sites. Outreach workers and case managers. Outreach workers are responsible for making the initial contact with prospective clients in order to recruit and enrollment them for services. Sites describe the outreach process as intense for most prospective clients, and it often requires many outreach attempts over the course of weeks before enrolling individuals. If outreach is successful and the client enrolls, there is a transition to a case manager who works with the client and connects him to additional services. The initial findings suggest that SSYI sites are using at least two distinct approaches to the outreach and case management role. One approach within a portion of sites was to combine these roles into one position. A smaller number of sites also leveraged the case management position to provide additional support services (e.g., employment training and counseling). This approach has potential benefits and risks. For example, having one staff fill multiple roles within SSYI may provide some continuity of care; however, it may lead to lesser quality services or considerable gaps at the site if the site has staff turnover. The other approach among sites was to employ distinct outreach workers who may or may not be affiliated with the lead organization. In this case, outreach workers were exclusively responsible for finding and referring potential clients to case managers for support and programming.

A fairly common characteristic for outreach staff across sites was to have “lived the experience;” these staff often grew up in the community they serve and have personal ties to SSYI clients or their family members, peers, or acquaintances. Staff interviewed suggested that this created an informal bond with prospective clients that facilitated initial “trust” in the staff person, and SSYI by extension. That said, multiple sites expressed how difficult it was to recruit

prospective clients for enrollment—at times requiring upwards of 10 or more outreach attempts before making successful contact.

When prompted about what leads to successful outreach, sites stressed the importance of trust and establishing a safe space for clients. Some sites suggested that trust is built through clients' prior experience with the organization or programming. Others offered that trust can be established through “little wins” and incentives early on in the enrollment process. Several sites expressed, above all, the importance of not making promises to clients because of the potential damage it can do to client trust. In addition to relational trust, clients need to trust that the physical space is safe. In large cities, this might require meeting the clients where they prefer or establishing a wide network of community partners, so that clients are not asked to cross into unfamiliar, or rival, territory. Further, in several SSYI sites, formal protocols are used to ensure clients are “safe” to come into community buildings and pose no immediate risk to the safety of others in the building. Beyond trust and safety, offering food and a clean, reliable source of support and a place to go to engage in positive experiences goes a long way for SSYI clients who might not otherwise have access to these resources on a regular basis.

The outreach role is one that is prone to both secondary trauma and relapse into “the life.”²⁰ Self-care was something that site leadership promoted among outreach workers and case managers. No sites identified specific policy or formal training around self-care, but several sites noted that it is a critical ingredient to the success and retention of staff. At least one site had a mental health clinician who provided regular support to employees as challenges emerged. Sites also held team-building exercises or staff outings as a potential solution. At the most basic level, multiple sites reaffirmed the importance of the team in order to support each person within the work as well as to improve work-life balance.

Among case managers, licensure or post-secondary academic experience was commonly reported. Their primary criteria for selecting case managers was the individual's capacity to serve the clientele within SSYI who described it. For example, some case managers had undergraduate- or graduate-level experience in social work or psychology. In larger sites with multiple case managers, staff often relied on each other—“the team”—to best serve the SSYI clients. Although outreach workers may have worked in relative isolation focused on a caseload, case managers provided scaffolding to support each other's clients. Case managers sharing and discussing clients' texts, activities, and social media posts was described and observed in multiple sites. Several sites used some type of needs assessment²¹ process at the start of the case management process. The needs assessment was used to first address the

²⁰ Observation based on authors' discussion with program staff within Massachusetts and other jurisdictions.

²¹ While most sites 10 of 12 described a needs assessment process, it varied considerably across sites. Some use validated tools (e.g., Ohio Risk Assessment System) while others use a locally developed tool that does not fully capture historical and criminogenic needs.

most pressing barrier to positive development, and then to establish an individualized service plan to guide the client’s program experience. Overall, however, the needs assessment process was highly variable across sites and a small number of sites did not use any needs assessment process at the time of the interviews.²²

Sites’ capacity to provide resources beyond outreach and case management varied considerably. For some sites, the majority of services were self-contained in-house, while others needed to leverage community partners to provide services to clients. The reason for this divergence varied by site. As mentioned above, in the larger cities, it would be unsafe and unrealistic to maintain most services in-house because of preexisting relationships between, and gang affiliations among, SSYI clients. For others, it was an issue of capacity—in either staff or space—to operate the expansive set of programming required to fully support SSYI clients. Regardless of whether programming was kept in-house or provided in the community, sites identified common strengths and gaps. The following sections briefly describe how sites addressed the following SSYI service components: employment and workforce readiness, education, behavioral health, and other services (e.g., housing or transportation).

Workforce Readiness and Employment

A majority of sites emphasized the importance and relative strength of the employment and workforce readiness component in the SSYI model. It was expressed that not only are long-term, well-paying jobs necessary to turn SSYI clients away from illicit activities, but the soft skills training that is often provided through SSYI is also essential for improving clients’ chances of success. Most sites had some type of workforce training component as well as employer partnerships in the community. For example, several sites offered in-house workforce readiness training related to professional attire, communication, and job expectations (e.g., timeliness and personal hygiene). Other sites had similar trainings facilitated by outside partners, such as MassHire. Within some sites, clients receive stipends for engaging in workforce readiness training. The stipends incentivize ongoing participation in the training and also serve as an initial financial relief valve to support clients as they transitioned from other illicit means of generating income. The use of stipends varied by site, but generally sites provided stipends for either achieving programming benchmarks or for regular attendance and training engagement.

Beyond workforce readiness training, several sites also provided subsidized employment programming either within the organization or with vetted community partners. Often, sites had group check-in, transportation to off-site job sites, and debriefs at the end of the day. Subsidized employment was nearly always less than full-time and included additional training

²² It should also be noted that the state piloting an evidence-based needs assessment at the time of the interviews and intended to mandate using an evidence-based needs assessment across all sites. Therefore, the variation or lack of needs assessments in some sites may have changed since the time of the interviews

components to facilitate professional growth. Finally, nearly all sites had external community partners that clients were referred to for job placement. The breadth and quality of employment opportunities varied drastically by site. Some sites had partnerships with local government, construction, utility, and other private partners that offer a variety of career tracks. Other sites were much more limited with perhaps only one or two community employment partners. This was most often due to either access and availability to quality partners in the smaller communities or lack of employer trust in the SSYI clients. Overall, however, employment-related services were seen as a critical ingredient to client success and a relative strength across many sites.

Education

Educational services also varied across sites. Some sites mentioned very little with regard to educational services outside of workforce training; however, the most common programming was GED or HiSET courses to help clients achieve their high school equivalency certificates. Some sites offered these courses in-house through permanent staff, while others contracted with external partners or consultants who either went to the site or offered community-based programming. Beyond these courses, the educational opportunities varied based on the type of community partnerships that were established as well as the in-house infrastructure available to support additional coursework. For example, some of the larger centralized sites had the capacity to offer a variety of vocational and traditional courses that were provided in small group settings to SSYI clients or as part of a broader group of participants. Other sites had relationships with community colleges that connected older clients with opportunities to enroll in postsecondary coursework.

Mental Health

Mental health supports are a core component of SSYI, and sites echoed the importance of ongoing mental health services for SSYI clients progression and well-being. One example of mental health supports is cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT). CBT, a short-term psychotherapy focused on reorienting goals and behaviors, was described as in use at several SSYI sites. Whether used by trained case managers or external providers, CBT was discussed as one way to help SSYI clients with self-regulation and decision making as they navigate life. While the majority of sites expressed that mental health support was one of the biggest needs for this population, several sites also acknowledged that they are under-equipped to fully serve SSYI clients. More training for staff and resources to engage high-capacity community partners were commonly mentioned in regard to mental health services. Although most sites had partnerships with local mental health clinicians and/or facilities, several sites had challenges successfully referring clients into these services due to either lack of trust among clients or lack of experience among clinicians to support the SSYI clientele – or both. In addition, the opioid crisis was referenced as an added complexity to enrolling and engaging SSYI clients. Generally, staff

felt that they did not have the training to deal with serious substance use issues, and the interplay between violence, drug use, and drug sales put additional demands on staff related to how they engaged with clients. The other service gaps commonly discussed across sites included the housing shortage in SSYI cities, which was compounded by the criminal history of clients; the inability to provide basic needs (e.g., emergency funds) for clients; and offering supportive services for families of clients.

Key Challenges and Successes

The interviews and site visits illuminated many common challenges within and across SSYI sites. Several sites identified housing, homelessness, and substance use—specifically opioids and marijuana—as major barriers to engaging the SSYI population in services. Affordable and safe housing in these communities, like elsewhere, is in short supply and rent prices continue to climb. Some sites mentioned SSYI clients’ revert back to criminal life to financially support partners and/or children. For single males, the housing crisis, compounded with the lack of adequate shelters or youth homes that accommodate young men, resulted in couch surfing or homelessness in many SSYI communities. Clients who experience homelessness often have had a unique set of traumatic experiences (e.g., running away, abandonment) that providers must understand to adequately support them.²³

Additionally, job placement was a key challenge reported by sites. Many of the SSYI clients who are street involved were unable to work with other SSYI client or at certain job sites due to the risk of gang violence. Further, in some sites, prospective employers were resistant to hiring SSYI clients due to their criminal history and propensity for violence. Finally, those clients who were successfully placed often only made near or at minimum wage. Multiple site staff discussed how difficult it is to keep clients placed in low paying jobs when they can make far more money through drug sales or other illicit and criminal careers.

Finally, other challenges noted were inadequate behavioral health support and engagement, as well as staff capacity to support the mental health needs of SSYI population. Behavioral health services take time to access and complete and require a lot of trust and buy-in from SSYI clients before they are willing to commit to the process. Sites who were able to offer these supports in-house and through permanent staff were less concerned with the component. Sites with only external partners or contracted mental health services that were not permanently available to clients noted this as a challenge they needed to address. Additionally, although staff capacity to work with a proven risk population had improved across many sites, some sites were not sufficiently able to address the needs of non-native English speakers because few

²³ See National Health Care for the Homeless Council (2016).

qualified staff were bilingual. Similarly, sites discussed continually trying to ensure that their staff are similar to the clients they serve in terms of gender, race, and ethnicity, but this parity has been difficult to attain in all sites

Despite the challenges discussed above, SSYI sites also noted several successes. The most common successes came from outreach and case management, job-related services, and partner collaboration.

While all sites provide outreach and case management, nearly all sites also noted outreach and case management as a specific strength. This was often described as it relates to the quality of the relationship between SSYI staff and clients as well as the quality of individualized care provided through case managers. Additionally, Some sites engaged SSYI clients while incarcerated and supported families of SSYI clients as needed to increase buy-in and to sustain a relationship with the client. Several sites prided themselves on hiring staff who could relate to SSYI clients as well as staff who have lived the “life.” Among these sites, it was viewed as a means to create positive and authentic relationships with SSYI clients that increases trust and buy-in.

In addition to outreach and case management, workforce services were seen as a notable success in several sites. It is not surprising given that the SSYI statewide technical assistance partner, Commonwealth Corporation, provides training and technical assistance to all sites around workforce development. However, it was observed that sites with strong workforce readiness training and community partnerships for job placement tended to have the most success in addressing client employment needs. Finally, community partnerships were noted as a key driver of success in multiple communities. SSYI has been in place for nearly a decade and there are sites in which leadership and community partners have been stable over time. These partnerships lead to strong collaboration and communication among partners as well as a stable service array for SSYI clients. Although some considerable challenges still exist to finding the right partners to have at the table, community engagement and provider collaboration were key elements highlighted in the interviews as well as in the organizational survey results, discussed below.

SSYI-Affiliated Community Service Provider Capacity and Collaboration

As part of the SSYI evaluation, AIR and WestEd conducted a survey of SSYI partners and related community organizations in each of the 12 SSYI sites²⁴ to better understand how organizations worked with one another to engage with and deliver services to SSYI participants in order to improve their lives. Survey respondents were asked to complete three sections of the survey:

²⁴ Haverhill was not included in the evaluation activities because the site was new and in the pre-implementation phase during the time of the evaluation activities.

(1) organizational characteristics, (2) prevalence and strength of collaboration, and (3) nature of collaboration among partners.

The section on organizational characteristics asked about the respondent’s role in the organization as well as details on the organization’s role within SSYI including what services the organization offered through the SSYI contract. The section on prevalence and strength of collaboration had two lists of partners. The first list was pre-populated with current and known SSYI partners for each SSYI site and the second list was a place for the respondent to identify additional SSYI partners that were not included in the first list. For each partner, the respondent was asked to rate the level of collaboration experienced in five areas (referrals, working group on youth violence, business partners, delivered services to at-risk youth, and social marketing or advertising) on a scale of 1 to 3 with 1 indicating “communicate,” 2 indicating “coordinate,” and 3 indicating “collaborate.” The final section asked about the extent and nature of collaboration among SSYI partners in the community. For each of the items, respondents indicated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

Sample. The research team identified listed community partners from each SSYI site and invited each listed contact person from that organization to complete a survey. A total of 76 individuals were invited across all SSYI sites to take the survey; 43 individuals responded for a response rate of 56.6%. The respondents to the survey represented all SSYI sites (Exhibit 18).

Exhibit 18. Responses to organization survey, by SSYI-funded city

City	Number of respondents/partners
Boston	2
Brockton	5
Chelsea	4
Fall River	5
Holyoke	3
Lawrence	4
Lowell	2
Lynn	4
New Bedford	4
Pittsfield	2
Springfield	4
Worcester	4
Total	43

Organizational Characteristics. The types of organizations represented through the surveys included law enforcement agencies, mental health agencies, and service providers for young people related to workforce, business, and education. The types of roles respondents said they had within the SSYI included being an SSYI partner; serving on a steering committee; and

serving as the law enforcement partner, the director of an SSYI site, a clinician, an education partner, a workforce partner, and an outreach worker. Overall, 21.0% ($n = 9$) of the respondents were law enforcement partners.

Respondents were asked to identify how many years they had been involved in SSYI, the number of clients they served, and the number of staff at their organization involved in SSYI (see Exhibit 19). The average years involved in SSYI ranged from 3 to 10 years, the average number of clients receiving services ranged from 10 to 257.8,²⁵ and the average number of staff involved in SSYI ranged from 3 to 16. These were open-response questions and it should be noted that these data may have limitations where respondents may have different reference points when answering.

Exhibit 19. Respondents’ organizational history, staff, and role in SSYI, by SSYI-funded city

City	Average number of years involved in SSYI	Average number of clients receiving services ¹⁷	Average number of staff involved in SSYI
Boston	5.5	87	16
Brockton	10	27.3	2.6
Chelsea	5	89.7	3
Fall River	7.2	257.8	4.4
Holyoke	4.3	50	4
Lawrence	3	10	4.3
Lowell	10	120	35
Lynn	2.75	28.5	3.7
New Bedford	6.25	5	3.7
Pittsfield	3.5	22.5	6
Springfield	7.75	61.3	7.3
Worcester	4.5	31.7	3.3

Respondents were then asked to identify, from a list of services, what services their organization provided through their SSYI site. The list of services included fiscal agent, lead agency, outreach, case management, education, employment, behavioral health, job skills training, housing, and other. The respondents for each site identified a range of services, with the exception of Pittsfield, which only identified its organization as providing housing services (Exhibit 20). Respondents from Worcester and Springfield indicated that all the services were provided collectively across their organizations. The most common service provided across SSYI site partners were job skills followed by case management and employment (Exhibit 21).

²⁵ Although efforts were made to focus exclusively on SSYI clients served by the organization, some respondents provided data that may have included other young people served through the organization. Thus, the data may be inflated in certain sites.

Exhibit 20. Number of organizations providing services to SSYI clients, by SSYI-funded city

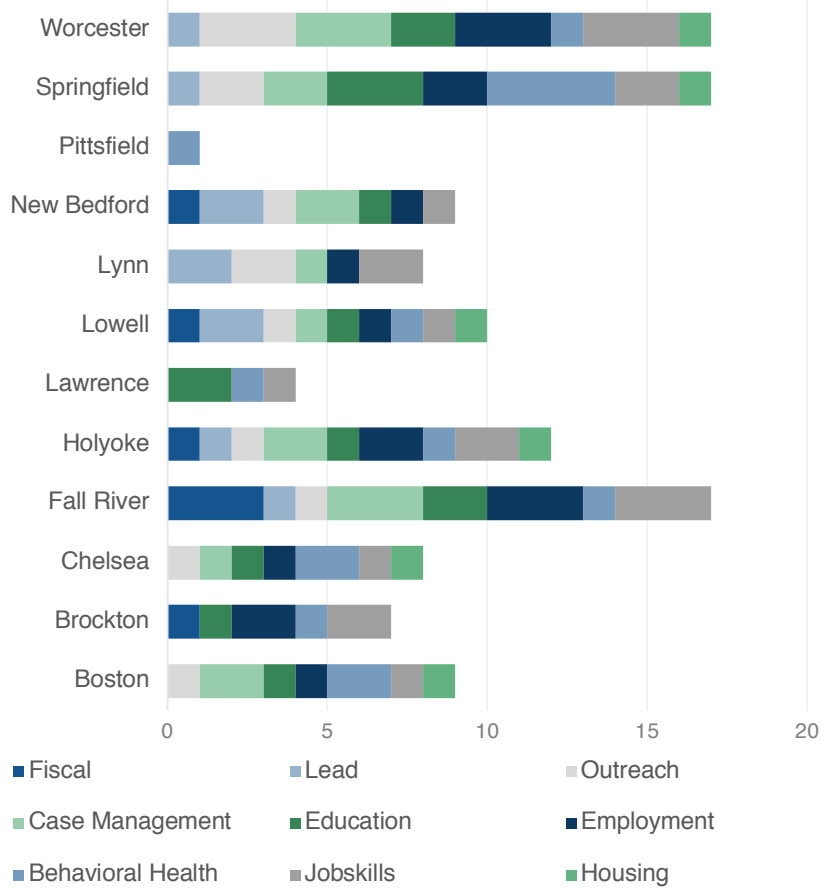
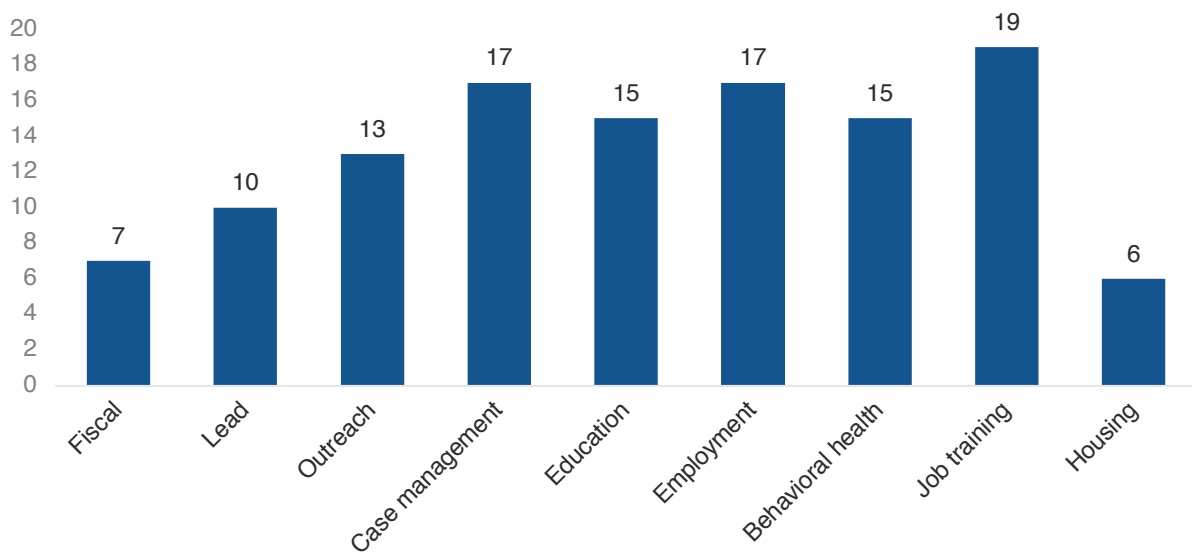
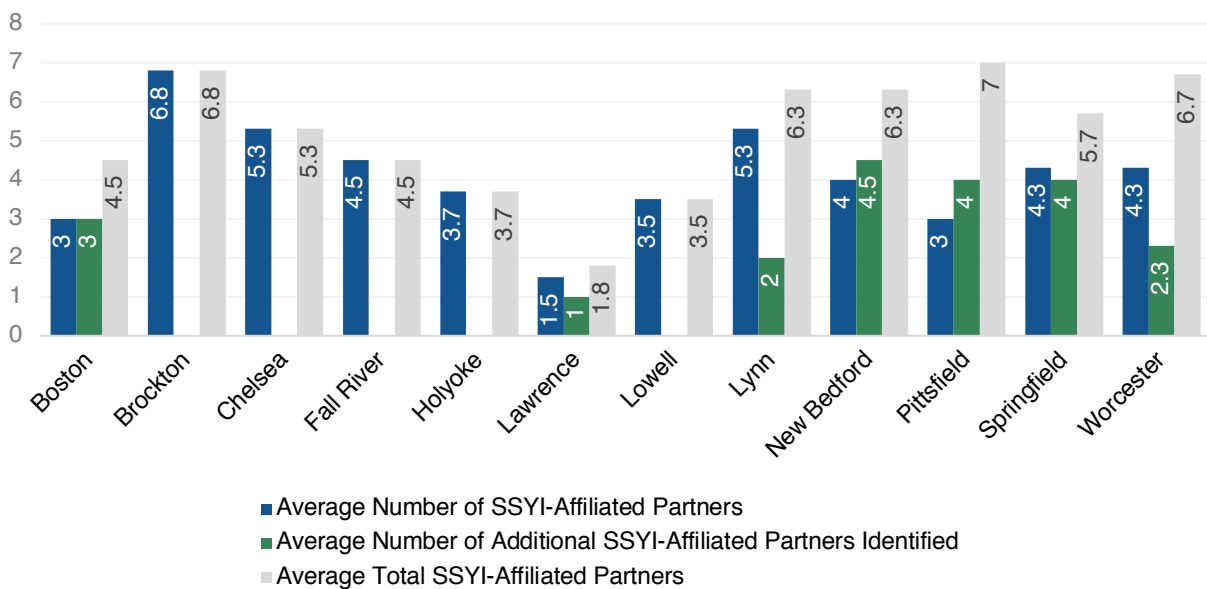


Exhibit 21. Services provided across all SSYI-funded cities, by service type



Prevalence and Strength of Collaboration. To measure the prevalence and strength of collaboration among SSYI partners, respondents were asked to rate their level of collaboration with all the partners either listed on their survey or with the partners they added to the list on the survey. The prevalence of SSYI partnerships was examined in three ways: the average number of partners that respondents worked with on their current list of partners, the average number of partners that respondents added to their list, and the total number of partners that respondents said they worked with. The range of total partners identified was between 1.8 in Lawrence and 7 in Pittsfield. Seven sites wrote in additional partners they worked with and all sites did work with at least one partner on their original list (Exhibit 22).

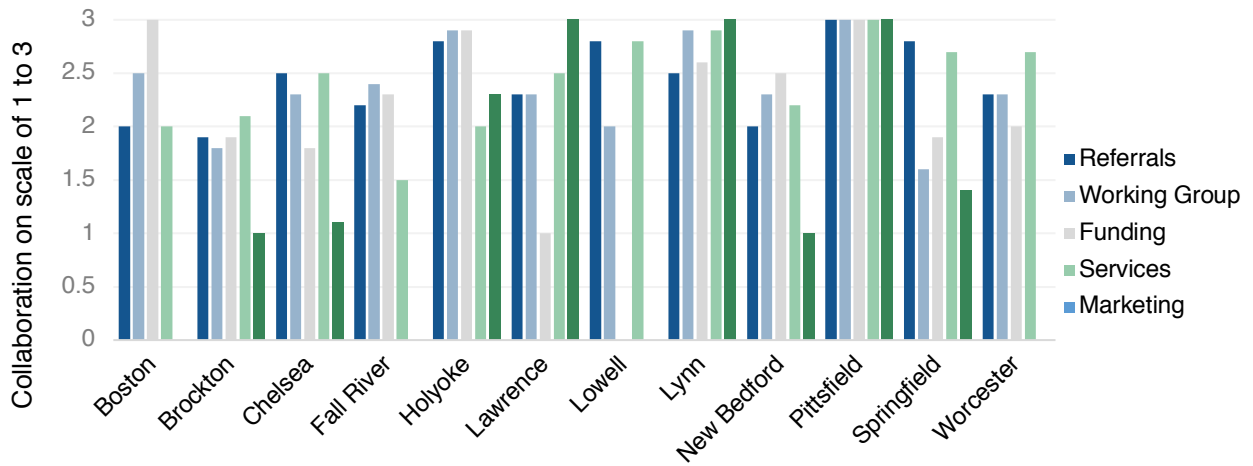
Exhibit 22. Average number of SSYI-affiliated partnership, by SSYI-funded city



The strength of collaboration with each partner was measured across five domains: shared referrals, formed a working group to address youth violence issues, acted as a business partner to pursue funding opportunities, delivered services to at-risk youth and families, and shared a social marketing or advertising campaign. The response options ranged on a scale from 0 to 3 (with 0 = absent; 1 = low; 2 = medium; 3 = high) for communication, coordination, or collaboration; a higher score indicated stronger collaboration.

Among partners for whom respondents indicated active relationships, results showed a range of collaboration in each site across the five domains (Exhibit 23). Overall, although most partners collaborated around programming, including outreach and support services, fewer shared partnerships around pursuing funding or marketing efforts. However, among those with active partnerships, collaboration was generally seen as fairly strong.

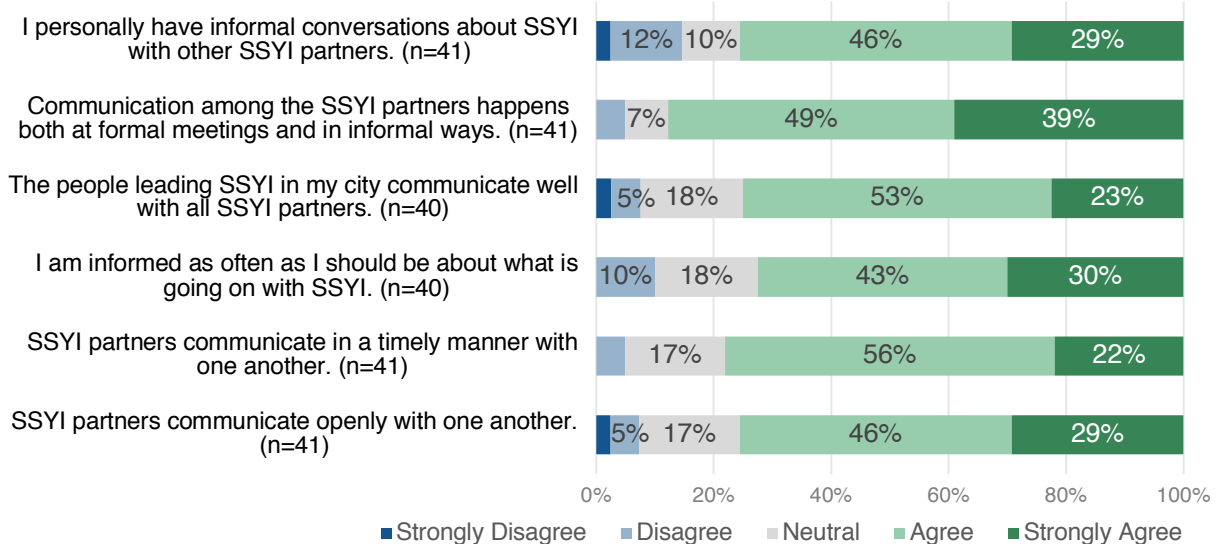
Exhibit 23. Average level of partnership reported across service domains, by SSYI-funded city



Nature of Collaboration Among Partners. In this section, respondents were asked to reflect on the extent and nature of collaboration among SSYI partners in their communities. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement for 31 statements. For the first group of 15 statements, respondents were asked to consider all SSYI partners.

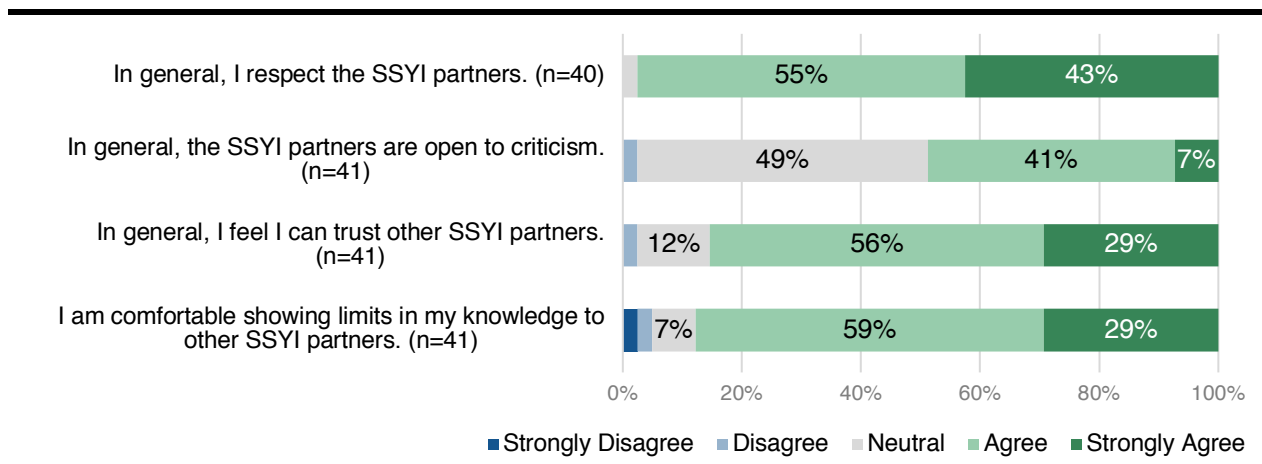
The first six statements were about the providers’ perceptions of services and collaboration among partners (Exhibit 24). The majority of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed with all five statements. For example, 88% percent of respondents agreed (and 39% strongly agreed) with the statement, “Communication among the SSYI partners happens both at formal meetings and in informal ways.”

Exhibit 24. Perceptions of services and collaboration among SSYI-affiliated partners



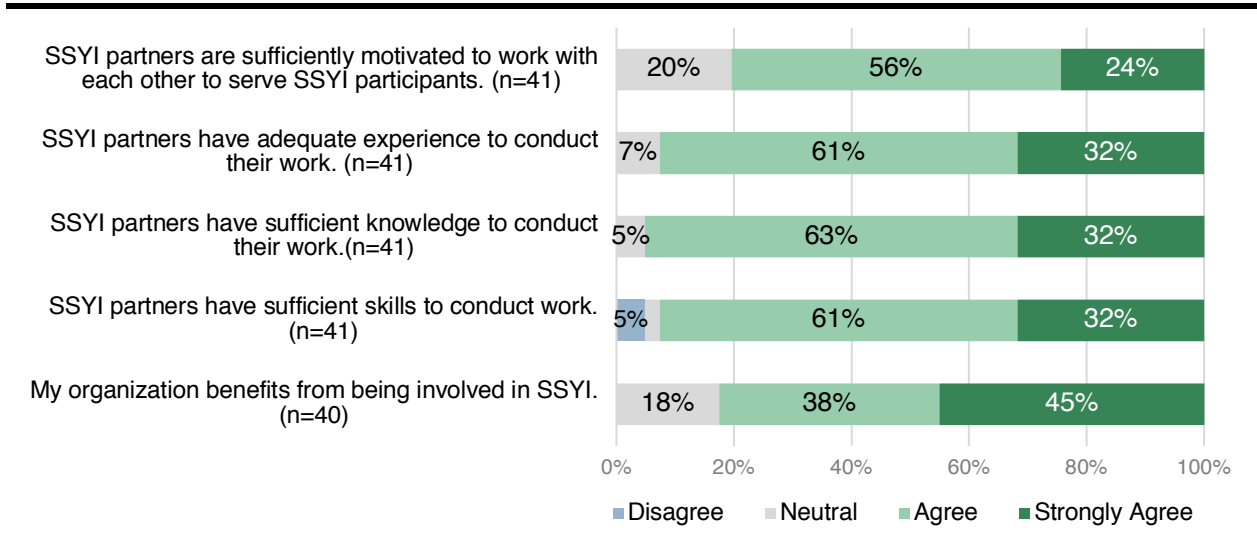
The following four statements were focused on the trust and respect between partners (Exhibit 25). Again, for most of the items, the majority of respondents indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that trust and respect were good among partners. However, nearly half of respondents indicated feeling neutral about the statement, “In general, SSYI partners are open to criticism.” This finding can be interpreted in several ways. For example, it may suggest that the respondents were unsure or that SSYI partners generally did not engage in critical dialogue. Given the importance of critical discussion to continuous improvement, it may be worth contextualizing this finding through a sample of interviews or other follow-up data collection.

Exhibit 25. Trust and respect among SSYI-affiliated partners



The final five items asked about the perceived capacity and motivation to implement SSYI among community partners (Exhibit 26). The majority of respondents indicated that partners had both the capacity and motivation to serve this population through SSYI. Further, when prompted with the statement, “My organization benefits from being involved with SSYI,” 8 in 10 respondents agreed, with nearly half (45%) strongly agreeing.

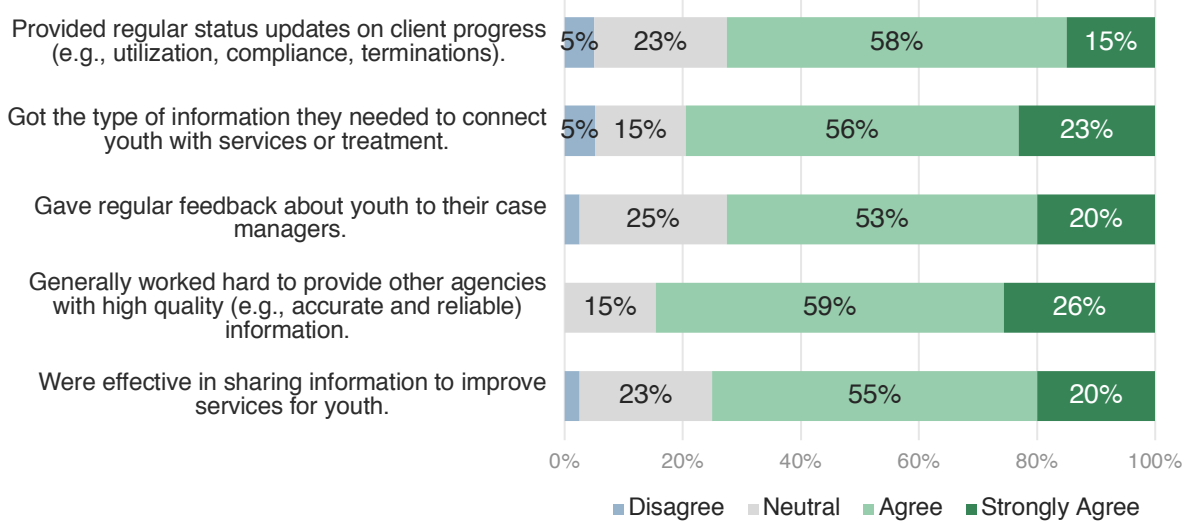
Exhibit 26. Capacity and motivation among SSYI-affiliated partners



Following the initial questions regarding all SSYI partners, respondents were asked to respond to an additional 15 statements to indicate their level of agreement related to the work among SSYI partners, including information sharing, general collaboration, and partner involvement. Similar to the items above, SSYI partners generally thought highly of one another across most indicators; however, trust remained a persistent issue.

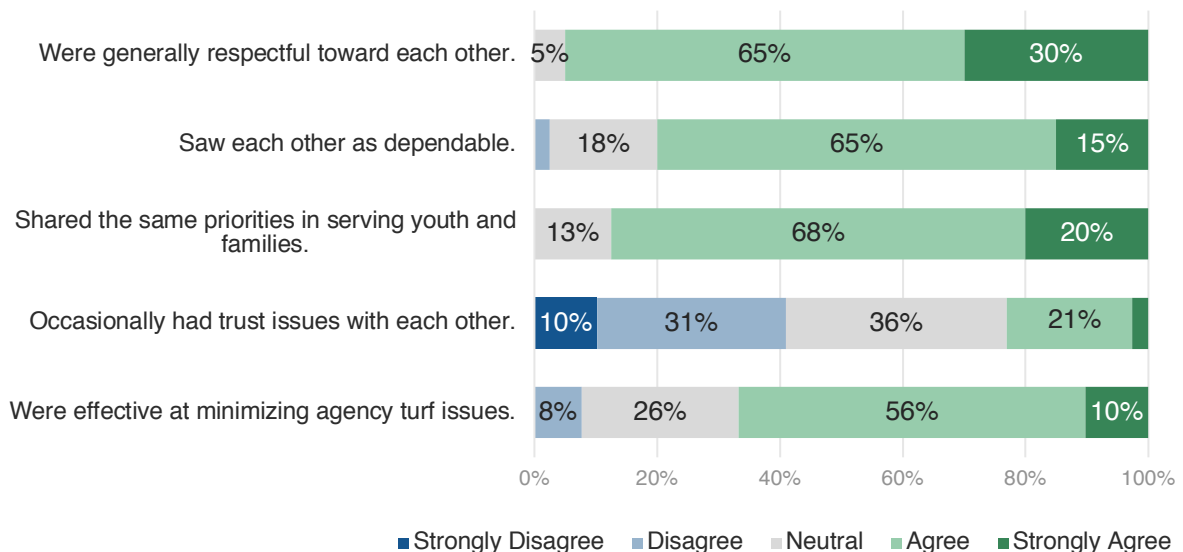
The first five items focused on information sharing practices related to SSYI clients between community partners (Exhibit 27). The majority of partners agreed or strongly agreed that partners regularly provided effective and high-quality information related to clients. This resulted in partners having the information they needed to engage with clients, as demonstrated by the 79% of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they “got the type of information they needed to connect youth with services or treatment.”

Exhibit 27. Client information sharing among SSYI-affiliated partners



The next set of items focused on collaboration efforts across SSYI partners (Exhibit 28). Most respondents agreed that partners were respectful toward each other (95%), saw each other as dependable (80%), and shared the same priorities regarding clients and families (88%). Further, 4 in 10 respondents (41%) indicated no occasional trust issues among partners (with an additional 36% neutral about this) and 66% agreed that partners were effective at reducing turf issues.

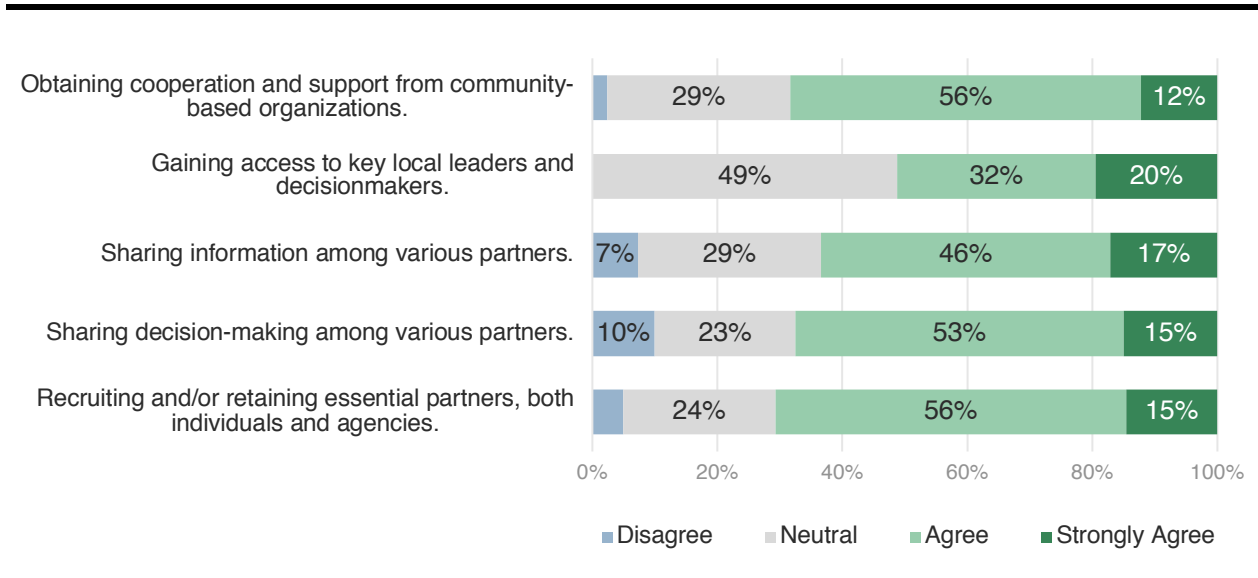
Exhibit 28. Collaboration among SSYI-affiliated partners



The final set of statements related to overall involvement across partners (Exhibit 29). The results suggest that, while respondents generally agreed that they were able to obtain cooperation and support from community-based organizations (68%) and that they could

recruit or retain essential partners (71%), there was less agreement that partners had access to key local leaders and decision makers (52%).

Exhibit 29. General involvement among SSYI-affiliated partners



VI. Discussion

In many ways, Massachusetts as a state has followed the national trend of decreased violent crime over the last quarter century.²⁶ For example, Federal Bureau of Investigation data show that the violent crime rate in Massachusetts fell in 2017 for the sixth year in a row, and dropped below national levels for the second time since 2016 (Crimaldi, 2018). However, such trends have not been realized in many of the country’s urban settings. Sixty of the 81 cities in the AmericanViolence.org database (74%) saw murders *increase* between 2014 and 2017, with Chicago and Baltimore experiencing large increases in homicides during this time.²⁷ While there has been more recent fluctuations in these trends for some locations, murders again eclipsed historical averages during 2019 in cities like Philadelphia, Milwaukee, and Detroit. Indeed, violent crime in Massachusetts is concentrated within its urban cities.²⁸ And it is in these urban cities where SSYI continues to focus efforts on reducing violent crime by serving those most likely to be perpetrators and victims of gun violence.

The findings of the AIR/WestEd team’s most recent evaluation of SSYI highlighted in this report continue to illuminate a clear distinction between cities with SSYI relatively to similarly violent²⁹ cities without SSYI. Since SSYI’s inception, rates of violent offenses and victimization in non-SSYI

²⁶ See Gramlich, J. (2019).

²⁷ The American Violence database project tracks city-level murder rates the largest cities in the United States. The database is run by New York University and funded through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. See <https://www.americanviolence.org>

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ In terms of violent crime rate rather than raw count of crimes.

cities saw modest decreases or were relatively stable. Conversely, in cities with SSYI funding, rates have steadily declined since 2012. Further, cities with SSYI continue to see a positive return on their investment, netting a more than \$5.00 societal benefit from reduced victimization costs for each \$1.00 invested in SSYI. These economic benefits are notable considering the alternative is potential sustained crime and violence.

The most recent evaluation was the first opportunity to deepen the examination of SSYI beyond communities and look at the outcomes and impacts for the individuals targeted by and involved with SSYI. The findings provide a more nuanced understanding of the positive impact of SSYI on these individuals. For example, since 2012, the young men enrolled in SSYI had fewer arraignments for violent (and non-violent) offenses than those young men identified for SSYI but who never enrolled. In addition, analysis of self-reported survey data from SSYI clients shows that SSYI provides these young men with resources and supports they value, if not depend on. Further, participation in SSYI facilitates meaningful changes in their lives that decrease their likelihood for future involvement with violence and improve their prospects for future personal, social, economic, and physical wellbeing.

The current study is not without its limitations and more research is warranted to continue to examine the specific impact of SSYI on community and individual violence. Future investigation that moves beyond whether or not SSYI positively impacts violent crime and instead focuses on *how* SSYI reduces violent crime will further inform EOHHS and other state, local, and nation stakeholders of the ways in which communities can best address the underlying causes of violence for individuals, families, and communities.

VII. References

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Appendix A. Technical Appendix

Imputing Offense Data for Boston

Since data on violent criminal offenses was not available in Boston for 2007 through 2012, we imputed the number of violent offenses from a linear regression model using cities, victimization rates, population, and years as inputs. Specifically, for each crime type, we ran the following regression:

$$Offense_{ct} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Victims_{ct} + \alpha_2 Population_{ct} + \alpha_3 City_c + \epsilon_{ct} \quad (1)$$

In equation (1), $Offense_{ct}$ is the number of offenses in city c in year t ; $Victims_{ct}$ is the number of victimizations for city c in year t ; and $City_c$ is a vector containing binary variables indicating each city in the sample. Using cities and years where we had both offense and victimization data, we estimated the parameters α_0 , α_1 , α_2 and α_3 . Using these estimated parameters and plugging in the values of $Victims_{ct}$, $Population_{ct}$ and $City_c$ in equation (1) for the years with missing offense data, we predicted the number of offenses for Boston in those years (2007 to 2012).

Crime Trends Difference-in-Differences (DID) Model

The formal difference-in-differences (DID) model estimates the following equation:

$$Victimization_{ct} = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 Post_{ct} + \alpha_2 Treat_c + \alpha_3 (Post_{ct} \times Treat_c) + \alpha_4 X_{ct} + Y_t + C_c + u_{ct} \quad (1)$$

In equation (1), $Victimization_{ct}$ is the victimization rate for city c in year t . $Post_{ct}$ is a binary variable that is equal to 1 for post-SSYI program implementation years and 0 otherwise, $Treat_c$ is a binary variable that takes the value of 1 for cities participating in SSYI and 0 for non-program cities, and $Post_{ct} \times Treat_c$ is the interaction between the post variable and the SSYI treatment. X_{ct} is a vector containing time-varying city characteristics that include labor force, unemployment rate, and per capita income. Y_t represents a vector of year fixed effects, controlling for any external shocks in a given year that might also affect city-level crime rates. C_c represents a vector of city fixed effects that controls for city-level, time-invariant, unobservable characteristics, such as city policies or city climate, that might also affect the outcomes. A DID estimation relies on the identification of the coefficient on interaction term $Post_{ct} \times Treat_c$ or α_3 , which measures the difference in changes in outcomes between treatment and control groups from before to after the implementation of SSYI.



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