

2023 CHARLES E. SHANNON COMMUNITY SAFETY INITIATIVE FITCHBURG/GARDNER

Funded Partners: City of Fitchburg Police Department, City of Gardner Police Department, Making Opportunity Count, Mount Wachusett Community College, Shining Light Ministries, Spanish American Center

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

Strategies, Outcomes, and Funding Allocation

Total Funding: \$416,812.00

| Strategies | Outcomes | | Funding Allocation |
|--|--|---|---------------------|
| Case Management, Street Outreach, or Intervention | 48 youth received case management services | 48 case management goals achieved | \$32,620.29 |
| Education & Employment | 51 youth participated in employment programs | 94 youth participated in education programs | \$147,540.55 |
| Positive Youth Development & Recreation | 130 youth participated in recreation programs | 105 youth participated in youth development programs | \$67,984.18 |
| Suppression | 143 hot spot patrols completed | 133 law enforcement home visits completed | \$168,666.99 |

Youth Risk Assessments

- 79% **LOW-RISK*** Youth in danger of engaging in risky behavior or gang activity.
- 15% **MODERATE-RISK*** Youth exposed to the same risk factors as low-risk youth, as well as additional risk factors such as truancy.
- 6% **HIGH-RISK*** Youth who are perpetrators or victims of shooting or stabbing violence, and/or are known gang members.

* % of youth assessed for risk

Success Highlight

“One of our student’s parent passed away from an overdose, and their other parent is currently incarcerated. The student also disclosed their past hardships with substance and alcohol abuse. The student graduated high school a few years ago and decided to return to college in the fall of 2023 for the first time. This student excelled in all their classes during the fall 2023 semester - and credited much of their success to the Senior Success Program. The student expressed sincere gratitude for the supplies and their counselor that were provided to them.”

~ Mount Wachusett Community College

Community Risk Factors

| | Massachusetts | Fitchburg | Gardner |
|--|---------------|-----------|---------|
| Total Population (2022/2023 Estimates) | 7,001,399 | 41,502 | 20,902 |
| Population Lives in Poverty | 10.4% | 13.9% | 14.8% |
| Unemployment Rate (Jan. – Nov. 2023) | 3.1% | 4.4% | 3.7% |
| Total School Population (2022-23) | 964,066 | 6,326 | 2,735 |
| Low-Income (2023) | 42.2% | 72.6% | 64.8% |
| High School Dropout Rate (2020-21) | 2.1% | 2.8% | 2.2% |

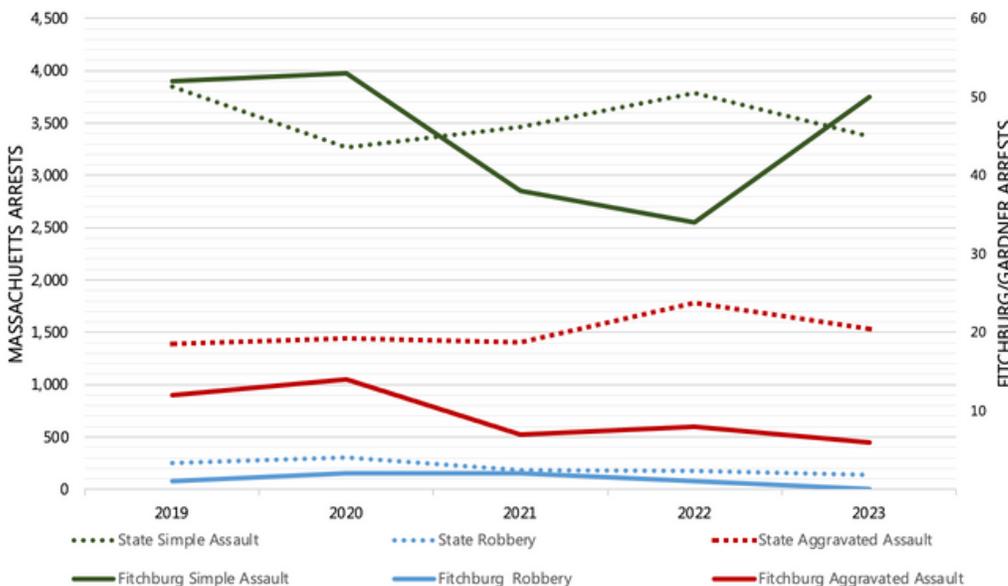
Sources: www.census.gov/quickfacts; profiles.doe.mass.edu; www.lmi.dua.eol.mass.gov/LMI/LaborForceAndUnemployment

Gang Activity in Fitchburg/Gardner

8
Street Gangs
36 Estimated Gang
Members
Between the Ages of
10-24

Since the end of the summer of 2022, the number of juveniles involved in gang activity or suspected to be involved in gang activity has grown for the first time in about a decade. Youth as young as 13 have been noted to be involved in criminal activity, including weapons, disturbances, assaults, robberies, shootings, and suspected drug activity. There are at least three emergent juvenile gangs forming in the Tri-City area, including Leominster and Gardner. Over the last 18 months, they have participated in several violent severe crimes, including shootings, stabbings, and shots fired calls for service. Crime rates have increased in and around public parks, school events, and after-school activities. In Fitchburg alone, these suspected gangs and their associates have participated in at least 16 significant crimes in the city and at least a dozen in Leominster.

5-Year Crime Trends for Offenses Committed by Youth Ages 10-24, 2019-2023



Changes in Crime for Young People Ages 10-24, 2019-2023

- Simple assaults in...
 - Massachusetts decreased 12%
 - Fitchburg/Gardner decreased 4%
- Robberies in...
 - Massachusetts decreased 46%
 - Fitchburg/Gardner decreased 100%
- Aggravated assaults in...
 - Massachusetts increased 10%
 - Fitchburg/Gardner decreased 50%

Source: National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS)

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