

# ORGANIZATION REPORT

Massachusetts | Education | School Readiness

# YWCA OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS, INC.



MARCH 2010

## DEFINITION: SCHOOL READINESS

School Readiness refers to the field within Early Childhood Education that prepares children, aged 2½ to 6, to participate in and derive maximum benefit from kindergarten, laying the foundation for continuous success in school.

## RECOMMENDED APPROACH

Social Impact Research (SIR) recommends **center-based programs** that include:

- Curriculum focused on education and socio-emotional development
- Parent involvement programs
- Access to complementary services through community partnerships

## INVESTMENT RECOMMENDATION

The school readiness program at the YWCA of Central Massachusetts, Inc. (YWCM) is one of several programs aimed at empowering women and helping them become self sufficient. An investor interested in school readiness programs as a women's empowerment strategy should consider YWCM.

## ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

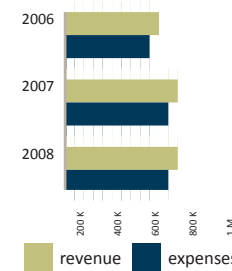
The YWCM annual planning process starts with feedback from parents and staff to identify criteria for success, and then works from the bottom up to tie those success criteria to broader organizational goals and budget. While it currently collects primarily input and output data, YWCM has begun to collect outcome data on its programs.

### FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

COST PER BENEFICIARY	DEBT TO EQUITY RATIO 2008	CURRENT RATIO 2008	# OF MONTHS IN CASH RESERVES 2008
\$12,271*	0.20	1.73	2.49

\*Because variables included in program cost are not standardized, this rate should not be used to compare organizations. Excluding factors such as rent can drive program cost down artificially, affecting the cost per beneficiary as reported by the organization.

## SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM GROWTH



This school readiness program represents 9.91% of the organization's total budget.

## ORGANIZATIONAL RATINGS

SIR evaluates organizations by analyzing key qualitative and quantitative indicators within the categories below. The rating in each category represents a holistic score. A score of one indicates poor performance, while a score of five indicates very high performance. Indicators shown in boxes to the left represent a sampling of the data used to determine the final ratings. For further information, please see the methodology guide on SIR's website

	1	2	3	4	5
<b>ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH</b>					
Financial Sustainability	█	█	█	█	█
Management and Governance	█	█	█	█	█
Performance Measurement	█	█	█	█	█
<b>PROGRAM PERFORMANCE</b>					
Curriculum and Education	█	█	█	█	█
Parent Involvement Programs	█	█	█	█	█
Complementary Services	█	█	█	█	█
<b>SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT</b>					
Systemic Change	█	█	█	█	█
Growth Prospect	█	█	█	█	█

## PROGRAM PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

YWCM integrates all the key components of a quality program: educational and social curricula, child assessment, high-quality teaching, and a strong transition to kindergarten program. Additionally, parents are offered a variety of ways to be involved in their child's education.

# OF YEARS PROVIDING SCHOOL READINESS SERVICE	# OF CENTERS 2009	# OF CHILDREN SERVED 2009	LEAD TEACHER TURNOVER RATE 2008
32	2	80	9%
% OF TEACHERS WITH A BACHELOR'S DEGREE	% OF TEACHERS PURSUING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE	# OF CHILDREN ON WAITLIST 2009	% OF CHILDREN SHOWING AGE APPROPRIATE PROGRESS 2008-2009
45%	27%	5	100%*

\*As reported by the organization. Because this rate is based on teacher observations, it should not be used to compare organizations.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

As a YWCA, YWCM is a direct service and advocacy agency focused on the empowerment of women. YWCM has a very strong advocacy program through which it works to change systems that negatively affect women and children.

SYSTEMIC CHANGE	GROWTH POTENTIAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocates for women on issues including childcare regulations by attending public hearings, mobilizing staff and board members to speak out, and conducting trainings on advocacy.</li> <li>Participates in many pilot programs in order to stay on the forefront of promising practices in early education.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concentrating on improving program quality by providing support for teachers to attend degree programs and trainings.</li> <li>Exploring ways to scale in Worcester through new sites and partnerships.</li> </ul>

## RISKS TO BE CONSIDERED

In the current economic climate, school readiness programs across MA are facing severe federal and state funding cuts. These cuts will force YWCM to balance its investment in the school readiness program with other high-need programs.

## NOTE ON OUTCOME INDICATORS

When assessing impact, one should consider outcome indicators that demonstrate an organization's effectiveness in addressing a social issue. In the case of school readiness, currently available data do not show reliable aggregate success rates because the indicators rely on teacher observation of students. The accuracy of assessments varies greatly with a teacher's level of training on assessment tools. In the future, third grade MCAS scores are expected to yield more reliable data in this field.

# YWCA OF CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS, INC.

## MISSION

"The YWCA Central Massachusetts is dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all."

## ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

The YWCA is the oldest and largest multicultural women's organization in the world. YWCM was founded in 1885 and has provided a school readiness program for 32 years. YWCM continually takes advantage of opportunities to learn from new promising practices to improve its program.

## ALIGNMENT WITH RECOMMENDED APPROACH

CURRICULUM AND EDUCATION	PARENT INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS	ACCESS TO COMPLEMENTARY SERVICES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ State-validated curriculum and assessment tool</li> <li>✓ Formal kindergarten transition program with public schools</li> <li>✓ Tool to assess program quality holistically</li> <li>✓ Program for teachers to pursue higher education</li> <li>✓ Policy of no expulsions</li> <li>✓ Staff training on curriculum and assessment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Formal requirement of active parental participation</li> <li>✓ Home visits to identify family needs and set goals</li> <li>✓ Parent advisory committee</li> <li>✓ Workshops on child development and parenting</li> <li>✓ Childcare and meals provided for meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Food security, nutrition, and basic needs providers</li> <li>✓ Primary health, dental, and vision providers</li> <li>✓ Job training or education for parents</li> <li>✓ Teacher professional development</li> <li>□ Formal referral process for internal and/or external complementary services</li> </ul>

## POPULATION SERVED BY SCHOOL READINESS PROGRAM

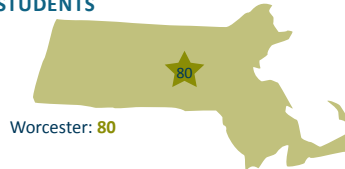
YWCM serves children that face serious family and community risk factors. 75% of its students live below the federal low-income level. Additionally, Worcester has high poverty and crime rates. Several factors that mitigate these risks, however, include the relatively high educational attainment rates for parents (99% of mothers have high school degrees) and the fact that almost 80% of children speak English as their first language.

**1.76**  
out of 3

### RISK LEVEL OF POPULATION SERVED

Note: Organizations featured in SIR's Reports address the needs of a variety of populations, and it is important to consider a target population's risk level when making investment decisions. While organizations that serve the highest-risk populations may report lower success rates and higher costs per beneficiary than organizations serving lower-risk populations, they may also provide an opportunity for higher return on investment. To address variability in population risk levels, SIR created a risk-level calculation that determines a weighted score between 1 (lowest risk) and 3 (highest risk) that considers risk factors in three areas: individual ability, family situation, and community profile, with family situation weighted most heavily.

### CENTER LOCATIONS BY NUMBER OF STUDENTS

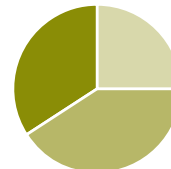


### 2008 PRIMARY LOCATION PROFILE: WORCESTER

	WORCESTER	MA
Poverty Rate <sup>1</sup>	14.8%	10%
Unemployment Rate <sup>2</sup>	6.3%	9.4%
Crime Rate (Violent Crimes per 100,000 residents)	970	449

Sources:  
<sup>1</sup> 2008 American Community Survey  
<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics (LAUS)  
<sup>3</sup> 2008 FBI Uniform Crime Report

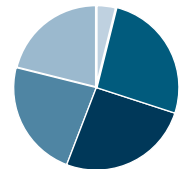
### FAMILY INCOME



34% Up to 100% of the Federal Poverty Level  
 41% 100-200% of the Federal Poverty Level  
 25% Above 200% of the Federal Poverty Level

*As reported by the organization*

### RACE AND ETHNICITY



26% Hispanic  
 26% Black  
 23% White  
 21% Other/Unspecified  
 4% Asian

*As reported by the organization*

### OTHER STATISTICS

0% Homeless children  
 1% Mothers who have not completed high school  
 21% Parents who are non-native English speakers

*As reported by the organization*

## YWCA OF CENTRAL MA, INC.

### CONTACT

Linda Cavaioli, Executive Director  
 lcavaioli@ywcaworcester.org

### ADDRESS

One Salem Square  
 Worcester, MA 01608  
 (508) 791-3181  
 www.ywcacentralmass.org

### HOURS OF OPERATION

Monday-Friday  
 8:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

## ABOUT ROOT CAUSE'S SOCIAL IMPACT RESEARCH

SIR is the independent research department of Root Cause, a research and consulting firm dedicated to mobilizing the nonprofit, public, and business sectors to work together in a new social impact market. SIR aggregates, analyzes, and disseminates the best information available about social issues and the performance of nonprofit organizations.

This report provides an in-depth analysis of one of the 21 high-performing organizations selected from more than 140 center-based School Readiness organizations working with at-risk children in Massachusetts. It is based on extensive issue-based research, consultation with experts, and a rigorous data collection and analysis methodology. When reviewed with the SIR Social Issue Report on School Readiness, prospective donors will gain a deeper understanding of School Readiness and the effectiveness of organizations working to ensure that children enter kindergarten ready to learn.

One Canal Park, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor | Cambridge, MA 02141 | 617-492-2300 (Phone) | social-impact-research@rootcause.org  
 www.socialimpactresearch.org | www.rootcause.org