

ALL-AMERICAN CITY APPLICATION

WORCESTER, MASSACHUSETTS



JANUARY 31, 2017

THE ALL-AMERICAN WORCESTER CAMPAIGN



Executive Summary: Worcester, An All-American City

The City of Worcester, Massachusetts has a long and proud history as a community that embodies the founding principles of the American Spirit. From its foundations as an agrarian New England community in the 17th and 18th centuries to its rapid growth at the center of the Industrial Revolution to its current position as a leader in Massachusetts' growing biomedical and service economies, Worcester epitomizes the growth and progression of America and the American City.

Since 1949, when the National Civic League first issued the designation, Worcester has been named an All-American City five times: in 1949, 1960, 1965, 1980 and 2000. Seven other cities share this five-time distinction, the most of any All-American awardees. The designation of an All-American City award recognizes a community's dedication to civic engagement, innovative leadership and transformational action. Worcester's All-American designations over the past six decades are a testament to her enduring embodiment of American progress.

In 2016, Leadership Worcester graduated its newest class of community leaders. Sponsored by the Greater Worcester Community Foundation and the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, Leadership Worcester offers training and skill development to inspire Worcester's future leaders and create a network of individuals who can move the region and each other forward. Recognizing that the City of Worcester has experienced an inspiring revival in the past decade, members of Leadership Worcester 2016 sought to convene a group to apply once again for the All-American City award.

The 2017 All-American City award is conferred by the National Civic League in partnership with the Campaign for Grade-Level Reading. Criteria for award winners include a display of measurable progress in early-education priority areas: school readiness, summer learning, grade-level reading and attendance. To address these specific criteria, Leadership Worcester partnered with Edward Street Child Services, an organization dedicated to improving quality early education in the Worcester community. Leading organizations focused on early education were convened for a community discussion held at the Tatnuck Elementary School library, one of the Worcester Public Library's *One City, One Library* neighborhood branches. With help from many partner organizations and community contributors, Worcester submitted the following application for the 2017 All-American City award marking significant progress in early childhood education.

We report here on recent progress made in early childhood education. However, much like our nation, Worcester can never accept progress as complete. We strive to make this community better each day: a better place to learn, to work and to live. It is perhaps this enduring dedication to the pursuit of progress that makes Worcester truly an All-American City.

All-American City Award

Application

The Campaign for
**GRADE-LEVEL
READING**

The 2017 All-American City Award will recognize cities that have made measurable progress for students in key areas. The Worcester community came together to reflect on our progress and highlight areas where we have moved the needle on behalf of our students. Here are just some of the great stories we shared in our 2017 All-American City Award application!

Grade-Level Reading

From 2013-2016, 3rd grade MCAS Reading scores at Tatnuck Elementary improved from 35% to 46% of students scoring Proficient or higher while those scoring below grade-level benchmarks fell from 59% to 36%. This period of time represents a significant change in the reading culture at Tatnuck Elementary including the significant investment of The One City, One Library (OCOL) initiative at Tatnuck.

Across the City, four neighborhood library branches have opened since 2013 as part of OCOL. Branches have hosted 250,000 visitors and issued more than 2,200 library cards. Nearly 4,000 class visits have occurred at branch libraries. Over 80,000 student visits have taken place. The OCOL branch has been a catalyst in the reading revolution that has occurred at Tatnuck Elementary. Significant investment in a reading physical plant, paired with strong school leadership, has been impactful at Tatnuck and is now being replicated in some of Worcester's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

ONE CITY



ONE LIBRARY

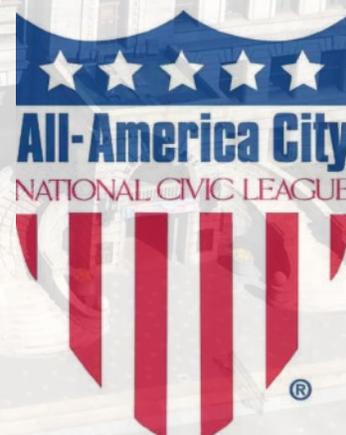
Summer Learning

The Summer Literacy Initiative (SLI) leverages summer learning to prevent learning loss for Worcester's students. By embedding literacy coaches and dedicating some time to reading during summer camps and programs, 75% of participating children sustain or gain in their reading skills and a full 95% avoid typical summer learning loss! SLI has significantly expanded its population reach by more than doubling from 231 children in the summer of 2010 to 567 children in 2015. More than 2,000 children have been served since 2010. In 2015, 93% of SLI students were from low-income households and strategic expansions have been made to continue focusing on this population of learners.



School Readiness

Worcester's Head Start program serves nearly 20% of rising kindergarteners in the City. Growth and proficiency is critical for this population. Head Start utilizes the Work Sampling System (WSS) child assessment tool to assess a child's abilities and development of skills. Through coordination across numerous early-child programs, family services and education outreach efforts, as well as targeted Head Start initiatives, 76% of three-year-olds and 87% of four-year-olds were Proficient in Literacy Knowledge and Skills in the 2016 WSS assessment (up from 64 and 78%, respectively, in 2015).



Worcester's 2017

All-American City Award

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GRADE-LEVEL
READING



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WORCESTER



PUBLIC LIBRARY



Worcester
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THE COMMUNITY
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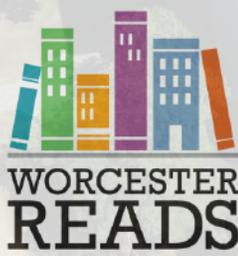


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