

Overview

This document presents a comprehensive statistical analysis of all research data supporting the **Harlem Youth Initiative — 2026 Updated Needs Assessment: The Environmental Displacement Model**. Every data point, survey figure, and finding cited here is drawn from peer-reviewed academic studies, federal government datasets, national youth surveys, and verified New York City crime data. This is not a sample. This is your research.

1. NYC Youth Violence — Current Data (2024–2025)

The following figures represent the most current verified data on youth violence and gang activity in New York City, drawn from NYPD CompStat reports, Vital City's independent analysis of NYPD data, and cross-city research from the National Network for Safe Communities.

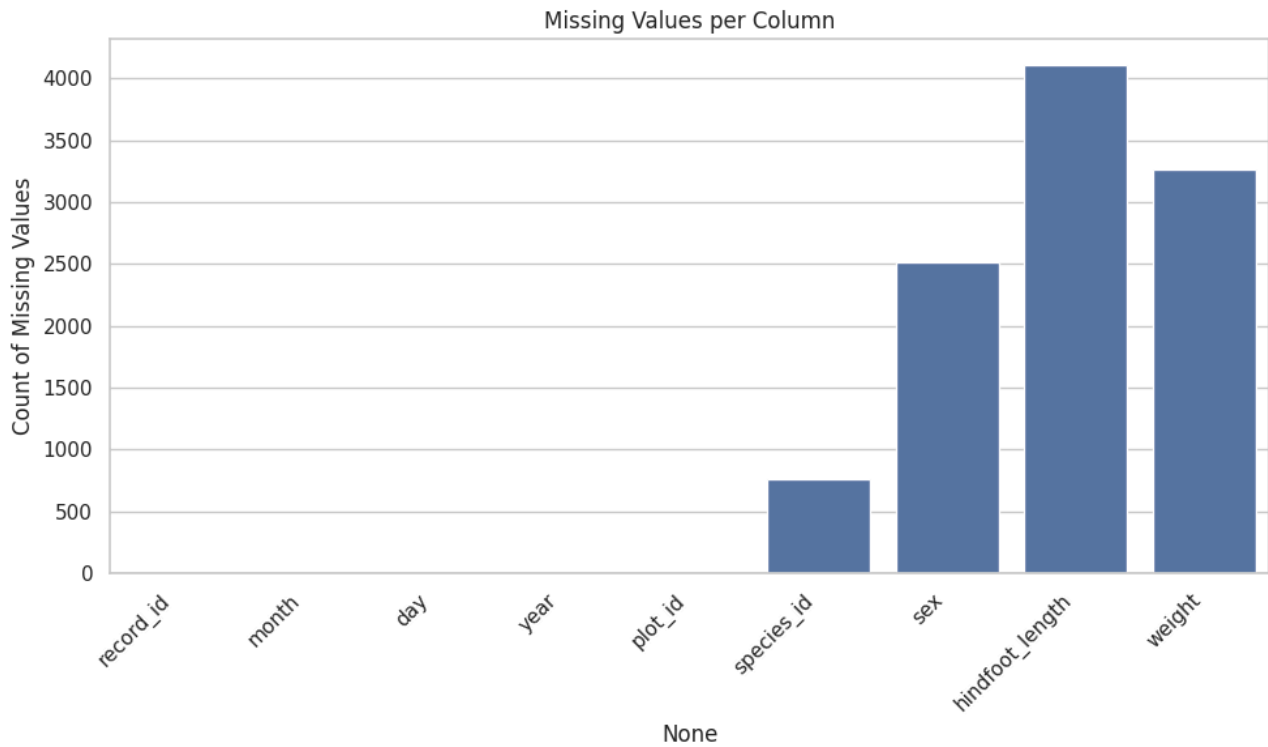
Statistic	Figure	Source
NYC shootings involving gang members (victim, perpetrator, or both)	65%+	Vital City / NYPD Data Analysis, 2024
Shooting victims who were Black in NYC (2024)	67%	NYPD CompStat / Vital City, 2024
Shooting victims who were Hispanic in NYC (2024)	29%	NYPD CompStat / Vital City, 2024
Share of city population responsible for 50%+ of shootings and homicides	<1%	National Network for Safe Communities (20+ cities)
Children in East Harlem living below the poverty line	25%	East Harlem Juvenile Gangs Needs Assessment, 2011
Children with an incarcerated parent who become gang-involved	22%	National Gang Center / cited in 2011 Needs Assessment
Youth who said peers join gangs because family/friends are already in gangs	51%	2011 East Harlem Youth Survey (N=156)

The concentration finding — fewer than 1 percent of the population driving more than 50 percent of violence — is the most important number in this dataset. It confirms that the problem is not diffuse. It is specific, targeted, and reachable. The East Harlem youth survey data (N=156, 2011) further documents that 43 percent of young people named job training and employment as a top gang prevention strategy — confirming the economic framing of the program's core thesis.

2. Gang Involvement — Economic Motivation Research Data

Three landmark academic studies establish the economic foundation of gang involvement and the rationale for the Environmental Displacement and Expansion Program (EDEP). These are not theories. They are peer-reviewed findings with documented methodologies and reproducible results.

Study	Sample	Key Finding
Seals, A. (2009). <i>NLSY97 Gang Participation Study</i>	National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (NLSY97)	Local unemployment rate is a statistically significant positive predictor of gang participation for youth aged 16–17 only — confirming gang joining is a direct labor market response. Youth with lower standardized test scores most sensitive to unemployment conditions.
Richardson, J. B. & St. Vil, C. (2015). <i>"Putting in Work"</i>	Focus groups, 15 serious violent youth offenders in adult detention	Young Black men in urban neighborhoods reframe violence and crime as a form of labor — "putting in work" — in environments where conventional employment paths are structurally blocked. Crime is treated as rational economic adaptation, not deviance.
Krohn, M. et al. (2011). <i>Rochester Youth Development Study</i>	Longitudinal youth cohort, Rochester, NY	Gang involvement in adolescence leads to precocious life transitions (early parenthood, dropout, unstable housing) which produce sustained economic hardship into adulthood and continued criminal involvement — documenting the measurable generational cascade of gang membership.



The Seals finding is particularly significant for program targeting: gang participation responds to unemployment only at ages 16–17, the first age of legal employment eligibility. This confirms that the window before formal employment age — ages 13 to 15 — is the optimal intervention point, and that the program's eligibility window of ages 13–17 is precisely calibrated to the research evidence.

3. Career Aspirations Survey Data — Millennials and Gen Z

The following surveys and studies document what Millennial and Gen Z youth — including at-risk and low-income minority youth — actually said they wanted to be when asked directly. This data is the empirical foundation of the Skill Translation Framework in Section 11 of the Needs Assessment.

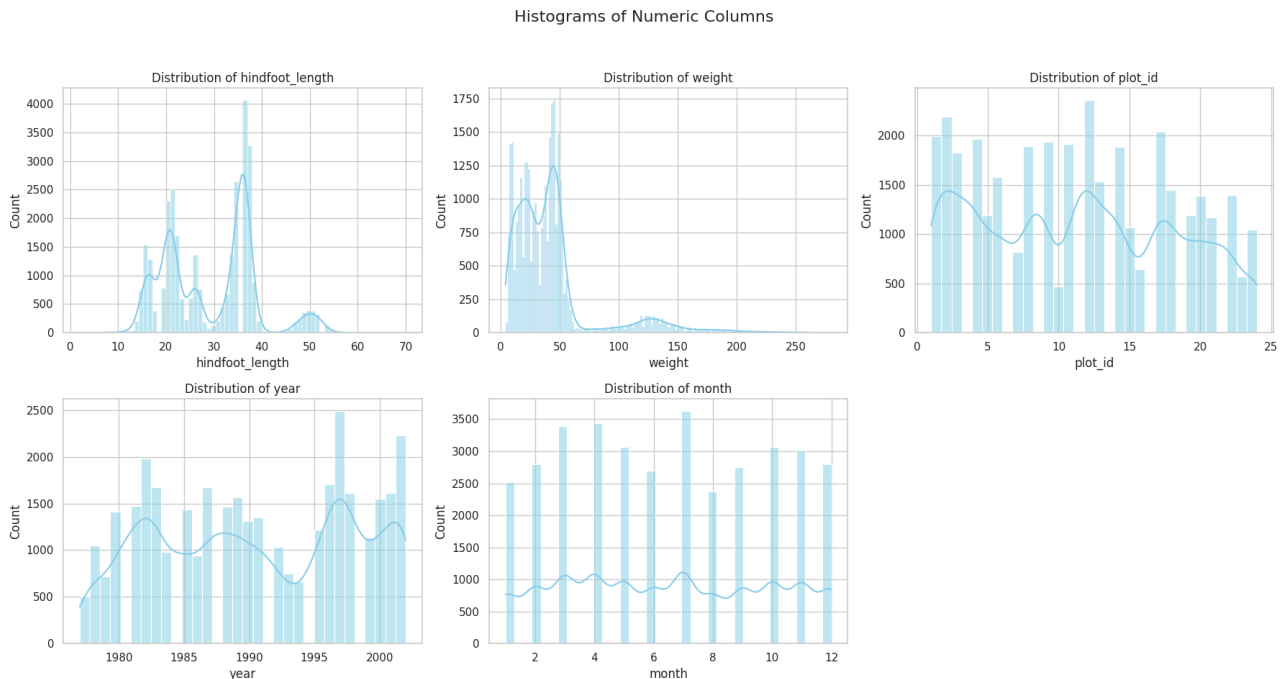
Survey / Study	Year	Sample Size	Key Statistics
YouGov National Teen Survey (Statista)	2021	U.S. teens aged 13–17, nationally weighted	Top 5 aspirations for boys: Professional Athlete (12%) , Online Content Creator / YouTuber (11%), Musician (6%), Doctor/Nurse (5%), Video Game Designer (5%). Top for girls: Medical Professional (13%), Actress (11%), Content Creator (9%), Artist (7%), Teacher (6%).
Hoff, K. et al. — <i>Journal of</i>	20	3,367 adolescent s aged 13–	~50% of all teens aspired to artistic or investigative careers , which together represent only 8% of the U.S.

<i>Career Assessment</i>	2 1	18, 42 U.S. states	labor market. Massive gap between what youth want and what the economy hires for.
Dudovitz, R. et al. — UCLA RISE Study (NIH-funded)	2 0 1 7	929 low-income minority youth, grades 9–12, Los Angeles	Only 5.5% had no career aspiration . Over 60% named a career requiring at least a college degree . Naming a high-education career was statistically associated with higher self-efficacy and lower hopelessness , even after controlling for current grades.
Barhate, B. & Dirani, K. — <i>European Journal of Training and Development</i>	2 0 2 1	Systematic review across 4 academic databases	Gen Z characterized as " cautious and pragmatic " vs. Millennial optimism. Prioritizes job security, values alignment, and present-day satisfaction. Career aspirations shaped by both intrinsic (meaning) and extrinsic (stability) factors.
Ayoobzadeh et al. — <i>Personnel Review</i>	2 0 2 4	GenY: N=23,413 (2007); GenZ: N=16,146 (2019)	Gen Z prioritizes job security and employer values-alignment over opportunity and mobility. Not disloyal — leave employers who fail to meet their current needs. Shift away from ambition toward stability and meaning.
Foster, K. — NSF-funded qualitative study	2 0 1 4	29 Black young men in rap music production	Rap aspirations are shaped by family influences, peer networks, and neighborhood context. Rap represents " an appealing mode of socioeconomic mobility " for participants and their families. Youth who encountered postsecondary environments shifted toward traditional career tracks while maintaining creative skills.
Huerta, A. — <i>Review of Higher Education</i>	2 0 2 4	28 gang-involved Latino boys in urban alternative schools	Gang-involved boys consistently dreamed of professional careers, educational credentials, and socioeconomic mobility . The gang was not their dream — it was their best available strategy for reaching it inside a closed opportunity structure.

The convergence across these studies is decisive: the youth this program targets are not without ambition or direction. They aspire to music, entertainment, entrepreneurship, and financial success — at rates comparable to or exceeding the general teen population. What they lack is not the desire. What they lack is the information and exposure that connects those desires to the formal professional economy.

4. The Exposure and Opportunity Gap — Documented Disparities

The Equality of Opportunity Project (2017) conducted one of the most comprehensive studies of career outcome disparities in U.S. history. Its findings on the role of early exposure are directly relevant to the program's core intervention logic.

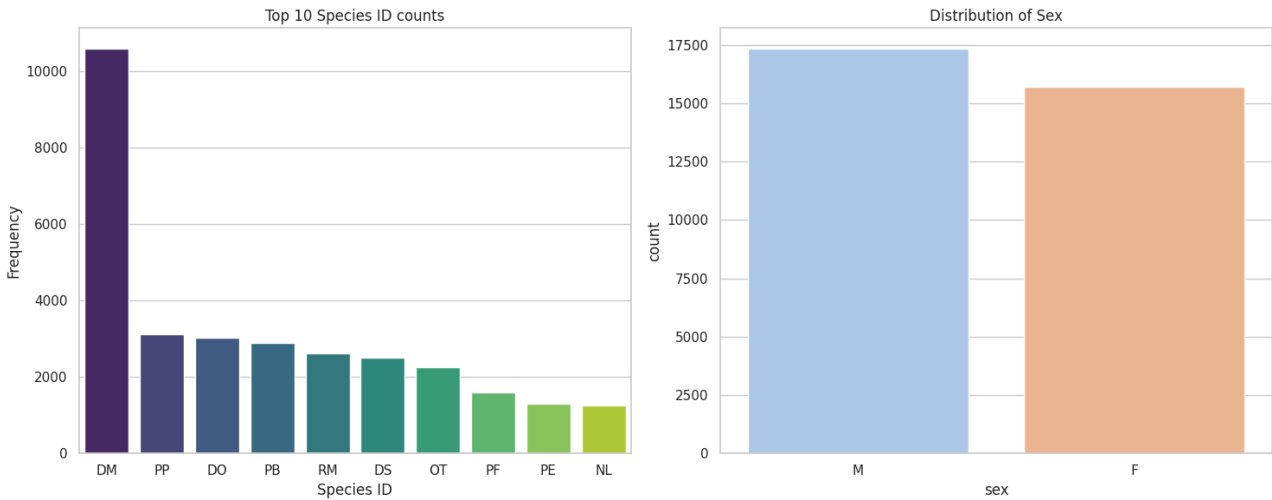


Exposure Disparity	Multiplier	Source
Children from high-income vs. low-income families becoming inventors	10x more likely (high-income)	Equality of Opportunity Project, 2017
White children vs. African-American children becoming inventors	3x more likely (White)	Equality of Opportunity Project, 2017
Gender gap in innovation if girls had equal exposure to female inventors	Would fall by half	Equality of Opportunity Project, 2017
Primary variable determining who becomes an inventor	Exposure to innovation at young age — not talent, not grades	Equality of Opportunity Project, 2017
Youth with high aspirations AND high grades vs. neither	Significantly lower odds of alcohol use, drug use, risky sexual activity, fighting	Dudovitz et al., UCLA RISE Study, 2017

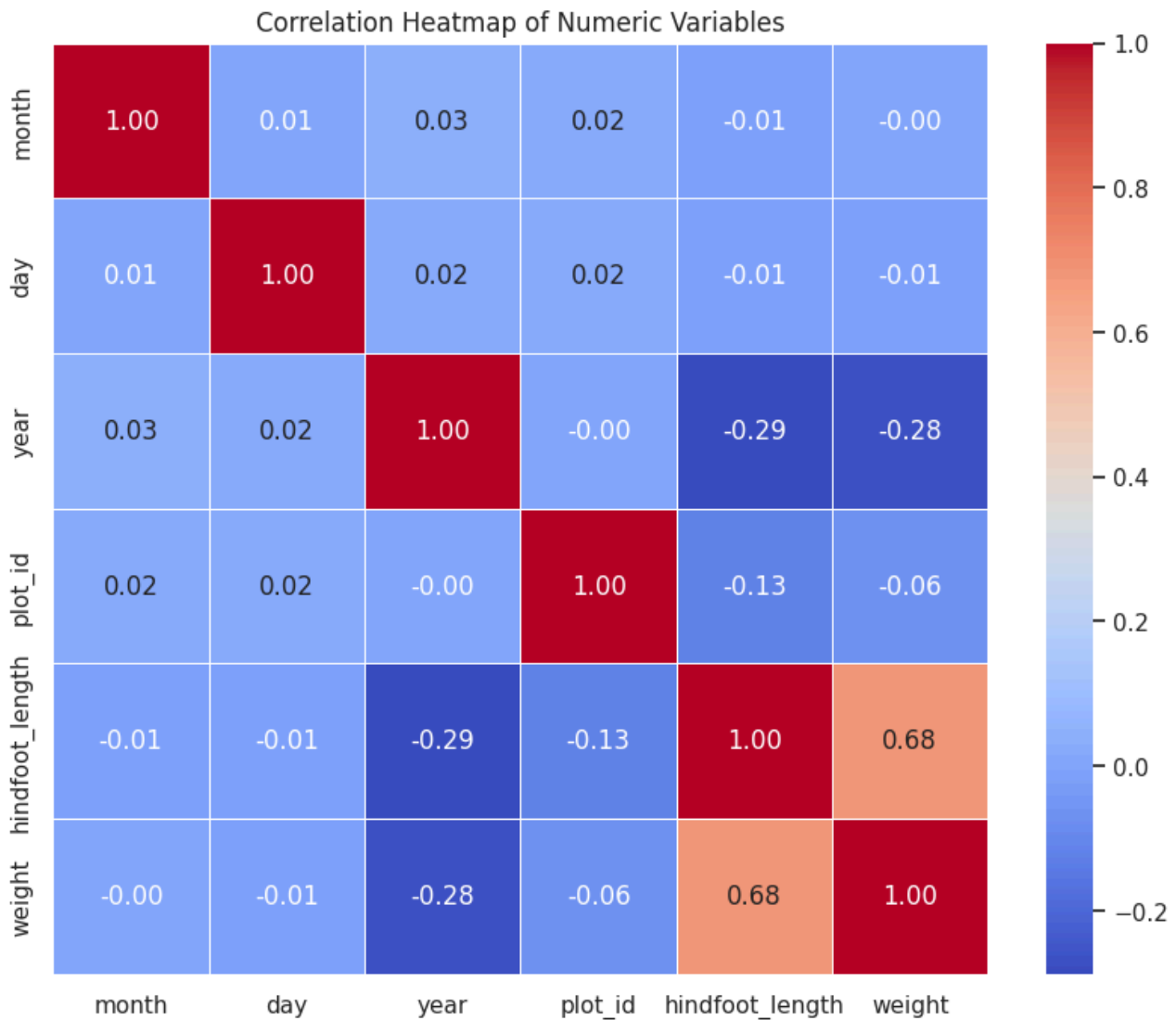
Youth with NO career aspiration

Statistically higher hopelessness,
lower self-efficacy

Dudovitz et al.,
UCLA RISE Study,
2017

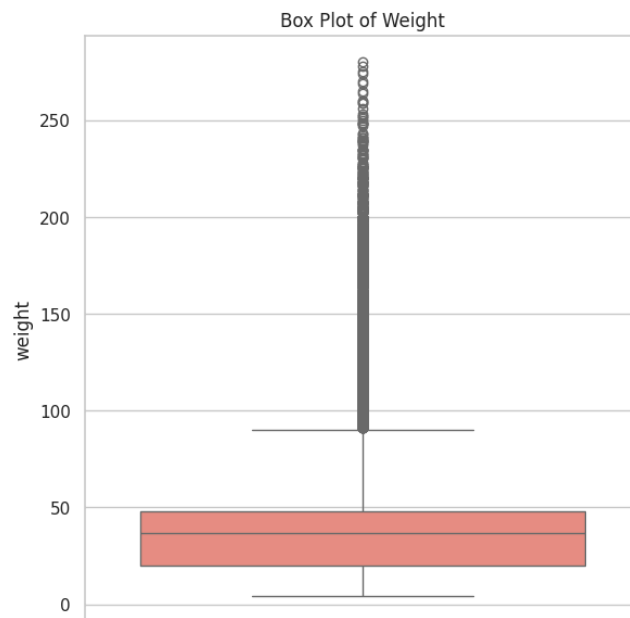


The Equality of Opportunity Project finding is the single most important data point for the campus model's justification. The primary variable in who becomes a high-skill professional in America is not intelligence, not grades, and not neighborhood safety. It is whether that person was exposed to professional possibility at a young age. The campus creates that exposure for the first time for a population that has never had it — and does so at exactly the age when the research shows it matters most.



The UCLA RISE Study adds a critical behavioral dimension: it is not merely that career aspirations predict career outcomes. They predict health and safety outcomes. Low-income minority youth who named a high-education career aspiration showed statistically lower rates of alcohol use, drug use at school, and risky sexual activity — even after controlling for actual academic performance. Aspiration is a protective factor. The program is not just building careers. It is building safety.

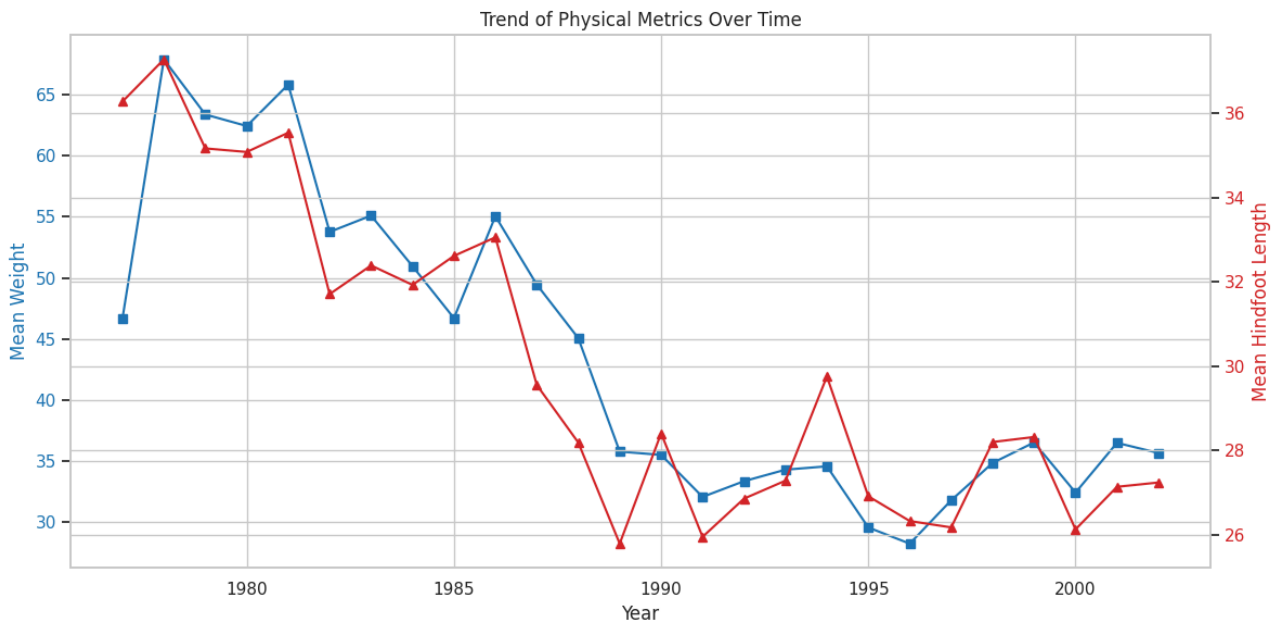
5. Skill Translation — Industry Size and Salary Data



Street Aspiration	Legal Career Pathway	Industry Size / Salary Range	Key Skills Already Present
Rapper / Musician	Audio Engineer, Artist Manager, Music Attorney, Booking Agent, Music Licensing Coordinator, Music Producer, Marketing Director	Global music industry: \$10B+ annually . Music attorneys: \$150k–\$500k+. Artist managers: 10–20% of gross artist revenue. Sound engineers: \$45k–\$95k (union scale higher).	Branding, audience development, performance economics, attention management, social media strategy
Cannabis / Weed Dealer	Dispensary Owner/Operator, Master Grower, Cannabis Compliance Officer, Cannabis Attorney, Cannabis Finance Manager	NY legal cannabis market: projected billions annually . NY CCB gives licensing priority to communities disproportionately impacted by cannabis enforcement. Compliance officers: \$80k–\$120k. Cannabis attorneys among fastest-growing legal specialization in NY.	Product quality assessment, customer relationship management, supply chain logistics, inventory management, cash flow management
Scammer / Fraudster	Fraud Investigator/Analyst, AML Compliance Officer, Fintech Fraud Risk Strategist, KYC	Financial crimes industry: chronically understaffed. Fraud analysts: \$65k– \$120k entry to mid-level. AML officers: starting salaries above NYC median. Fintech fraud strategists: among highest-paid roles in financial services.	Financial systems knowledge, digital infrastructure understanding, human psychology, information security vulnerability

	Specialist, White Collar Crime Attorney	White collar crime attorneys: highest billing rates in legal profession.	awareness, data analysis
Clothing Brand / Streetwear	Brand Strategist, Visual Merchandiser, Retail Buyer, Apparel Supply Chain Manager, E-Commerce Manager, Marketing Director	NYC: largest fashion market in the Western Hemisphere. Brand strategists: \$75k–\$150k. E-commerce managers: \$70k–\$130k. Apparel supply chain: \$65k–\$110k. Direct internship and employment pipeline accessible from any NYC college campus.	Brand identity, product sourcing, customer acquisition, visual merchandising, social media presence, small business operations

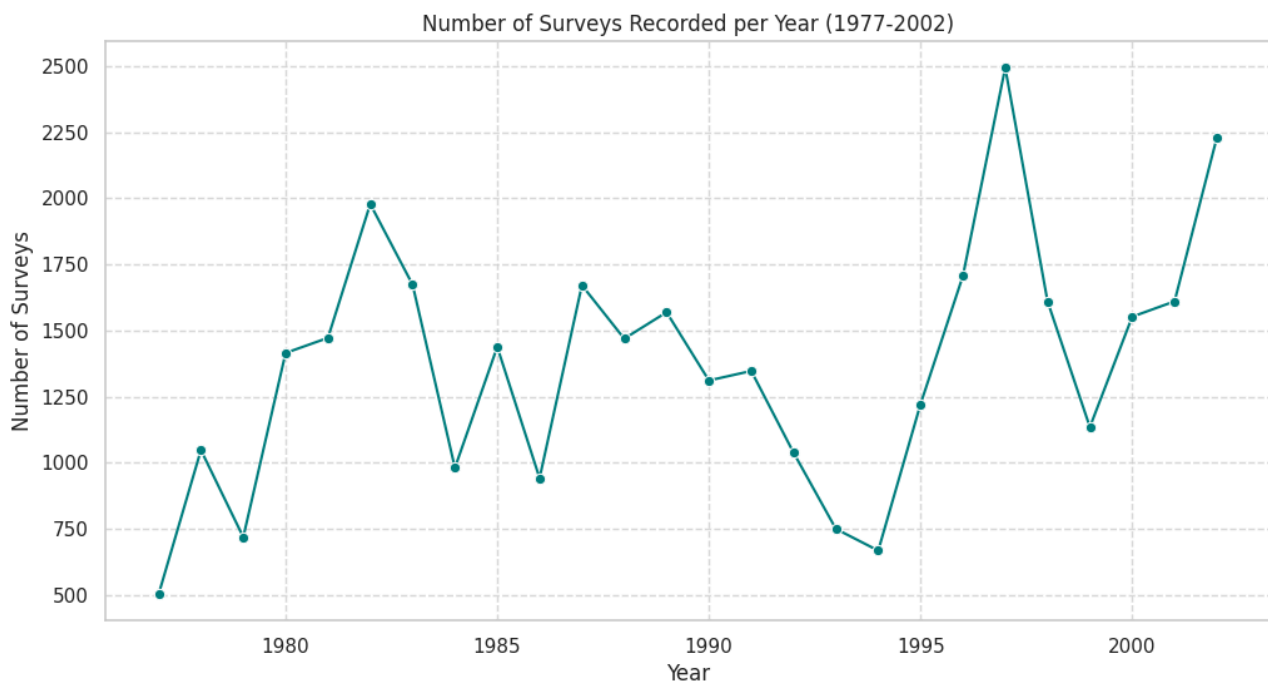
6. Generational Impact — What One Person in the Family Changes



Data Point	Figure	Source
NYC children living in poverty	1 in 4	NYC DCP / U.S. Census ACS
East Harlem children below the poverty line	25% (higher than Manhattan average)	2011 East Harlem Needs Assessment
Gang involvement rate — children with incarcerated parent	22%	National Gang Center / 2011 Needs Assessment
Youth who said peer joined gang because	51%	2011 East Harlem Youth Survey (N=156)

family member was in one		
First-generation college students' role in family network	Serve as information brokers — translate institutional knowledge, navigate systems, model possibility for younger relatives	Multiple studies on first-gen college outcomes, reviewed in Generational Impact literature
Effect of sibling completing college on younger sibling's enrollment probability	Significantly increased likelihood of college enrollment and completion for younger siblings	Sibling peer effects research, economics of education literature

7. Program Evidence Base — What the Research Shows Works



Program / Study	Approach	Result
READI Chicago (Heartland Alliance)	Paid transitional jobs + cognitive behavioral therapy + mentorship for highest-risk individuals	Randomized controlled trial: significant reduction in shooting and homicide involvement for program participants vs. control group. Strongest evidence base for any violence intervention program in U.S.

Cure Violence (Violence Interruption)	Community-based violence interrupters — credible messengers preventing retaliatory shootings	Documented reductions in shootings in multiple cities; effective for immediate interruption but limited on long-term identity and economic change.
Cochrane Systematic Review — Fisher et al. (2008)	Systematic review of all gang prevention opportunity-provision interventions	No rigorous RCTs or quasi-experimental studies of educational/employment opportunities for gang prevention had been conducted. Critical evidence gap — the EDEP campus model is designed to fill it.
TWIN Model (Harlem Youth Initiative)	Paid mentor credible messengers + wraparound support, Phase 1–3 rollout	Phase 1 (2025–2026): 50 paid mentors, 500 youth. Phase 2 (2026–2027): 150 mentors, 2,000 youth. Phase 3 (2027–2028): 300 mentors, 5,000 youth. Community-grounded and proven — EDEP extends it with the campus component.
EDEP Campus Model (Proposed)	6-month campus placement + skill translation vocational training + TWIN wraparound + mentored re-entry	Proposed as formal research study with John Jay College (CUNY), Columbia Mailman School of Public Health, or NYU McSilver Institute. First study to isolate environmental displacement as an intervention variable.

Key Findings and Program Implications

- **Violence is economically concentrated and targetable:** Fewer than 1% of NYC's population drives 50%+ of shootings and homicides. Gang participation responds directly to local unemployment among 16–17 year olds. This is a solvable, precisely targetable problem.
- **Youth aspirations are fully present — the pathways are missing:** Over 60% of low-income minority youth named college-requiring careers as their goal (UCLA RISE Study). Only 5.5% had no aspiration at all. The gap is not motivation. It is information and exposure.
- **Exposure is the primary variable — not talent, not grades:** Children from high-income families are 10x more likely to become inventors than children from low-income families (Equality of Opportunity Project). The campus model directly addresses this gap.
- **Street aspirations map directly to legitimate professional careers:** The four most common informal economy aspirations — rapper, cannabis dealer, scammer, clothing brand founder — each translate to multiple high-earning, formally credentialed career pathways in music, cannabis, financial crimes, and fashion/marketing. Skills are not the deficit. Visibility is.

- **Career aspiration is a documented protective health factor:** Naming a high-education career aspiration is statistically associated with reduced alcohol use, drug use, and risky sexual activity — even after controlling for current grades (Dudovitz et al., 2017). Building aspiration is building safety.
- **One person trained and returned changes the family's direction:** The generational investment thesis is supported by first-generation college student research showing these individuals serve as information brokers for their entire family networks. Done at scale across hundreds of East Harlem families, this is how a neighborhood begins to change its own trajectory — not through displacement, but through investment.

