

# Prop 64 Cohort 2: Chula Vista Final Evaluation Report

October 2024

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# Background

Passed by California voters on November 9, 2016, Proposition 64 (Prop 64) legalizes specified personal use and cultivation of marijuana for adults 21 years of age or older; reduces criminal penalties for specified marijuana-related offenses for adults and juveniles; and authorizes resentencing or dismissal and sealing of prior, eligible marijuana-related convictions.

Prop 64 allocated a portion of state cannabis tax revenues to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) to administer a grant program designed to mitigate the impacts of cannabis legalization on local communities. Since 2019, BSCC has awarded over \$31 million to local governments through the Prop 64 Public Health and Safety Grant Program, who have utilized these funds to support youth development, public health and law enforcement initiatives. In many cases, local governments have contracted with community-based organizations to deliver such services and education.

In 2021, under the Proposition 64 Public Health and Safety Cohort 2 Grant Program, the BSCC awarded \$20,995,842 to 22 different grantees across California. Within the San Diego region, three police departments were awarded with grants, amounting to a total of \$2,999,960 over a three-year period. Together, the San Diego Police Department, awarded \$999,960, the Chula Vista Police Department, awarded \$1,000,000, and the La Mesa Police Department, awarded \$1,000,000, collaborated with community-based organizations (CBO) to educate students and the broader community about the risks associated with youth marijuana use. Funds were also utilized to monitor legal dispensaries and tackle illegal operations, such as selling to individuals under the age of 21.

The City of Chula Vista is the second largest city in San Diego County and one of the few (of 18) that had not banned the cultivation or distribution of recreational marijuana when the application of the grant was just submitted. At the time, the City of Chula Vista had received 32 applications to open commercial cannabis businesses that included retail storefronts, manufacturing businesses, and cultivation businesses.

Educating youth and communities on the risks of marijuana use is crucial, particularly following its legalization in California. Studies at both national and state levels have shown an increase in use since recreational legalization,<sup>1</sup> and regional data indicate a decline in youth perceptions of the harms associated with marijuana.<sup>2</sup> As legalization contributes to the normalization of use, targeted educational efforts are essential to increase awareness about the potential risks and consequences associated with marijuana consumption.

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<sup>1</sup> Gunadi, C., Zhu, B., & Shi, Y. (2022). Recreational cannabis legalization and transitions in cannabis use: findings from a nationally representative longitudinal cohort in the United States. *Addiction*, 117(10), 2651–2659; Paschall, M. J., García-Ramírez, G., & Grube, J. W. (2021). Recreational Marijuana Legalization and Use Among California Adolescents: Findings From a Statewide Survey. *Journal of studies on alcohol and drugs*, 82(1), 103–111.

<sup>2</sup> Center for Community Research (2020). County of San Diego Marijuana Prevention Initiative 2020 Report. Prepared for and funded by the San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency, Behavioral Health Services. April 2020.

# Key Accomplishments

## Key accomplishment #1:

Prevention and diversion services were provided to 476 at-risk youth, surpassing the overall project goal of 75 youth per year. Notably, over 95% of participants completed the program exited successfully. Additionally, more than 90% of youth demonstrated reduced needs on the Family Well-Being Assessment (FWBA) at case closure.

## Key accomplishment #2:

Successfully conducted a total of 68 educational events, including 14 parent presentations, 17 youth presentations, and 37 community education presentations, exceeding the overall established goal of 36 (12 per year). Conducted presentations for 408 parents and 1,021 youth on topics such as marijuana use and vaping prevention; dangers of juvenile marijuana use; marijuana and fentanyl use dangers; current drug trends; dangers of vaping and THC use; and illegal THC in tobacco shops.

## Key accomplishment #3:

Conducted 61 inspections in 24 dispensaries in the City of Chula Vista, exceeding the goal of 48 compliance operations (four per quarter). In 12 of those inspections, it was found there were violations to three municipal/penal code regulations, resulting in two citations. Additionally, 37 minor decoy operations were conducted in 16 dispensaries.

## Key accomplishment #4:

Conducted 85 surveillance and 61 enforcement operations, exceeding the goal of 48 (four per quarter). During the enforcement operations it was found 35 municipal/penal code regulations had been violated, resulting in 34 arrests and 5 citations.

# Program Description

The program encompassed prevention, education, and intervention efforts targeting youth and their families, with a focus on preventing the sale of marijuana to minors, whether through legal or illegal dispensaries. To support these efforts, the Chula Vista Police Department (CVPD) partnered with the community-based organization (CBO) SBCS (formerly South Bay Community Services) to enhance evidence-based diversion, prevention, and intervention services.

Youth participating in the program were assessed by a Youth and Family Development Associate (YFDA), who developed a customized service plan tailored to the individual needs of both the youth and their family. All participating youth received education on the risks of marijuana use. Those assessed with higher needs related to substance abuse or mental health were referred to individual or group counseling utilizing the Seeking Safety Model. Youth with fewer needs were able to participate in group sessions through the One Circle Foundation, and additional group counseling services were available as needed, covering topics such as anger management and parenting support. Additional services included peer education through youth leadership programs and community service activities.

For youth referred for diversion, the program included educational components on marijuana dangers, coupled with counseling sessions based on the evidence-based Seeking Safety model. Youth referred for prevention services were offered marijuana education and participated in gender-specific groups led by SBCS staff using the One Circle Foundation curriculum. SBCS also offered additional services such as anger management, cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), educational support, and family wraparound services, which were available to all participants through other funding sources.

The program also included quarterly parent education groups offered in both English and Spanish. These groups were available to parents already involved with SBCS' Community Assessment Team (CAT) and the Youth Prevention and Intervention (YPI) team, as well as to the broader Chula Vista community through public presentations. These presentations covered topics such as the risks of marijuana use, driving under the influence, and how to discuss these issues with children. The format of these presentations varied depending on public health guidelines and included both virtual sessions and in-person meetings.

CVPD and SBCS coordinated quarterly marijuana education presentations, as well as monthly social media posts to raise awareness about marijuana-related risks. These posts appeared on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram, as well as the SBCS website, sharing key insights from news articles and research studies.

To further address the sale of marijuana to minors, CVPD conducted decoy operations and targeted surveillance of both legal and illegal dispensaries, to ensure compliance with age restrictions for sales.

SANDAG served as the outside evaluation partner of this project and met regularly with partners to track the progress of the grant and help address any challenges. SANDAG conducted both a process and impact evaluation to document the outcomes and successes in achieving the intended goals.

# Program Goals, Objectives, and Design

The program aimed to raise awareness about the risks of the use of marijuana and ensure compliance among marijuana-related businesses in Chula Vista through prevention, education, and intervention efforts. It targeted youth, parents, and the community, offering services like diversion, counseling, and group sessions, with special attention to those referred for marijuana-related offenses. The program also included quarterly parent education, peer leadership activities, and community outreach to enhance educational objectives. Finally, enforcement efforts aimed to ensure legal dispensaries were compliant with specific regulations. Below are the main goal and objectives, along with a detailed description of the program design and components that were used to accomplish them. The program was comprised of a three-pronged approach—prevention, education, and intervention—that targeted youth, parents, and the community, while partnering with SBCS to deliver evidence-based services and enforce regulations against underage marijuana sales.

## **Goal 1: To decrease the use of marijuana among at-risk youth.**

- **Objective 1a:** Provide prevention and diversion case management services through SBCS for at least 75 at-risk youth per year within the City of Chula Vista.
- **Objective 1b:** At least 90% of youth receiving case management services will successfully complete program goals within approximately three months.
- **Objective 1c:** At least 90% of youth receiving case management services will show decreased risk by program exit, measured by the San Diego Risk and Resiliency 2 Assessment.

## **Goal 2: Increase parents' and other community members' knowledge of the risks of marijuana use and dangers associated with illegal recreational dispensaries.**

- **Objective 2a:** Conduct at least 12 educational presentations annually to educate youth, parents, and community members on the risks of marijuana.

## **Goal 3: Ensure dispensaries comply with local laws and regulations.**

- **Objective 3a:** Ensure legal operating dispensaries comply with Chula Vista Municipal Code regarding their daily operations.
- **Objective 3b:** Conduct 24 Minor Decoy Operations (Persons under 21 attempt to purchase marijuana).

## **Goal 4: Reduce the number of illegal recreational dispensaries in operation in the City of Chula Vista.**

- **Objective 4a:** Monitor the community for any existing/new illegal commercial cannabis entities that arise.
- **Objective 4b:** Investigate illegal operations and coordinate prosecutions.
- **Objective 4c:** Close illegal cannabis operators/establishments.

As detailed in this evaluation report, the program's overall goals and objectives were successfully met, and in some cases exceeded initial expectations.

# Methodology

## Research Design

SANDAG conducted both a process and outcome evaluation. SANDAG staff were involved from the beginning of program development to ensure the evaluation accurately measured program goals and objectives, developed necessary data collection tools, and established research timelines and protocols. SANDAG participated in all team meetings and documented up-to-date information on client intakes, exits, and services received, as well as law enforcement operations and outcomes. These data were shared at meetings with partners to inform program implementation and address any challenges or adjustments needed.<sup>3</sup>

## Analysis Plan

The analysis included both qualitative and quantitative components, incorporating individual and population-level data. A quasi-experimental design using a single-group, pre-test/post-test approach (i.e., comparison of measures before and after program participation and intervention) was employed. Changes in risk factors (e.g., substance use) and protective factors (e.g., decision making) were compared over time using appropriate levels of analysis (e.g., chi-Square statistics, difference of means tests, and measures of effect size). Descriptive data on law enforcement operations and activities were documented and analyzed to provide a framework for assessing changes in criminal activity surrounding the targeted entities at baseline and three months prior to the end of grant operations. Statistical analysis included the use of frequency distributions and chi-Square statistics for nominal measurements (e.g., prior criminal history, education, instant offense, race/ethnicity), and difference of means tests for ratio-level data (e.g., age). Below are the process and outcome research questions addressed in this evaluation report.

### Process Measures

The process evaluation documented which program components were employed and whether interventions were implemented as planned. Data were gathered from multiple sources to describe the population served, the groups attended, services received, the type and number of law enforcement operations conducted, satisfaction with services and implementation, and lessons learned. The process evaluation addressed the following questions:

1. What were the number and characteristics of the participants?
2. What was the level and type of services received?
3. How many educational sessions and social media posts were provided and by whom?
4. How many law enforcement operations and code compliance checks were conducted?

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<sup>3</sup> Based on these discussions, it was decided that enforcement operations conducted by CVPD would be reduced from five to two per quarter. This change allowed CVPD to address other issues that relate to cannabis sales and use in the community.

5. What was the level of satisfaction of services?
6. Was the program implemented as designed, what lessons were learned?

### **Outcome Measures**

The outcome measures were individual in nature and focused on how effective the project was and for whom. The outcome evaluation addressed the following questions:

1. Did participants' resilience/risk of substance use improve?
2. Did participants' understanding of the risk of marijuana use increase?
3. What impact did the project have on crime in the surrounding areas of the dispensaries?

## **Data Collection and Sources**

A detailed description of each of the data sources and how data were collected is described below. During the startup process, efforts were made to use existing databases whenever possible. Specifically, SBCS' Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) platform was used as the depository for program data. SANDAG downloaded data from the system on a quarterly basis.

### **Pre and Post Family Well-Being Assessment (SDRRCII/FWBA)**

Youth who received services from the start of the program through December 2021 completed pre- and post-assessments using the San Diego Risk and Resiliency Assessment (SDRRCII). This tool measures changes in substance use risk and protective factors to prevent youth involvement in the justice system. However, due to a change in County contracting and assessment requirements, starting in January 2022, youth completed the Family Well Being Assessment (FWBA). The FWBA established baseline measures on key mental health and quality of life metrics and measured change over time. Assessments were administered upon intake and at exit.

### **Exit Surveys of Participants**

To gather participant feedback, each participant was asked to complete an anonymous survey upon exit. The survey gathered information on what they found most helpful, how they felt treated, areas of personal growth, and suggestions for program improvement. The survey was provided in both English and Spanish.

### **Post-Knowledge Surveys**

To measure any increase in knowledge on the effects and risks of marijuana, responsible adult use, and available community resources for those seeking further information, a post-survey was administered to participants at the conclusion of adult, youth, and community educational sessions.

### **Crime Data:**

To assess changes in drug-related crime in areas impacted by Prop 64 activities, aggregate-level crime data, including highest charge and calls for service, were gathered from a one-mile radius around target sites. Data were collected at baseline and three months post-grant completion.

## **Law Enforcement Operations Tracking Log**

To document all law enforcement operations, including the type, location, and response (i.e., citations, arrests, education), data were tracked using an Excel form created by SANDAG and completed by CVPD.

## **Participant Tracking Logs**

Session and group participation, referral sources, and program completion status were tracked at the individual level by SBCS and entered ETO. Each youth was assigned an individual identification number to maintain confidentiality. SANDAG downloaded data from ETO quarterly for analysis.

## **Stakeholder Survey**

To gather feedback about program implementation, what worked, and areas for improvement, a survey of key program staff was administered. The survey was conducted electronically using Survey Monkey or Qualtrics twice during the project to inform mid-course program adjustments and program maturation.

# **Project Implementation**

As of May 30, 2024, a total of 401 participants received enhanced services. Over 95% of case management participants who discharged from the program exited services successfully. Over 90% of youth who exited the program showed decreased risk at program exit, as indicated by reduced needs on the Family Well-Being Assessment (FWBA) tool at case closure.

Several challenges arose during the first two quarters of the project, including staffing delays at CVPD and a COVID surge that disrupted outreach and presentation plans. Illegal cannabis operations in Chula Vista and San Diego County shifted from storefronts to pop-up shops and delivery services, which used private social media groups and fraudulent licenses, complicating enforcement. In response, enforcement adapted by increasing tips, surveillance, and strengthening their social media presence. As the project progressed, CVPD surpassed its goals for compliance checks, surveillance, and enforcement operations. They conducted numerous inspections across dispensaries, identifying several violations and issuing citations. Minor decoy operations also revealed additional violations. In terms of enforcement, CVPD carried out multiple surveillance and enforcement actions, leading to several arrests and citations.

Youth enrollments increased incrementally as the project progressed, with each successive quarter having more new enrollments than the previous one (Figure 2). This incremental enrollment increase was expected, as both programs planned to expand their enrollment capacity as time went on.

## **Youth Enrollments**

Throughout the program there were 476 participants, of which, 57% identified as male, 42% as female, and less than 1% identified as transgender/non-binary (Figure 1).

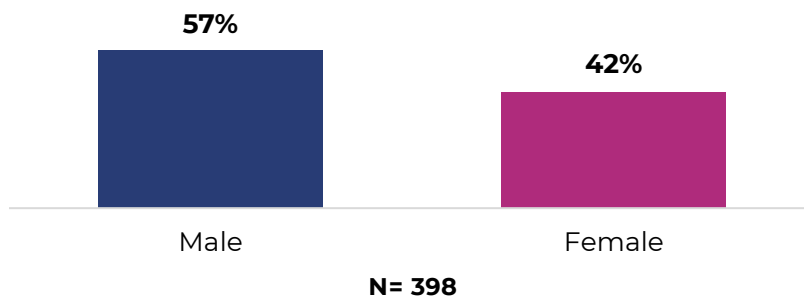
Most participants were between 13 and 17 years old (77%), 22% were 12 years old or younger, and 1% between 18 and 20 years old (Figure 2).



The majority of participants identified as Hispanic (80%), with smaller percentages identifying as White (9%), Black/African American (5%), Asian (3%), and Other (3%) (Figure 3).

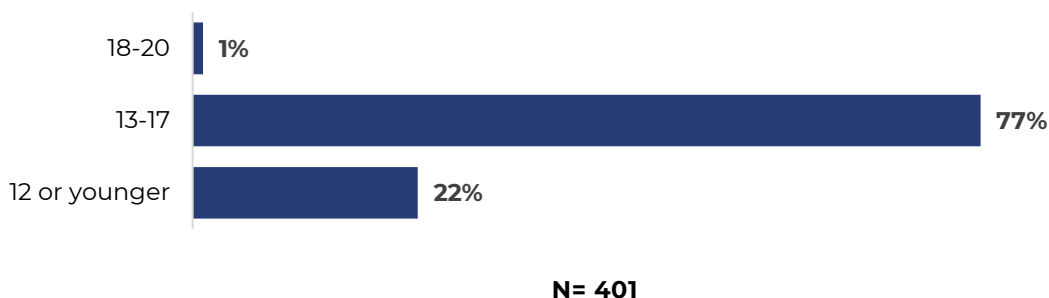
Regarding their level of education, 42% of the participants were in middle school, 40% in high school, 17% in elementary school, and less than 1% in kindergarten (Figure 4).

**Figure 1: Gender distribution of youth enrolled**



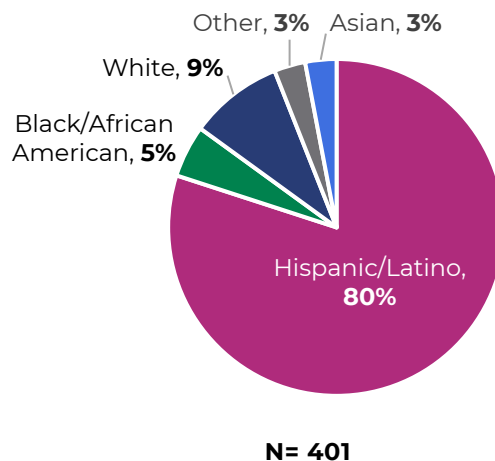
Notes: Transgender/non-binary not included. Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding.  
Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG.

**Figure 2: Age range of youth enrolled**



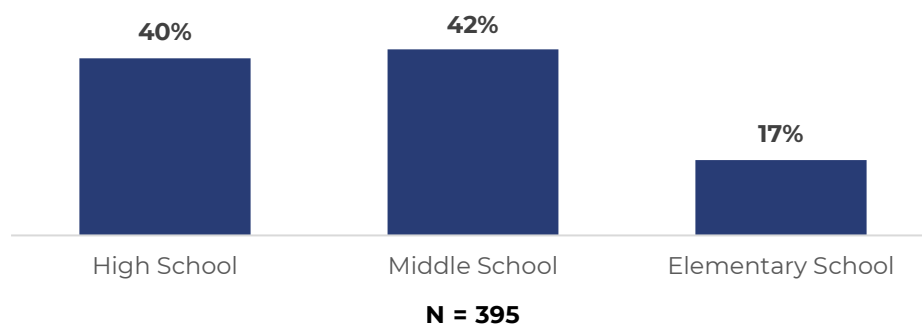
Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG.

**Figure 3: Race/Ethnicity of youth enrolled**



Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG.

**Figure 4: Level of education of youth enrolled**

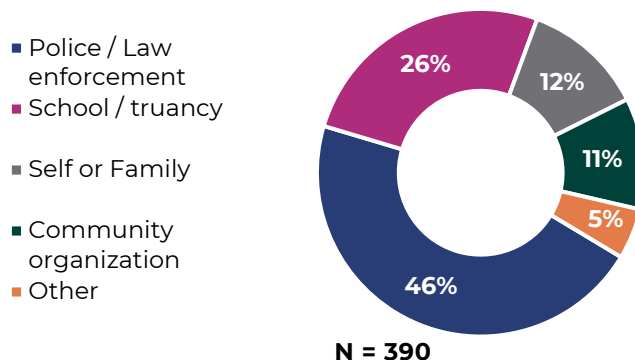


Notes: Kindergarten and Alternative not included.  
Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG.

Regarding referral sources, nearly half of the youth (46%) were referred by police or law enforcement, followed by school or truancy referrals (26%). Additionally, 12% were self-referred or by a family member, 11% by community organizations, and 5% from other sources. Less than 1% were referred by probation. At intake, 43% of enrolled youth had prior informal contact with law enforcement, while 57% had no such contact.



**Figure 5: Referral Sources**



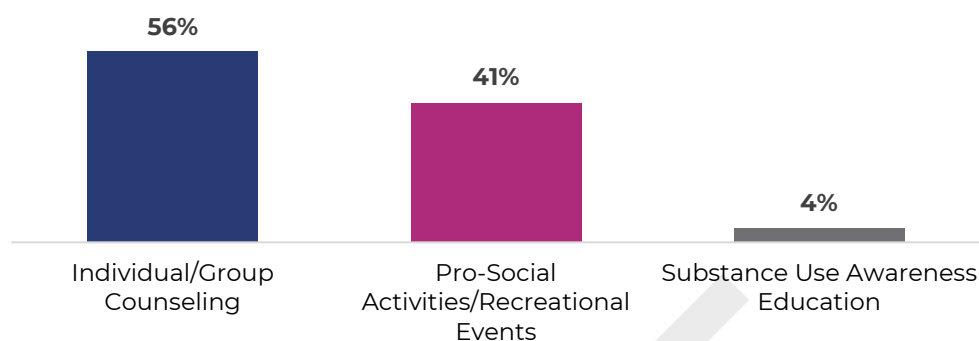
Notes: Probation not included. Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding.  
Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG.

## Development Activities and Case Management

Participants in the enhanced intervention program participated in referral/linkage to mental health services (individual/group counseling), referral/linkage to substance use services (substance use awareness), and pro-social activities/recreational events.

Out of 200 youth participants in development activities and case management, 56% participated in individual/group counseling, 41% in pro-social activities and/or recreational events, and 4% in substance use awareness education (Figure 6).

**Figure 6: Youth Participation in Development Activities**



**N = 200**

*Note: Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding.*

*Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG.*

## Youth Exits

An overwhelming majority of participants (95%) successfully completed the program. Of participants who did so, over half (58%) were male, 42% female, and less than 1% identified as transgender/non-binary (Figure 7). Most participants (76%) were between 13-17 years old (Figure 8).

**95%**

Successfully completed

Regarding ethnicity, a majority of participants (80%) identified as Hispanic (Figure 9). Over two in five (42%) youth were in middle school, 18% in elementary school, 9% in high school, 1% in alternative education, and less than 1% in kindergarten (Figure 10).

**Figure 7: Gender distribution of exited youth**

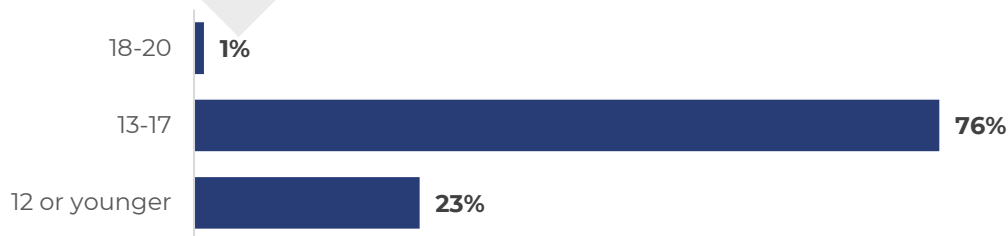


**N= 369**

*Notes: Transgender/non-binary not included.*

*Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG.*

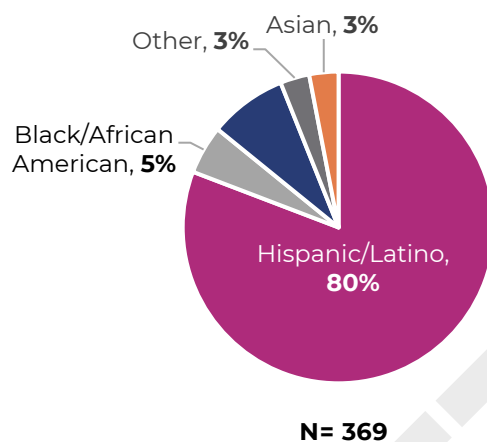
**Figure 8: Age range of exited youth**



**N= 371**

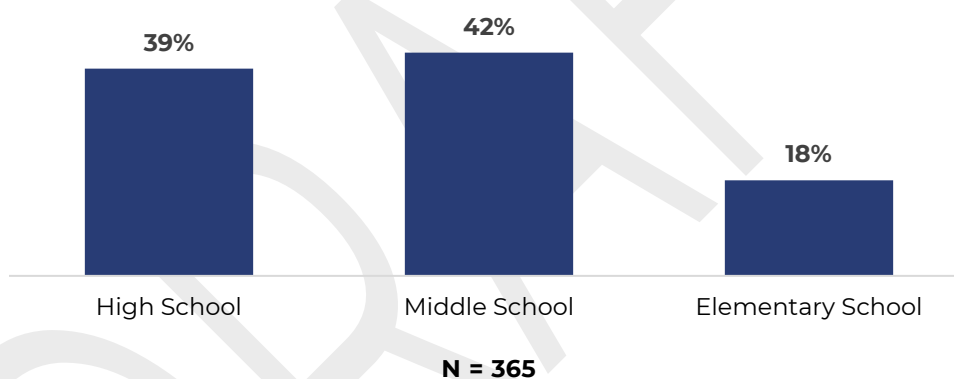
*Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG.*

**Figure 9: Race/ethnicity of exited youth**



Notes: Pacific Islander not included. Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding  
Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG.

**Figure 10: Level of education of exited youth**



Notes: Alternative and Kindergarten not included. Percentage may not add to 100% due to rounding.  
Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG

## Outcomes of successful youth

Out of the 371 youth who exited the program:

- **60%** felt better about their school performance.
- **48%** reported they can handle problems better after being in the program.
- **42%** reported they have a more positive perception of going to school.

## Educational Presentation Outcomes

### Parent Presentations

Over the course of three years, CVPD and SBSCS conducted 13 parent education presentations as part of their outreach efforts. The presentations, which were consistently delivered every quarter, were delivered both virtually and in-person. They focused primarily on marijuana use and vaping prevention, as well as dangers related to fentanyl. Each session had between 3 and 16 participants, reaching a total of 110 individuals over the reporting period. Some topics were tailored specifically for Spanish-speaking audiences. The program successfully met the goal of conducting at least one parent education prevention session per quarter.

**13**

parent education prevention presentations

**110**

total participants

**8.5**

participants per presentation, on average

### Youth Presentations

Between 2021 and 2024, 18 youth education presentations were conducted, focusing primarily on marijuana use and vaping, along with a session on fentanyl dangers. These sessions were held both virtually and in-person at the CVPD Headquarters, with participant numbers ranging from 5 to 120, for a total of 527 participants. Topics were occasionally tailored for Spanish-speaking participants. The goal of conducting at least one session per quarter was consistently met across the three years.

**18**

youth education prevention presentations

**527**

total participants

**31**

participants per presentation, on average

### Community Presentations

CVPD and SBSCS organized a series of drug prevention and education presentations, primarily focusing on the dangers of marijuana, vaping, and THC use. Some sessions also addressed fentanyl and illegal THC sales. Facilitators conducted these sessions both virtually and in-person at local schools, targeting both youth and adult participants. There were a total of 37 presentations with a total of 288 participants.

**37**

community presentations

**288**

total participants

**35**

participants per presentation, on average

The following are detailed summaries of presentations conducted per year:

**Year 1 (2021-2022):** The presentations in the first year were held online due COVID-19 restrictions. These presentation addressed the dangers of juvenile marijuana use and fentanyl. These sessions, including one organized by the Navy Enlisted Leadership Foundation and another in Spanish, drew between 9 to 112 adult participants.

**Year 2 (2022-2023):** Presentations shifted to in-person formats and focused on vaping and THC use, with participation varying from 2 to 4 adults and up to 100 students per session. Additional virtual sessions on drug trends in San Diego County were held in collaboration with other facilitators. A total of 14 educational phone calls were made in January 2023, focusing on illegal THC sales in tobacco shops.

**Year 3 (2023):** Presentations continued in schools such as Bonita Vista Middle School, Eastlake Middle School, and Hilltop Middle School. The topics were consistent—focusing on the dangers of vaping and THC use—targeting up to 30 students per session.

**Year 4 (2024):** In-person sessions resumed at Bay Front Charter, continuing the focus on vaping and THC use. These sessions were attended by around 40 youth participants per presentation in an auditorium setting.

Across the four years, the program met its goals of increasing awareness of drug dangers—particularly vaping, THC, and marijuana—among youth and adults, demonstrating a strong commitment to educating both students and parents about the risks of associated drug use.

### Social Media

CVPD published a total of 80 posts across various platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram) for their social media campaign. These posts focused on topics such as e-cigarette aerosols, the effects of marijuana use, and exposure to cannabis products. The campaign reached a wide audience, garnering a total of 141,245 total views. The posts were shared 553 times and received 2,306 likes or reactions, and the posts were shared 553 times indicating a moderate level of engagement from the community. The campaign addressed four unique topics, contributing to increased public awareness and education regarding cannabis-related issues.



**Table1: Social Media Posts by Quarter**

Quarter	Number of Social Media Posts	Topics Covered	No. of views, shares, & reactions (likes)
Y1Q2	11	E-cigarette aerosol, vaping marijuana linked to lung injury, effects of marijuana use on juveniles, and exposure to cannabis products	26,930
Y1Q3	9	Impacts on school performance and socioeconomic status, how marijuana affects the brain & body, and juvenile use of a mind-altering substance	14,658

Y1Q4	9	Abnormalities in brain function, details on recent arrests, increase in exposure to cannabis/poison control centers	14,210
Y2Q1	9	FDA warns about Delta-8 THC, FD&C Act Violations, and smoke shops illegally selling THC analogs	19,454
Y2Q2	9	VA 4 y/o death due to THC gummies, smoking marijuana may be more harmful to lungs than smoking cigarettes, and driving while high is still a DUI	14,179
Y2Q3	9	Young children are eating edibles, marijuana use and pregnancy, and presentation with SBCS	9,479
Y2Q4	9	Poisonous hydrogen cyanide illegal THC vape cartridges, marijuana intoxication side effects for children, cannabis and suicidality in young adults	10,780
Y3Q1	3	Driving high is a DUI	3,312
Y3Q3	6	Smoke shop investigation, minor decoy op at smoke shop	25,086
Y3Q4	6	Bipolar or schizophrenic disorders was highest for cannabis users aged 16 to 20, and using marijuana as little as once per month is associated with a higher risk of both heart attack and stroke	6,025

Notes: There were no social media posts on Year 1 Quarter 1

Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG

## Inspections & Minor Decoy Operation Outcomes

### Cannabis Dispensary Inspections

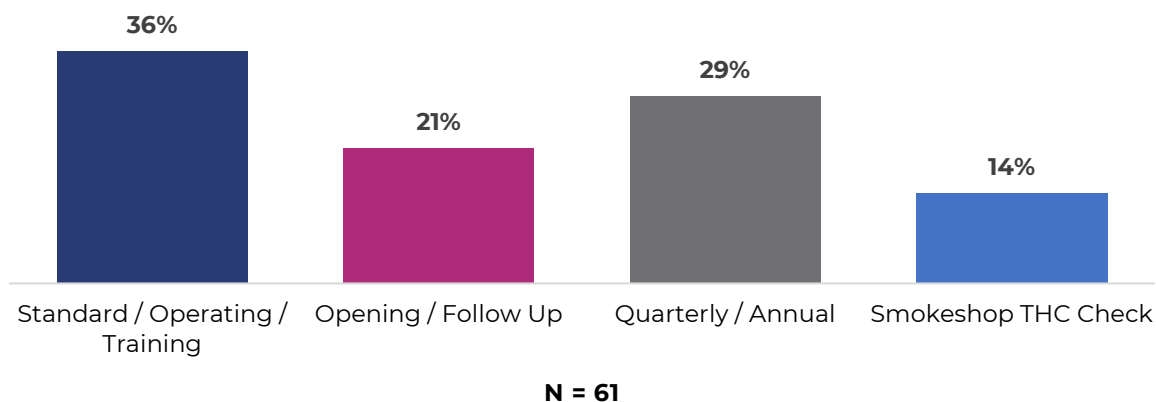
From July 2021 to March 2024, a total of 61 inspections of various types were conducted (Figure 11):

- Standard/Operating/Training inspections: Focused on routine compliance checks.
- Opening/Initial/Follow up inspections: For newly opened facilities or follow-ups.
- Quarterly/Annual inspections: For regular compliance assessments.
- Smoke shop THC checks: Focused on specific issues related to THC sales and regulations.

Throughout the period, inspections were carried out at multiple dispensaries, including Caliva Delivery, Grasshopper, March and Ash, Element 7, and others. Violations were identified in six cases. Several facilities were issued written warnings or had violations resolved after follow-up inspections, using a proactive approach to improving compliance across the inspected dispensaries. For some facilities, such as Grasshopper and March and Ash, it was deemed necessary to establish ongoing monitoring and close oversight, resulting in multiple inspections.

Training was consistently provided to owners and employees during inspections. These trainings focused on enhancing security measures, ensuring compliance with municipal codes, and addressing issues related to juvenile THC use.

**Figure 11: Type of inspection**



Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG

### Minor Decoy Operations

CVPD conducted Minor Decoy Operations to ensure compliance with regulations regarding the sale of cannabis and THC-related products to minors. In line with Goal 3, which required at least two minor decoy operations per quarter, these operations were conducted regularly throughout the reported period.

There were a total of 36 decoy operations conducted during the grant cycle. Each operation required the collaboration of multiple officers to prepare and execute inspections. The officers' collaboration ensured thorough coverage of these businesses, helping to enforce compliance with local and state regulations (Table 1).

Most operations did not result in violations, indicating general compliance with municipal and state cannabis laws. However, there were a few instances where violations were found:

- On August 18, 2021, and June 9, 2023, violations were identified at two dispensaries under CVMC 5.19.080(l) and B&P § 26140(a)(2), related to improper sales practices. In these cases, no arrests or citations were issued; instead, verbal warnings were given, emphasizing correction over punishment.

No arrests were made during the operations, and citations were rarely issued. Instead, the operations emphasized educating businesses about compliance to prevent future infractions. Follow-up checks were often conducted to ensure businesses adhered to regulations moving forward.



By enforcing cannabis-related regulations, particularly regarding the sale to minors, the operations ensure that businesses operate responsibly and within legal guidelines. Through continuous monitoring and education, the project advances its goal of fostering a safe and legal cannabis industry in the community. Table 1 below shows a breakdown of the Minor Decoy Operations by quarter and the facilities where these operations occurred.

**Table2: Minor Decoy Operations by Quarter**

Quarter	Number of Operations	Facility Name
Y1Q2	2	Grasshopper, March and Ash
Y1Q3	2	Grasshopper, March and Ash
Y1Q4	3	Grasshopper, March and Ash
Y2Q1	3	Grasshopper, March and Ash
Y2Q2	5	Grasshopper, March and Ash, Element 7, California Holistics
Y2Q3	6	Grasshopper, March and Ash, HOC Harvest of Chula Vista, Sunset Smokeshop, Element 7, Pacabol
Y2Q4	6	Grasshopper, Rock City Smokeshop, HOC Harvest of Chula Vista, Sunset Smokeshop, Element 7, Pacabol, 420 Smokeshop
Y3Q1	6	Grasshopper, March and Ash, Sunset Smokeshop, California Holistics, Pacabol, Herb N Joy
Y3Q3	1	Grasshopper
Y3Q4	2	Herb N Joy, California Logistics

*Notes: There were no Minor Decoy Operations on Year 1 Quarter 1 and Year 3 Quarter 2.  
Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG*

## Surveillance and Enforcement Operations Outcomes

### Surveillance Operations

The CVPD conducted regular surveillance operations to monitor and address potential illegal cannabis activities. The primary objective was to conduct two surveillance operations per quarter to investigate tips complaints and suspected violations related to illegal cannabis sales.

Surveillance operations were consistently conducted across multiple quarters, targeting dispensaries suspected of illegal cannabis activities.

- In Y1Q2, operations focused on suspected pop-up dispensaries on Eastlake Parkway, Lori Lane, and Hilltop Drive. Multiple surveillance operations were conducted, but no arrests or citations were made, and most activities required continued surveillance due to lack of observed illegal activity.

- During Y1Q3, tips about illegal cannabis sales led to operations at locations like Broadway and Hilltop Drive. Although no violations were observed at most sites, continued monitoring and coordination with enforcement units was deemed necessary.
- In Y1Q4, surveillance focused on suspected illegal dispensary owners and managers. These operations included the following of targets to locations outside of Chula Vista, such as Fullerton. In this particular case, a search warrant resulted in the seizure of cannabis and cash. The coordination with other departments resulted in significant outcomes, though no arrests were immediately made.
- In Y2Q1 and Y2Q2, operations targeted both storefront dispensaries and private residences based on tips of illegal sales. These efforts included tracking addresses associated with illegal sales and checking compliance at known locations.

Although many operations did not result in immediate citations or arrests, they provided valuable insights into the activities at various dispensaries. For example, during Y3Q1 and Y3Q2, continued surveillance at Bud Rush and other dispensaries allowed law enforcement to track operations and identify potential violations, leading to further investigation. A few significant outcomes included the seizure of \$48,000 and over 1,100 pounds of cannabis during a coordinated surveillance and search warrant operation.

Many operations were part of ongoing investigations that required multiple follow-ups. These efforts allowed law enforcement to build a comprehensive understanding of illegal operations and make informed decisions about when to take enforcement action. The goal was not always immediate arrests but rather long-term disruption of illegal cannabis networks through surveillance and intelligence gathering.

In conclusion, the surveillance operations were crucial in monitoring potential illegal cannabis activities. By conducting surveillance and gathering critical intelligence, CVPD was able to maintain a proactive stance in ensuring compliance with cannabis regulations while addressing illegal operations in the community.

**Table3: Surveillance Operations by Quarter**

Quarter	Number of Operations	Brief Description of Operations
Y1Q2	9	Surveilled multiple sites of possible illegal dispensaries
Y1Q3	5	Conduct surveillance on identified locations and individuals related to illegal dispensary activities and planned enforcement operations
Y1Q4	8	Conducted surveillance on suspected illegal marijuana operations and individuals for investigative and enforcement purposes. A search warrant led to the seizure of \$48,000 and over 1,100 pounds of cannabis
Y2Q1	6	Conduct surveillance on suspected illegal dispensaries and dealers based on tips and complaints

Y2Q2	6	Conducted surveillance on various locations based on tips and suspicious activity related to marijuana sales and cultivation
Y2Q3	6	Surveillance operations focused on identifying illegal THC sales and potential base locations for marijuana distribution
Y2Q4	11	Surveillance operations focused on monitoring suspected illegal activities, including vehicle checks, unlicensed employees, potential grow houses, and tips on illegal sales
Y3Q1	8	Surveillance and follow-up operations targeting specific locations, including Up in Smoke and Bud Rush, to monitor and investigate activities
Y3Q2	10	Surveillance operations conducted in response to complaints, event monitoring, and code enforcement tips related to cannabis delivery and business activities
Y3Q3	7	Surveillance operations aimed at identifying connections to illegal businesses, associates, and managers involved in unlawful marijuana activities
Y3Q4	9	Surveillance operations targeting associates of Bud Rush and monitoring activities related to Pure Smoke

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*Notes: There were no Surveillance Operations on Year 1 Quarter 1*

*Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG*

## Enforcement Operations

Enforcement operations targeted illegal cannabis activities within the city of Chula Vista. These operations ranged from search warrants to undercover purchases, aiming to disrupt unlawful cannabis sales and enforce municipal and penal codes.

Enforcement operations were regularly conducted each quarter, focusing on businesses suspected of operating illegally or selling cannabis without proper licenses. The operations targeted dispensaries, delivery services, and other cannabis-related businesses, leading to several arrests, citations, and the seizure of cannabis products.

These operations frequently resulted in arrests and citations. Some of the highlights of these operations conducted by CVPD include:

- 34 arrests
- \$41,023 recovered
- 697,730g of marijuana/THC, 1,093,608g of flavored tobacco, and 37,110g of Psilocybin mushrooms and products were seized
- 4 guns were recovered

Additionally, CVPD's cannabis knowledge and enforcement led to the rescue of a juvenile sex trafficking victim. CVPD assisted with 8 arrests, including a rape series, and the recovery of multiple guns and thousands of rounds of ammunition. CVPD supported dozens of other arrests and drug seizures but did not tabulate the cases as they would be numerous and difficult to track.

During Y1Q4, a search warrant at Q-Meds led to the recovery of \$7,000, an unserialized gun, and a felony arrest. During Y2Q1, enforcement at Grasshopper dispensary led to an arrest for selling cannabis to juveniles, with citations issued for violations of the Health and Safety Code.

Notable operations in Y2Q2 and Y2Q3 targeted illegal delivery services, such as Eastern Flower, and other businesses associated with the sale of THC products to minors. These operations often uncovered delivery drivers, stash houses, and other elements of illegal distribution networks.

Many of these operations were part of ongoing investigations aimed at dismantling illegal cannabis networks. For example, a collaborative operation with SDPD and SDSO in Y3Q3 led to the closure of the Canably dispensary and multiple arrests. Additionally, a decoy operation in Y3Q4 identified illegal cannabis sales at iSmoke, resulting in a search warrant and further investigations.

Enforcement targeted illegal cannabis activities in Chula Vista, uncovering important amounts of illegal products, identifying unlicensed operators, and disrupting criminal networks. In several cases, enforcement teams recovered thousands of dollars in cash, \$41,023 in total, and 1,538 pounds of cannabis and other illicit substances, contributing to the broader goals of the Prop 64 Grant Project.

**Table4: Enforcement Operations by Quarter**

Quarter	Number of Operations	Brief Description of Operations	Outcomes
Y1Q2	5	Enforcement operations included search warrants for illegal dispensaries, targeted buys from illegal delivery services, and busts for businesses operating with fraudulent licenses	Information found suggesting illegal delivery businesses operating in CV
Y1Q3	4	These enforcement operations involved serving search warrants, conducting buy-and-bust operations, and targeting illegal marijuana dealers and delivery businesses based on tips	2 arrests, 2 citations, \$3,800 recovered

Y1Q4	8	The enforcement operations involved buy-and-bust actions, search warrants, and arrests targeting illegal marijuana sales, dispensary operators, and THC product distribution, including operations at schools and tobacco businesses	4 arrests (2 felony arrests), 2 booked, \$37,000 recovered, cannabis seized
Y2Q1	7	Various enforcement operations were conducted, including area enforcement due to high activity, investigations involving juvenile marijuana cases, and arrests related to illegal substance purchases and warrants	1 arrest, 1 citation
Y2Q2	7	Enforcement operations included targeting unlicensed businesses, conducting arrests and searches for marijuana-related crimes, and addressing tips on illegal activities such as underage THC sales and illegal delivery services	3 arrests, 1 booked, 2 citations
Y2Q3	3	Covert buy operations followed by surveillance or arrests based on tips and activity at Eastern Flower Dispensary	1 arrest, 1 citation
Y2Q4	7	Conducted various enforcement operations, including asset forfeiture, robbery case submissions, cannabis-related investigations, and undercover operations involving social media	1 arrest, 1 booked and released
Y3Q1	6	Enforcement operations included drug dealer investigations, dispensary-related incidents, and cannabis-related offenses uncovered during broader criminal investigations	1 arrest, operation associated with domestic violence case
Y3Q2	2	Enforcement operations included illegal weapon inspections and search warrant services	1 arrest, 1 citation (dispensary was also cited)
Y3Q3	5	These enforcement operations involved undercover buys, search warrants, and decoy operations targeting illegal cannabis sales and distributors.	4 arrests (2 by SDPD), Identified stash house and major distributor

Y3Q4	5	These enforcement operations involved purchases, arrests, and search warrants targeting illegal activities at cannabis-related establishments	4 arrests, 2 citations, hundreds of pounds of marijuana products and mushrooms seized
Y3 Q5	2	Search warrants were executed, products were seized, with outcomes varying between no arrests or citations and the owner being arrested	1 arrest

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Sources: CVPD; SBCS, SANDAG

## Summary

The Prop 64 Grant Project in Chula Vista, implemented over a three-year period, successfully addressed key challenges related to marijuana legalization, focusing on youth prevention, community education, and enforcement of local cannabis regulations. The initiative focused on preventing underage cannabis use, enhancing awareness among parents and community members. It also ensured compliance among legal dispensaries while targeting illegal cannabis operations. Throughout the project, partnerships between the Chula Vista Police Department (CVPD), South Bay Community Services (SBCS), and SANDAG ensured a multifaceted approach combining education, prevention, and enforcement.

The program achieved its goal of working towards reducing marijuana use among at-risk youth through diversion and prevention services. SBCS provided services to over 475 youth, exceeding the annual goal of 75 youth enrollments. More than 95% of participants successfully achieved their case management goals, and 90% exited the program successfully. These positive outcomes highlight the effectiveness of culturally relevant, trauma-informed services in addressing the needs of at-risk youth and preventing marijuana use.

Additionally, the program achieved its community education objectives by reaching parents, youth, and the broader community through presentations and outreach efforts. CVPD and SBCS conducted 68 educational presentations over three years, surpassing the initial annual goal of 12 educational presentations. These presentations focused on the risks associated with marijuana use, especially for youth, and dangers related to illegal dispensaries. The combination of in-person and virtual sessions allowed the program to reach diverse audiences, fostering greater awareness and engagement across the community.

The program also achieved its goal of compliance with laws and regulations by local dispensaries. CVPD conducted a total of 61 inspections, 37 minor decoy operations, 85 surveillance operations, and 18 enforcement actions. These efforts resulted in 34 arrests, multiple citations, and the closure of illegal dispensaries. Through these enforcement operations, CVPD successfully targeted illegal cannabis activities, ensuring that legal dispensaries complied with local laws. Overall, the Prop 64 Grant Project in Chula Vista met and exceeded its goals following the efforts toward public safety, prevention of marijuana use by youth, and community engagement in the context of cannabis legalization.

# Final takeaways

Throughout the grant period, valuable lessons were learned that can inform future programs with similar populations. These lessons are noted below.

## Sustainability of efforts

As with any new projects, there were challenges and delays to start operating consistently according to the goals and objectives. One significant challenge was being able to implement the program and achieve the goals in the three-year period without a clear mechanism to ensure sustainability. Partners reported that just as growth and momentum were achieved, the grant period was ending. In the case of Chula Vista, a new award was granted under the Cohort 3 cycle, ensuring three more years of activities.

However, it is important to find mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of grant-funded programs for a more comprehensive implementation and to better assess outcomes.

## Additional Research Needed Amid Ongoing Challenges

As Proposition 64 continues to evolve in its implementation, areas of research warrant further exploration to ensure that the goals of youth prevention, public health, and community safety are fully addressed.

One of the most pressing concerns is the decline in youth perception of the risks of marijuana use and the increasing consumption of high-potency methods such as vaping and dabbing.<sup>4</sup> Research indicates that while efforts have been made to educate youth about the dangers of cannabis, these youth perceptions of risk are not improving at the desired rate. Future research should investigate the effectiveness of current educational strategies and explore why high-potency products are particularly appealing to young users. Studies from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) suggest that the potency of THC in marijuana products has steadily increased, which raises concerns about the potential long-term health effects on youth. Additionally, further evaluation is needed on how emerging consumption methods, such as edibles and vaping, impact youth behavior and health outcomes.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> SANDAG, 2024, 2023 Juvenile Arrestee Drug Use in the San Diego Region  
<https://www.sandag.org/-/media/SANDAG/Documents/PDF/data-and-research/criminal-justice-and-public-safety/criminal-justice-research-clearinghouse/cj-bulletin/cj-bulletin-2023-juvenile-arrestee-drug-use-in-the-san-diego-region-2024-05-30.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), 2024, Marijuana Research Report  
<https://nida.nih.gov/publications/research-reports/marijuana>

Additionally, illegal cannabis dispensaries remain a persistent issue despite the success of enforcement operations. It is essential to understand what factors contribute to the resilience of these illegal operations, such as economic incentives and social networks that support their existence. Research from the California Bureau of Cannabis Control highlights the complexity of enforcing cannabis regulations in an evolving legal landscape. Exploring enhanced regulatory measures or community-based approaches to shutting down illegal operations could provide new strategies for addressing this challenge.<sup>6</sup> Evaluating the role of local communities in supporting enforcement efforts, including the use of anonymous tip lines or neighborhood watch programs, could also prove valuable.

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<sup>6</sup> California Bureau of Cannabis Control, 2024, *Cannabis Licensing and Enforcement*  
<https://bcc.ca.gov>