

Proposition 64 Cohort 3 Grant Program

Local Evaluation Plan

Communities that Care for Youth

City of Parlier

David Cerda

dcerda@parlier.ca.us

+1(559) 646-6600

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Project Background

The City of Parlier, located in Southeast Fresno County, has experienced significant challenges since the legalization of cannabis through Proposition 64. These include an alarming rise in youth cannabis use, driven by misconceptions about its safety compared to alcohol, and an increase in violent crime tied to black-market cannabis operations. Local schools have reported a sharp uptick in cannabis-related disciplinary issues, including vaping incidents, which disrupt the learning environment and jeopardize student safety. Furthermore, rival gang activity has escalated as groups vie for control of the cannabis black market, resulting in operations that have uncovered honey labs, firearms, and incidents of human trafficking involving teens.

Parlier's population is 98% Hispanic/Latino, and culturally tailored, trauma-informed interventions are critical to effectively addressing these issues. However, limited access to youth services and prevention programs has exacerbated the challenges, leaving many at-risk youth without the resources needed to build resilience and avoid cannabis use. This project seeks to fill these gaps by integrating prevention, intervention, and public safety efforts to reduce youth cannabis use and promote community wellness.

The primary population served by this project includes youth aged 5 to 20 who are at risk of cannabis use, gang involvement, or truancy. Many of these individuals have prior involvement with the juvenile justice system or are exposed to environments where substance use and gang activity are prevalent. The project also engages parents and families through educational programs and provides resources to the broader community to address the societal norms contributing to cannabis use and violence. Specific efforts are focused on:

- Youth exhibiting chronic absenteeism, disciplinary issues, or prior offenses.
- Families requiring education on the risks of cannabis and strategies for prevention.
- Community members participating in outreach and prevention campaigns to shift attitudes and reduce violence.

Eligibility for participation in project activities and services is determined through a combination of school referrals, law enforcement identification, and assessments conducted by partner organizations such as ARC and Breaking the Chains (BTC). Schools identify students who exhibit risk factors like truancy, disciplinary issues, or declining academic performance. Law enforcement refers youth involved in cannabis-related crimes or gang activity. NGOs conduct risk assessments using a tiered framework to identify appropriate interventions based on the individual needs of each participant. These assessments include the use of Prevention Needs Assessment Surveys to gauge levels of risk and resilience.

Activities and services are developed and implemented based on comprehensive needs assessments conducted by the Communities That Care (CTC) Committee. This includes analysis of school data, crime reports, and survey results to identify the most pressing issues affecting youth and the broader community. The committee's collaborative approach ensures alignment between stakeholders, including schools, law enforcement, and community

organizations. Evidence-based models such as the Cure Violence framework and Botvin LifeSkills Training inform the design of interventions.

Key activities include:

- Delivering educational presentations in schools and community events to increase awareness of cannabis risks and prevention strategies, targeting 2,000 students annually.
- Offering recreational programs through the Parks and Recreation Department to engage 300-500 youth each year in prosocial activities, particularly during out-of-school periods.
- Providing case management, substance use counseling, and life skills training to 300 youth over five years through partnerships with ARC and BTC.
- Establishing a Community Violence Prevention Taskforce to develop a strategic plan for reducing gang violence and illegal cannabis operations.
- Implementing leadership and wellness programs to engage 180 youth by 2028 in activities that build self-esteem, foster community connections, and promote mental well-being.

The project’s goals and objectives include:

1. **Reduce Cannabis Involvement Among Youth:**
 - Conduct educational outreach to ensure 75% of youth engaged understand the risks of cannabis by the end of 2023.
 - Decrease reported cannabis use among youth by 10% annually.
 - Reduce juvenile arrests involving cannabis by 10% annually.
2. **Promote Youth Leadership and Wellness:**
 - Develop a youth leadership and media internship program for 25 participants by 2028, aimed at advancing cannabis prevention policies and messaging.
 - Engage 180 youth in art and wellness activities, with at least 80% reporting improved mental well-being and a sense of belonging.
3. **Enhance Public Safety:**
 - Reduce juvenile violent crime by 15% and adult violent crime by 20% over five years.
 - Decrease illegal cannabis operations and associated crimes by 10% annually.
 - Increase residents’ perception of safety by 20% using community surveys.

Project Logic Model

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts
Funding from Prop 64	Conduct educational	48 classroom	Increased knowledge	Reduction in youth

Cohort 3 Grant (\$2.98M)	presentations in schools and community events	presentations per year; 2,000 students reached annually	of cannabis risks among 75% of youth	cannabis use by 10% annually
Cannabis Officer	Organize recreational programs and sports leagues	300-500 youth engaged annually in prosocial activities	Increased engagement in prosocial activities	Decrease in juvenile arrests involving cannabis by 10% annually
Partnerships with NGOs (ARC, BTC, CA Health Collaborative)	Provide substance use counseling, life skills training, and wraparound services for at-risk youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 300 youth receiving counseling, 225 youth completing life skills training, • 250 youth receiving wraparound services over five years, • 150 parents educated on human trafficking prevention annually; • 30 community events and • 25 block parties held annually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved developmental assets among participants • Enhanced parental knowledge of risk factors and protective strategies 	Reduced gang involvement, truancy, and suspensions by 10% annually
Community Violence Prevention Taskforce	Develop a strategic plan to address gang violence and illegal cannabis operations	One strategic plan developed; quarterly taskforce meetings held	Decreased violent crime hotspots and improved coordination	Reduction in violent crime involving drugs and gangs by 10% annually
Parks and Recreation Staff	Host youth art and wellness programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 180 youth participate in art and wellness activities; • 25 youth complete internships over five years 	Improved mental well-being and sense of belonging among 80% of youth	Stronger community cohesion and resilience against substance use risks
Prevention Needs Assessment Survey	Administer surveys to youth, parents, and community members annually	Pre- and post-test surveys conducted for 2,000 youth annually	Enhanced knowledge of cannabis risks and positive coping mechanisms among youth.	Community-wide norm shifts reducing cannabis acceptance
Smartsheet Software for Data Collection	Monitor project implementation and progress	Monthly progress reports generated; annual evaluations	Enhanced data-driven decision-making	Sustainable practices for ongoing

		conducted		prevention and intervention efforts
Third-Party Evaluator (Dr. John Walkup)	Conduct process and outcome evaluations	Final evaluation report submitted with findings and recommendations	Improved program implementation based on evaluation insights	Scalable and replicable model for other communities

Process Evaluation Method and Design

Research Design

The process evaluation will utilize a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data (e.g., attendance, participation rates) with qualitative data (e.g., participant feedback, focus group insights). This approach will ensure a comprehensive understanding of how the project is implemented, which components are effective, and any areas for improvement. Evaluation will be guided by the project's logic model to align inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes.

Documenting Activities and Services

Activities and services will be documented systematically to ensure accountability and track progress. Specific documentation plans include:

- **Database Tracking:** All participant-related services and activities will be logged using Smartsheet software, enabling real-time updates and reporting.
- **Sign-In Sheets:** Attendance for educational presentations, recreational activities, and community events will be recorded and verified.
- **Program Logs:** Cannabis Officer activities, such as school presentations and community engagements, will be documented monthly.
- **Case Management Files:** NGOs like ARC and Breaking the Chains (BTC) will maintain individual records for youth receiving counseling, life skills training, and wraparound services.

Tracking Participant Progress

Participants' progress will be monitored using the following strategies:

- **Start Dates and Attendance:** All youth participating in activities such as the Parks and Recreation programs or counseling services will have their start dates and attendance recorded.
- **Milestones:** Completion of educational modules, life skills training, and recreational programs will be tracked and assessed.
- **Dropout and Retention Rates:** The database will monitor dropouts, successful completions, and program engagement over time.

- **Surveys:** Pre- and post-test surveys will assess knowledge gained and changes in attitudes or behaviors, particularly concerning cannabis use and prosocial engagement.

Tracking Non-Participant Activities

For project components not involving direct participants, documentation will include:

- **Code Enforcement:** Reports of investigations, including cannabis-related violations, illegal cultivation sites, and honey lab eradications, will be logged.
- **Community Events:** Details such as the number of block parties, town hall meetings, and workshops conducted will be documented.
- **Strategic Planning:** Progress of the Community Violence Prevention Taskforce, including the development and implementation of the strategic plan, will be monitored.

Process Measures

The project will measure key indicators to ensure alignment with goals and objectives:

- **Inputs:** Funding amounts, staff time, and partnerships.
- **Activities:** Number of educational presentations, counseling sessions, and recreational programs.
- **Outputs:** Participation metrics, such as youth and parent engagement.
- **Data Collection Methods:** Surveys, sign-in sheets, case logs, and reports.
- **Frequency:** Data will be collected monthly and reviewed during quarterly stakeholder meetings.

Oversight Structure and Decision-Making

The project oversight structure involves collaboration between the City of Parlier, ARC, BTC, and the Communities That Care (CTC) Committee. Key roles include:

- **Grant Administrator:** Ensures compliance, manages reporting, and coordinates with stakeholders.
- **Cannabis Officer:** Oversees community engagement, prevention efforts, and law enforcement activities.
- **CTC Committee:** Monitors progress, identifies areas for improvement, and adjusts strategies as needed. Decisions will be data-driven, informed by monthly reports, and discussed during quarterly meetings.

Monitoring Effectiveness

Effectiveness will be monitored through:

- **Regular Reviews:** Monthly updates using Smartsheet to track milestones.
- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Feedback from youth, parents, and community members collected through surveys and focus groups.

- **Annual Evaluations:** Conducted by Dr. John Walkup, who will provide actionable recommendations for improvement.

Ensuring Fidelity

To ensure fidelity to the program design:

- **Training and Resources:** Staff and partners will receive training on evidence-based practices, including Botvin LifeSkills and the Cure Violence model.
- **Standardized Protocols:** Activities such as educational presentations and counseling services will follow standardized guidelines.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Adjustments will be made based on evaluation findings to maintain alignment with project goals.

Data Analysis

Quantitative and qualitative data analysis will be used to assess project implementation:

- **Quantitative Methods:** Descriptive statistics, such as attendance rates and pre-/post-survey scores, will be analyzed using Smartsheet and statistical tools like Excel or SPSS.
- **Qualitative Methods:** Content analysis of participant feedback, focus group discussions, and community input will identify themes and inform decision-making. Evaluation findings will be summarized in quarterly progress reports and an annual report, ensuring transparency and accountability.

Input/Resource/Activity/Output	Data Element(s)	Data Source(s)	Frequency of Data Collection
Provide 200 youth participants with mentorship and intervention services	# of youth receiving mentorship and services	Case management system tracking referrals and services	Monthly
Conduct 48 classroom presentations annually to educate youth on the harmfulness of cannabis	# of students attending presentations	Attendance records, sign-up sheets from schools	After each presentation

Host 30 community events and 25 block parties per year to increase community awareness	# of community members attending	Event attendance sheets, community feedback surveys	After each event
Offer prosocial recreational programs for 300-500 youth annually through Parks and Recreation	# of youth attending recreational programs	Program attendance logs	Monthly
Provide 45 youth annually with life skills and resiliency training through ARC	# of youth completing life skills training	ARC training completion logs	Annually
Host annual Art & Wellness Summit for 50 youth and families	# of participants attending the summit	Event attendance sheets, post-event surveys	Annually
Recruit and engage 25 youth annually in the youth prevention internship	# of youth participating in the internship program	Internship attendance logs, activity reports	Monthly

Outcome Evaluation Method and Design

Key Outcomes to Assess

1. **Increased Youth Awareness of Cannabis Risks**
 - **Definition:** Enhanced understanding among youth aged 5–18 of the health, safety, and legal risks of cannabis use.
 - **Data Source:** Pre- and post-presentation surveys for educational sessions.
 - **Frequency:** Collected after each classroom presentation.
2. **Reduced Cannabis Use Among Youth**
 - **Definition:** A 10% annual reduction in self-reported cannabis use among surveyed students, using 2023 as the baseline.
 - **Data Source:** Annual Prevention Needs Assessment (PNA) survey conducted in grades 5, 7, 9, and 11.
 - **Frequency:** Annually.
3. **Increased Participation in Prosocial Activities**

- **Definition:** Engagement in youth-focused recreational and leadership activities, reducing idle time that could lead to substance use.
 - **Data Source:** Participant sign-in sheets, program attendance logs.
 - **Frequency:** Monthly monitoring and annual summaries.
4. **Enhanced Developmental Assets/Protective Factors**
- **Definition:** A 10% annual improvement in metrics such as reduced truancy, suspensions, and expulsions due to prosocial engagement.
 - **Data Source:** School records and program assessment tools.
 - **Frequency:** Semesterly updates from school district reports.
5. **Reduction in Violent Crimes Involving Youth**
- **Definition:** A 15% reduction in juvenile violent crimes tied to gang or drug activity.
 - **Data Source:** Police crime statistics and Cure Violence Taskforce reports.
 - **Frequency:** Semiannual updates.

Methods and Tools for Evaluation

- **Mixed Methods Design:** Combines quantitative data (e.g., surveys, crime statistics) and qualitative feedback (e.g., focus group discussions).
- **Statistical Analysis:**
 - Descriptive statistics for survey results (e.g., mean knowledge score changes).
 - Comparative analysis for pre/post metrics (e.g., truancy rates, crime reports).
- **Qualitative Analysis:**
 - Thematic coding for participant feedback from focus groups and interviews.
- **Annual Reporting:**
 - Consolidated summaries by the external evaluator to guide adjustments.

Projected Limitations

- **Causal Attribution:** Changes in youth cannabis use or crime rates may be influenced by external factors beyond the grant activities.
- **Data Gaps:** Reliance on schools and external organizations (e.g., ARC and BTC) for consistent and accurate data collection.

Evaluation Matrix

Outcome	Definition	Data Source(s)	Frequency
Increased Youth Awareness	Pre/post knowledge of cannabis risks after educational presentations.	Pre- and post-surveys, attendance logs.	After each session.
Reduced Youth Cannabis Use	10% annual reduction in self-reported cannabis use using 2023 baseline.	PNA survey (grades 5, 7, 9, 11).	Annually.

Increased Prosocial Engagement	Number of youth participating in recreational and leadership activities.	Sign-in sheets, attendance records.	Monthly, annual summary.
Enhanced Developmental Assets	10% annual reduction in truancy, suspensions, expulsions.	School district records, program assessments.	Semesterly.
Reduced Violent Crimes	15% reduction in juvenile crimes tied to gangs or drugs.	Police crime reports, Cure Violence Taskforce data.	Semiannually.