

Proposition 64

Health & Safety Youth Mitigation & Cannabis Awareness

Funding Source: BSCC

Grantee: The City of San Diego

Local Evaluation Plan

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Project Background

Introduction

San Diego (SD) is the largest city in San Diego County (SDC), with an estimated population of 1.31 million. SD is one of the few SDC municipalities (out of 18) that did not ban the cultivation or distribution of marijuana. At the time of this application, SD has over 60 facilities, with 40 cannabis production facilities and 36 outlets (4 per council district) authorized. According to recent crime statistics obtained from SDPD, there were 83 active crime cases across 22 dispensaries in the San Diego region between 2015 and November 2022, with the majority of these involving burglaries (459PC was the most frequent violation). Since the legalization of marijuana for medical and recreational use, perception of the potential harm of youth cannabis use in the County has increased. Increased calls to poison control, emergency room visits, individuals driving under the influence, crime around illegal dispensaries, and explosions from butane hash labs have become a reality. According to the most recent arrest statistics, there were 73.9 arrests per day in San Diego in 2020, and the second most common arrest type was for drug offenses (19% of all arrests).

To address these concerns San Diego Police Department's (SDPD) proposition 64 Public Health and Safety Grant Program funds will be used to support youth by providing prevention and intervention, primarily in the Southeastern and City Heights regions of the City of San Diego, where ethnically diverse, and economically disadvantaged youth reside. SDPD will partner with the non-profit STAR/PAL (a school based mental health organization). SANDAG will serve as the outside evaluator and conduct both a process and impact evaluation as well as document outcomes and success in achieving the intended goals.

Program Model

STAR/PAL is a community organization dedicated to empowering underserved youth by fostering character development, leadership skills, and crime prevention. Traditionally, STAR/PAL has positively impacted the lives of over 4,000 youth annually, but challenges such as the pandemic, budget cuts, and law enforcement reassignments have hampered its ability to provide crucial programming. To address these issues, the organization secured funding from the Prop 64 Cohort 2 grant, allowing them to hire the equivalent of 1.5 officers to fill the service gap created by the pandemic. In addition to continued support from the San Diego Police Department, STAR/PAL will expand its services by hiring a full-time coordinator and partially supporting key positions. This project will strengthen and expand on-site and off-site mentoring programs, provide valuable in-class sessions on topics like substance abuse, internet safety, and life skills, and collaborate with the San Diego County of Education Juvenile Court and Community Schools for high school programs. Furthermore, the project aims to educate parents about drug dangers and local trends in partnership with the Drug Enforcement Administration, with the flexibility to adapt programs for virtual delivery as needed.

The program components proposed here are consistent with the proven Boys/Girls Club Mentoring model, as well as other mentoring practices that have proven effective at reducing alcohol and other drug use by youth. Research has shown the positive effects a mentor can have in a youth's life (e.g., reduce risk of delinquency, greater engagement in schools, increased college aspirations, higher self-esteem and self-confidence), especially dealing with the risks associated with poverty, schools with large proportions of high needs students, and under-resourced communities. However, data also show that the more risk factors a young person experiences, the less likely s/he is to connect with an informal mentor, underscoring the value of introducing mentors to young people who face more risk factors than average youth.

STAR/PAL has created a variety of programs over 20 years in the community that model evidence-based mentoring such as Mentoring.org. STAR/PAL's unique model consists of group mentoring (many adults working with groups of youth) in three different program settings: community-based, site-or school-based, and e-mentoring. Benchmarks that align STAR/PAL with the Mentoring.org model include mentor recruitment and training, mentee recruitment, and matching/initiating. In addition, grant funds will allow STAR/PAL to increase its data collection and monitoring metrics to align with the study

Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring.

STAR/PAL is in complete alignment with providing prevention programs that break the cycle of drug use and keep youth from becoming involved in drugs and crime. Our programming begins in elementary school with our Let's Be Pals curriculum that focuses on bullying education and works to deter students from these behaviors at an early age. This program allows officers to begin cultivating positive relationships with youth at an early age allowing for a smooth transition into our middle and high school programs. Youth served through this effort will also have access to other programs that are all part of STAR/PAL's regularly scheduled Youth Safety and Empowerment Program, including our in-school mentoring programs, Elevate and Life Skills for middle and high school students, as well as our STAR/PAL sports programs for elementary and middle school youth. Youth also have access to our on-site after school programs, We Can, Making Changes and tutoring services for both middle and high school students. Through these in-school and on-site programs, youth receive civic engagement opportunities and leadership-based curriculum in local schools and at STAR/PAL's Center to Serve Youth. Students will have access to these multi-session and year-round curriculums focused on building social and emotional intelligence and overall life skills needed for success, in addition to our drug prevention education. Over 2,500 youth were served through STAR/PAL's in school and onsite programming over the past year. Youth also have opportunities to participate in and benefit from our community events including our annual backpack and supply give away, monthly food distributions, and holiday meal deliveries.

Program Goals and Objectives

The following are the goals and objectives for the Proposition 64 project.

Goal 1: Implement an onsite STAR/PAL mentoring program for youth ages 12-19, in grades 6-12.

Objectives 1a: Increase knowledge of marijuana use.

Objectives 1b: Decrease self-reported use of marijuana.

Objectives 1c: Increase attachment to supportive staff.

Objectives 1d: Increase awareness of laws as they relate specifically to juveniles.

Objectives 1e: Increase understanding of staying safe online regarding social media.

Objectives 1f: Improve relationships with law enforcement.

Goal 2: Implement offsite STAR/PAL mentoring in middle and high school.

Objectives 2a: Increase knowledge of marijuana use.

Objectives 2b: Decrease self-reported use of marijuana.

Objectives 2c: Increase attachment to supportive staff.

Objectives 2d: Increase awareness of laws as they relate specifically to juveniles.

Objectives 2e: Increase understanding of staying safe online regarding social media.

Objectives 2f: Improve relationships with law enforcement.

Goal 3: Implement mentoring programs to juvenile system at JCCS.

Objectives 3a: Increase knowledge of marijuana use.

Objectives 3b: Decrease self-reported use of marijuana.

Objectives 3c: Increase attachment to supportive staff.

Objectives 3d: Increase awareness of laws as they relate specifically to juveniles.

Objectives 3e: Increase understanding of staying safe online regarding social media.

Objectives 3f: Improve relationships with law enforcement.

Goal 4: Educate parents on risk and prevalence of marijuana and drug use.

Objectives 4a: Increase understanding of drug trends and risks.

Objectives 4b: Increase ability to communicate with children regarding drug use risks.

Logic Model

Goal 1: Implement an onsite STAR/PAL mentoring program for youth ages 12-19, in grades 6-12.
Goal 2: Implement offsite STAR/PAL mentoring in middle and high school.
Goal 3: Implement mentoring programs to juvenile system at JCCS.
Goal 4: Educate parents on risk and prevalence of marijuana and drug use.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Process and Impact Out comes
<p>BSCC Prop 64 grant to support SDPD and STAR/PAL:</p> <p>Enter into a contract with STAR/PAL to provide prevention and intervention services.</p> <p>Full-time coordinator will be hired to support the expansion of services through recruiting, managing a youth center, logistics coordination, etc.</p> <p>Enter into a contract with SANDAG to conduct evaluation services</p> <p>Partner with the DEA to offer quarterly parental information sessions</p>	<p>Prevention Services STAR/PAL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement on-site mentoring and weekly sessions with a total of 25 students from grades 6-12 Implement off-site mentoring and weekly sessions with youth in the justice system and youth attending grades 6-12 in the community Conduct parental education sessions on current drug trends, risk of drug use and ways to communicate with one’s children 	<p>Offer an onsite mentoring program for the duration of the school year to a minimum of 45 students annually for a total of 225</p> <p>Conduct four school-based mentoring programs to middle/high school youth for a minimum of 100 students annually (total 500)</p> <p>Conduct two 5-week programs at JCCS annually serving 50 youth per year, for a total of 200 youth</p> <p>Conduct three parent education sessions on risk and prevalence of marijuana annually to a minimum of 75 attendees, for a total of 300 parents</p>	<p>Process Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of youth attending session onsite will complete 90% of sessions. Youth attending 90% of sessions will demonstrate increased awareness of risk of marijuana use, knowledge of available supports for issues related to substance abuse and increased resiliency to protect against future substance use. Youth will report improved relationships with law enforcement <p>Impact Outcomes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents participating in educational sessions will demonstrate: -awareness of the risk of marijuana use knowledge of available supports for issues related to substance abuse one new skill to communicate with their children about substance abuse.

Evaluation Methodology

Research Design

SANDAG will conduct both a process and outcome evaluation. A quasi-experimental design will be employed to measure change overtime among youth pre and post STAR/PAL participation. SANDAG staff will be involved from the beginning of

project development to ensure evaluation accurately and measure program goals and objectives, to develop needed data collection tools, and establish research timelines and protocols. SANDAG will be included in all team meetings and will create easy to read data dashboards documenting up-to-date information on client intakes, exits, and services received, which will be shared at meetings with partners to inform program implementation and the need for any midcourse adjustments.

Process Measures

The process evaluation will document what program components were employed and if interventions were implemented as designed. Data will be gathered from multiple sources to describe the population served, the groups attended, services received, type and number of law enforcement operations conducted, satisfaction with services and implementation, and lessons learned. The process evaluation will address the following questions:

1. What were the number and characteristics of the youth participating in either the on-site or off-site STAR/PAL mentoring program?
2. What was the level and type of services received?
3. How many parents participated in the educational sessions? What were the topics of each session?
4. What was the level of satisfaction with services received?
5. Was the program implemented as designed, what lessons were learned?

To address these process research questions, data will be gathered from multiple sources. Table 1 summarizes the data sources that will address each process question.

Table 1
Process Outcomes and Measurements

Process Questions	Variables of Interest	Data Sources
What were the number and characteristics of the youth participating in either the on-site or off-site STAR/PAL mentoring program?	Demographics, grade level, primary need	STAR/PAL program Intake forms
What was the level and type of services received?	Type, dosage, completion status of mentorship program	STAR/PAL program tracking forms
How many parents participated in the educational sessions? What were the topics of each session?	Attendance and topics of parental educational forums	Attendance sheets
What was the level of satisfaction with services?	Program: Usefulness of program, staff helpfulness, areas of improvement. Education Sessions: Presenters knowledge, presentation skills, relevancy of topics	Client post-survey; Educational post surveys
Was the program implemented as designed, what lessons were learned?	Fidelity to model and program design ; how did stakeholders feel the program was implemented	Stakeholder surveys. focus groups; fidelity monitoring tools

Outcome Measures

The outcome measures are individual in nature and will focus on how effective the project was and for whom. The outcome evaluation will address the following questions:

1. Did participants awareness and knowledge of the risks of marijuana use improve?

2. Did parents' understanding of the risk of marijuana use increase? Did parents' ability to communicate with youth increase? What impact did the project have on crime in the surrounding areas of the dispensaries?
3. Did youth and law enforcement relationships increase post- program participation?

To address these outcome research questions, data will be gathered from multiple sources. Table 2 summarizes the data sources that will address each process question.

Table 2
Outcomes and Measurements

Impact Questions	Variables of Interest	Data Sources
Did participants awareness and knowledge of the risks of marijuana use improve?	Increased knowledge of the risks of marijuana use	Pre- and post- educational surveys
Did parents' understanding of the risk of marijuana use increase? Did parents' ability to communicate with youth increase? What impact did the project have on crime in the surrounding areas of the dispensaries?	Increase knowledge of the negative effects of marijuana, signs of use, risks of vaping; improved communication	Post educational surveys
Did youth and law enforcement relationships increase post- program participation?	Increase understanding of law enforcement's roles and level of trust. Increased understanding of youth's lives and needs.	Pre and posts surveys

Data Collection Sources and Process

Below is a more detailed description of each of the data sources and how data will be collected to address all the research goals. During the startup process, great effort has been taken to use existing databases whenever possible.

Program minutes: All project partners, including SANDAG will meet monthly to discuss project implementation, prior month activities, staff changes, challenges, and successes. The meetings will be the mechanism to document staff changes and activities. These meetings will be documented through minutes completed by SANDAG staff and will be used to inform the process evaluation.

Pre and Post survey: Youth who attend STAR/PAL on-site and off-site sessions will be administered a pre and post survey to measure change in perception, knowledge, and risks of marijuana and substance use. The survey will also include questions about youth's perception of law enforcement, areas of personal growth to help prevent future use, as well as his/her/their satisfaction with the program.

Post-knowledge surveys: To measure any increase in knowledge on the effects and risk of marijuana, responsible adult use, and available resources in the community for those seeking more information a post-survey will be provided to participants at the end of adult, youth, and community educational sessions.

Participant tracking logs: Session and group participation, referral source, school attendance, school performance, and program completion status will be tracked at the individual level by STAR/PAL and will be entered into STAR/PAL existing database. Each youth will be assigned an individual identification number to maintain confidentiality. SANDAG will receive a download from STAR on a quarterly basis for analysis and inclusion in a data dashboard.

Data Analysis

Analysis will be both qualitative and quantitative in nature. The project involves both individual and population level data. A quasi-experimental design using single-group, pre-test/post-test design (i.e., comparison of measures before and after

program participation and intervention) will be employed. Changes in risk (e.g., substance use) and protective factors (e.g., decision making) will be compared over time using the appropriate level of analysis (e.g., Chi-Square statistics, difference of means tests, and measures of effect size). Description of sessions provided, attendance, and topics will be documented to provide the framework for the outcome evaluation. Statistical analysis will include use of frequency distributions and Chi-Square statistics for nominal measurement and differences of means tests for ratio level data. Bi-variate analysis ANOVAs will be used to identify, and factors related to increased knowledge. In addition, informing the BSCC quarterly reports, the research partner will develop a data dashboard presenting current data and meet regularly with program staff to help inform the process and allow for any mid-course adjustments. In addition, a final Local Evaluation Report, including recommendations and lessons learned, will be completed at the end of the grant period.

Timeline and Reporting

As noted earlier, the evaluation will start from the inception of the project and research staff will work closely with STAR/PAL and its partners throughout the grant period. In addition, SANDAG will provide quarterly data dashboards to ensure timely sharing of data to inform the implementation process, SANDAG staff will participate in project meetings to understand the successes, challenges, and gain a greater understanding of the overall project. Table 3 provides a timeline of evaluation milestones.

Table 3
Impact Outcomes and Measurement Reporting

Activities	Start Date	End Date
Program partners begin meeting	May 2023	On-going
Finalize Local Evaluation Plan	September 2023	9/27/2023
Create SDPD tracking logs	September 2023	September 2023
Program services begin	June 2023	On-going
Create data dashboard	October 2023	10/31/2023
Update data dashboards	December 2023	Quarterly
Quarterly reports	August 2023	8/15/23 & 11/15/23; 2/15/24; 5/15/24; 8/15/24; 11/15/24; 2/15/25; 5/15/25; 8/15/25, 11/15/25; 2/15/26; 5/15/26, 8/15/26,11/15/26,2/15/27, 5/15/27,8/15/27,11/15/27, 2/15/28 and 5/15/28
Collect program data from STAR/PAL	October 2023	Quarterly

Summary

This project is aimed at addressing a pressing need related to the impact of Proposition 64 in San Diego. The city has experienced an increase in crime cases associated with marijuana dispensaries, rising calls to poison control, and elevated drug-related arrests, particularly among youth. The project primarily focuses on the City Heights and Southeastern areas of San Diego, which are characterized by economic disadvantages, high crime rates, and educational challenges. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, existing law enforcement resources for youth programs were reassigned, leading to a significant reduction in services. The project seeks to bridge this gap by hiring law enforcement officers, civilian staff, and a coordinator to provide mentoring and education programs to at-risk youth, aiming to reduce drug experimentation and delinquency. The project draws on successful mentoring models and emphasizes data-driven evaluation to measure its effectiveness. Ultimately, it aims to empower youth and build safer communities by addressing the growing challenges associated with marijuana use among vulnerable populations.