

California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program (CalVIP)

-

2020 Report

Volunteers of America

Report prepared by

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Executive Summary

The VOALA California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program (CalVIP) was developed to interrupt the cycle of increasing gang membership and violence by providing an alternative employment-based trajectory to at-risk transition aged youth (ages 18-25) in the city of Compton, CA. CalVIP provides a comprehensive employment and life skills training program to prepare participating youth for stable, independent lives outside of gang involvement. The goal was to provide services to 300 participants during a two-year period (i.e., 150 participants per year). Broad goals of the program included preparing at-risk youth in Compton to secure and sustain employment and reducing gang-related violence perpetrated by program participants by increasing their employment opportunities.

- **Enrollment.** A total of 206 at-risk transition aged youth (22.2 average age, SD = 2.23, 74.3% African American and 18.4% Latino) were enrolled. For year 1, CalVIP reached 130 clients (86.7% of its 150 goal); for the shortened year 2 (due to COVID-19), the program was on track to reach its 150-client goal with 76 clients within the first 6 months.
- **Services.** Individualized goals (e.g., identifying services and referrals, specific trainings and educational opportunities, employment opportunities and placement, housing, and legal issues) were developed for 100% of participants.
 - 100% had employment-related goals (e.g., obtaining, maintaining, promotion, job training, tools / certifications)
- **Employment Outcomes.** Individualized employment plans (IEPs) were developed for 190 (92.2%) clients; 120 (63.2%) met with job developers.
 - 81 (42.6%) were placed into a job, with 58 (30.5%) being hired onto permanent jobs, while the remaining attained part-time or temporary jobs.
- **Gang Involvement.** Among 160 participants who completed the gang assessments survey, 68 (42.6%) reported being involved with gangs.
 - 41 (56.2%) reported that they wanted to reduce their involvement in gangs.
- **Perceptions of CalVIP.** Focus group interviews with participants suggested that they credited the responsiveness of the CalVIP staff and their ability to provide support and trainings as key factors that motivated them to be engaged with the program and helped them develop a more positive outlook and patience for a long-term career.
- **Recommendations.** Recommendations to improve the program comprise the need to consider issues with transportation, identifying additional partners, funding for additional training, project staffing, and data entry.



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Overview

Volunteers of America Los Angeles was awarded a grant from the California Board of State and Community Correction (BSCC) to interrupt the cycle of gang-related violence among at-risk transition aged youth (ages 18-25) in Compton, CA. One of 20 funded projects, the California Violence Intervention and Prevention Grant Program (CalVIP) was designed to provide comprehensive employment and life skills training program to prepare participating youth for stable, independent lives outside of gang involvement. Available citywide, the goal was to service 150 participants per year, up to 300 during the 2-year grant period. The purpose of this report is to summarize key activities and data that have occurred during the grant period (i.e., October 2018 – May 2020).

Project Management

The evaluators have actively been involved in project management and have regularly communicated with the CALVIP staff (i.e., Patricia Vining, Eurskine Robinson, and Leo Villalobos) and VOALA leadership team (i.e., Drs. Suzanne Markoe Hayes, Maria Jimenez, and Rick Orlina). The evaluators met with the CalVIP and VOALA teams to discuss recruitment, feedback, planning, program implementation, and recommendations. The evaluators have: organized and participated in 14 meetings; attended two VOALA-led ServicePoint software trainings; have accessed ServicePoint for data acquisition; and processed survey data.

Development of Materials



In year 1, the evaluators reviewed existing documents which consisted of various survey scales and client data. The evaluators and the CalVIP teams discussed data management and cleaning of sensitive data (i.e., Gang Intake Assessments). The evaluators developed interview guides (i.e., interview questions) for participants and staff interviews. The interview guide are presented in the appendices (Appendix A and B). These guides were reviewed and approved by the CalVIP team.

Reporting

The evaluators have consulted with the leadership team to determine the scope of the reports. The evaluators developed two brief reports and two annual reports: 1) Year 1 2019 report and the 2) current 2020 summative report. The brief reports were based on ServicePoint data provided to the evaluators by the CalVIP team. The second brief report was based on the Hope Scale survey data. With regard to the annual reports, the Year 1 2019 report summarized findings and provided recommendations for year 2. Each of these reports were discussed at meetings with the CalVIP team.

Data Management/Analyses

The evaluators have regularly communicated data requests with the VOALA data collection team. Specifically, the evaluators have:

- Developed and managed databases for analyses (i.e., Gang Involvement Assessments, Hope Scale data); and
- Analyzed ServicePoint data and a summary of findings is presented in this report.



Data Collection

Although the evaluators have discussed on multiple occasions the need to conduct a site visit and observation of CALVIP participants, program staff have recommended waiting for a number of reasons (e.g., waiting for an increase in number of participants, establishing protocols in new location, increase in participant consistency in attending program activities). With regard to participant interviews, the evaluators attempted to conduct interviews and observations with CalVIP clients throughout the years. However, the coordination and scheduling of these activities presented specific challenges that (i.e., 2 canceled interviews, 1 cancelled event, inconsistent “drop in” meetings with participants and staff). Despite these challenges, the evaluators:

- interviewed one staff member (Year 1);
- attended one event (Year 1);
- conducted a site visit (Year 2); and
- conducted participant interviews (Year 2).

Quantitative Data Analysis and Summary

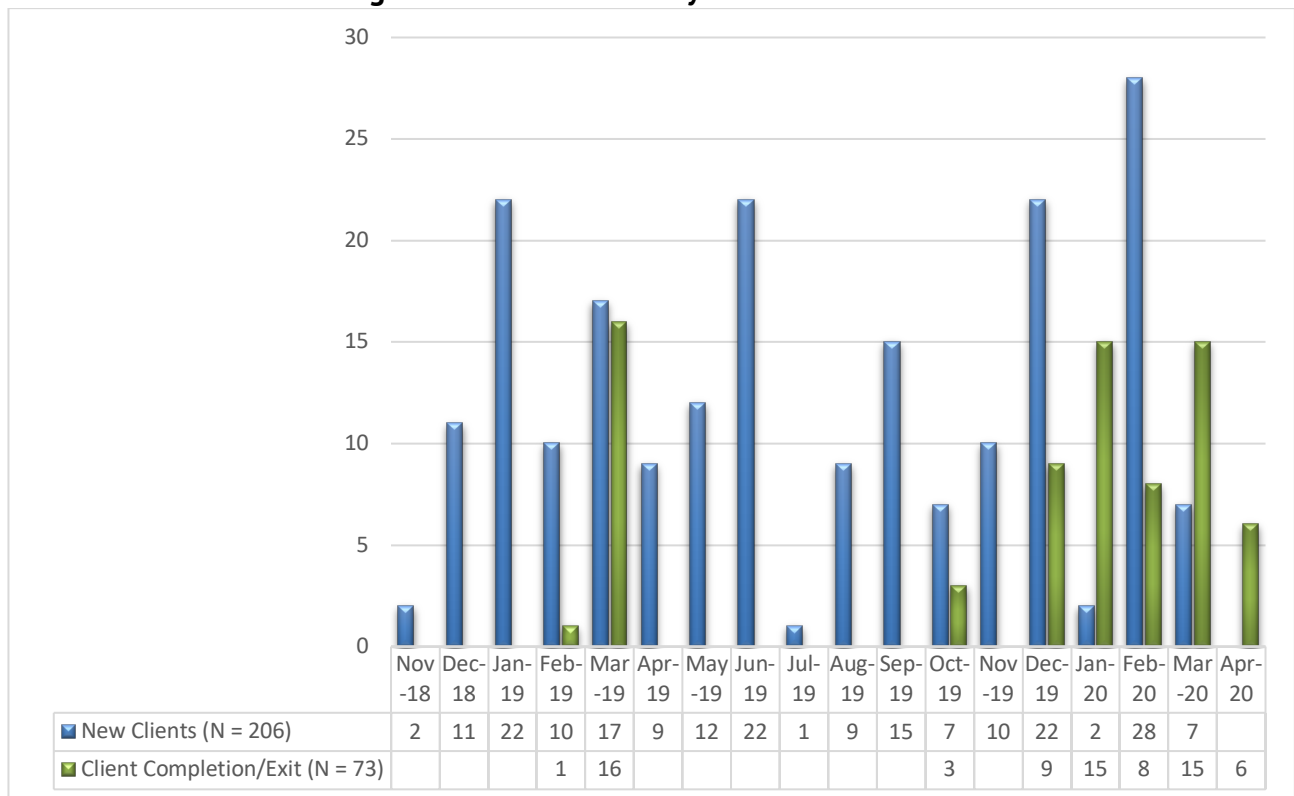
Data from each participant has been entered in ServicePoint by the CalVIP staff from October 1, 2018 until April 20, 2020. These data have been checked with CalVIP and ServicePoint teams. This summary reports on program findings as discuss in the evaluation plan. The program ended prematurely due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Enrollment. From October 2018 to April 2020, there a total of 206 participants: Year 1 (October 2018 to September 2019) had 130 participants and Year 2 (October 2019 to April

2020) had 76. Overall, CalVIP were close to meeting their 150 client goal for Year 1 (reaching 130 clients or 86.7% of their goal). This is likely due to the delayed start of the program, slow starts in recruitment efforts and networking with different organizations and community groups, modifying recruitment and operation hours, and the identification of key sites for recruitment.

For Year 2, 76 clients enrolled in the first 6 months (averaging 13 clients a month). These numbers indicate that the target enrollment for Year 2 would have likely been reached if Covid-19 did not stop the program. The summary of participant enrollment and exits by month are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Year 1 & 2 Entry and Exit Numbers.



Reasons for Exits / Destination after CALVIP. Among the 206 program participants, 64.6% are still part of the program (as of this report). Among the 73 remaining participants, the largest group completed the program (14.6%) or reached the maximum allotted time allowed (10.2%). Staff had difficulty maintaining contact with a small percentage of participants (7.3%; i.e., no contact for 30 days, disappeared). The complete list of exits reasons are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Percentage of participants who are continuing with, completed, or left the program (N = 206).

Client Status in the Program	
Still in the Program	64.6%
Exited Clients / Reason for Exiting	
Completed program	14.6%
Reached maximum time allowed	10.2%
No contact for 30 days	6.8%
Criminal activity / violence	1.0%
Non-compliance with program	1.0%
Does not qualify for enrollment in program	0.5%
Moved out (VOA-SvcCoord Only)	0.5%
Other	0.5%
Unknown/Disappeared	0.5%

Client Demographics. Given the focus of the project on the young adult population, clients average age was 22.2 (SD = 2.23). The majority of clients (84.3%) were between 19 to 25 years of age. See Table 2 below. Regarding ethnicity and race, the majority of clients were African American (74.3%) and Latino (18.4%), while the remaining participants (7.4%) consisted of White, multi-group, and unknown ethnicities. It is important to note that these

statistics somewhat reflect Compton demographics in which Latinos represent 68.2% and African Americans represent 29.5% of the population (Census, 2020)¹. Lastly, there were similar percentages of males (54.4%) and females (44.9%). The summary of participant demographics is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Demographics of clients (N = 205).

Age	Ethnicity		Gender		
18	2.9%	Black/African American	74.1%	Female	42.0%
19-21	24.5%	Hispanic/Latino	17.6%	Male	57.1%
22-25	59.8%	Multiple Race	2.9%	Unknown	1.0%
26-44	11.8%	White	2.9%		
Unknown	1.0%	Unknown	2.4%		

Goal Setting with Clients. Among the 206 clients served, all went through an intake process. This included verification that they lived in the city, getting identification cards (if they did not possess one), and an initial interview to identify program qualification and potential services. For each client, specific set of goals were developed; these included identifying services and referrals, specific trainings and educational opportunities, employment opportunities and placement, housing, and whether legal issue (e.g., parole status) need to be addressed (see Table 3 for list of client goals). Most clients (62.4%) had more than two or more set of goals, while 37.6% of clients had only 1 goal set. The goals set for all clients were employment (e.g., obtaining, maintaining, promotion, job training, tools /

¹ Data accessed from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/comptoncitycalifornia>
CalVIP 2020 Report

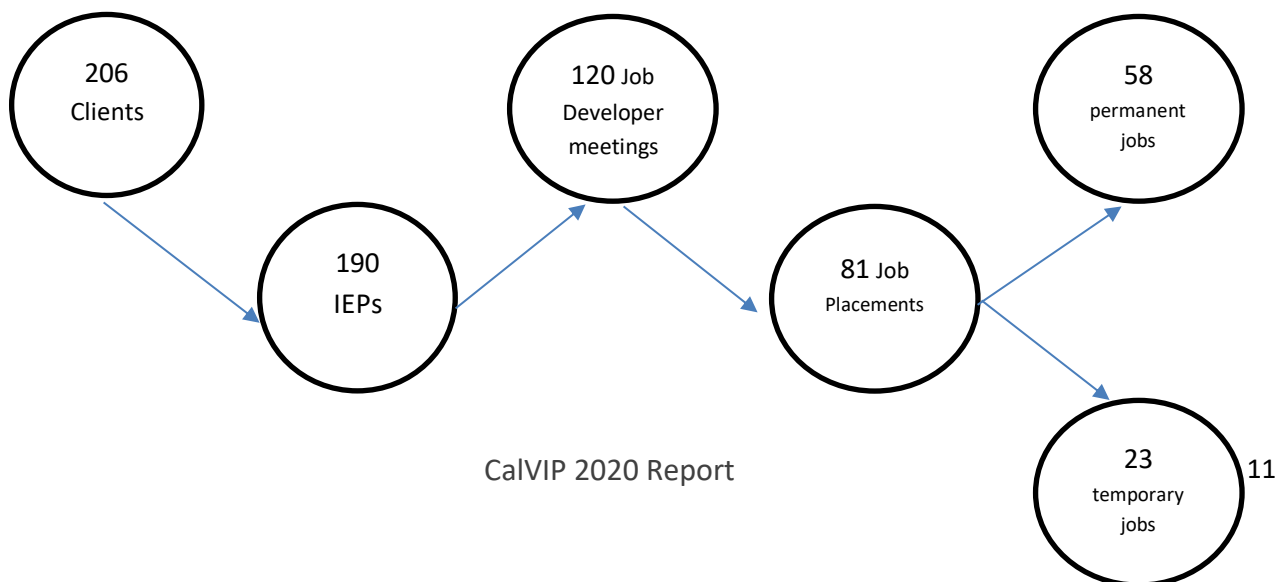
certifications), wherein 100% of all clients received. Other goals that were set included identifying trainings and education, case management, and housing.

Table 3. Recorded number of goals set given to CalVIP clients.

Type of Goals	Number
Case Management (i.e., case review)	16
Employment (i.e., obtaining, maintaining, promotion, job training, tools / certifications).	209
Housing (i.e., obtaining emergency housing, shelter, transition house, or permanent housing)	3
Identification (e.g., obtaining ID, social security)	1
Legal (i.e., compliance with probation / parole terms)	1
Other	2
Training and Education (e.g., vocational training, class enrollment, improve education achievements/attainments, increase life skill knowledge, obtain employable skills)	19

Employment Status Outcomes. CalVIP data showed that staff and supervisors developed 190 individualized employment plans (IEPs) and 120 clients (63.2%) met with a job developer intake and assessment. This led to 81 (42.6%) clients being placed into a job; available data suggest that 58 (30.5%) were hired onto permanent jobs, while the remaining were part-time or temporary jobs.

Figure 2. Employment status among clients (N = 206).





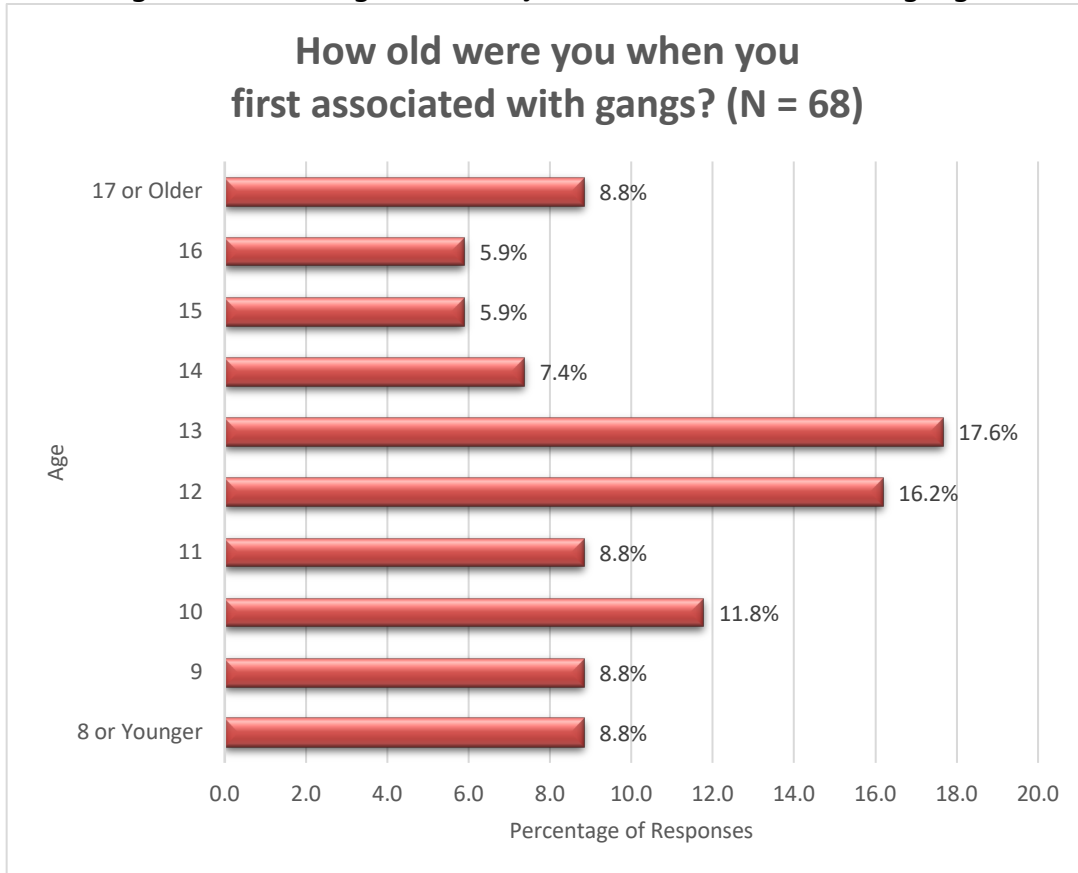
CalVIP Gang Involvement Assessment Results

As part of the intake and exit process, most participants completed paper-and-pencil surveys about their histories with gangs, violent and non-violent behavior, and law enforcement. These additional surveys were confidential (i.e., names were not linked to data). The surveys were administered by CALVIP staff, housed at CALVIP offices, and the evaluators transcribed the data from the surveys into a database for analyses and reporting.

Surveys Completed. A total of 160 surveys were completed. The majority of these survey were administered as part of the intake assessment (73.5%; N = 116) and only 1.3% (N = 2) were identified during the exit process. The remaining 26.3% (N = 42) were not identified as either intake or exit, and a large portion of these remaining surveys had missing data (61.9%; n = 26). The majority of these completed surveys (89.5%) were done by clients who were just starting (with less than 1 week of time enrolled in CalVIP); only 10% (N = 8) had been with CalVIP for more than a week. For the analyses of these survey responses, we aggregated all data together and reported the number of responses for each item.

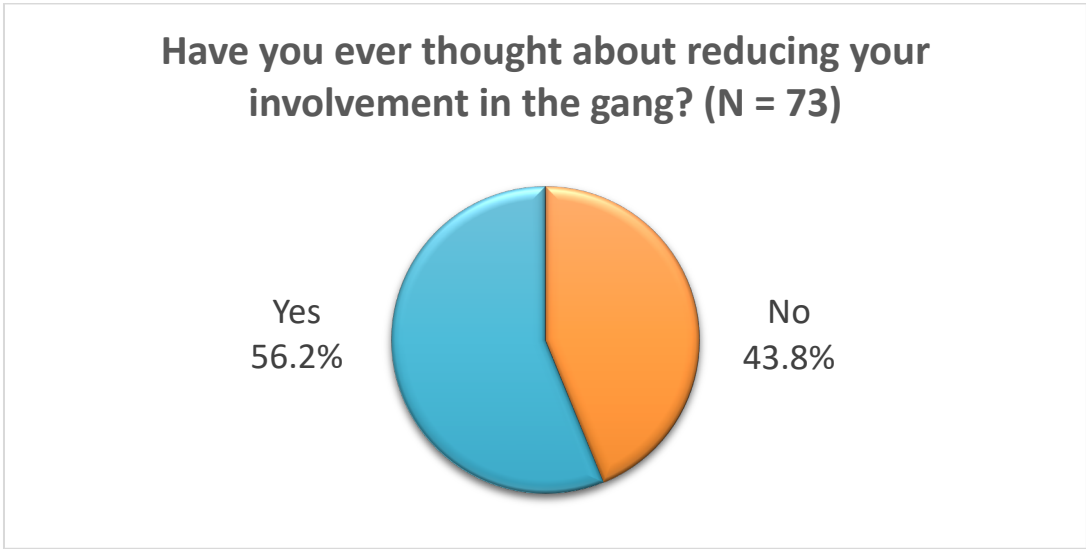
Gang Involvement. To assess their involvement in a gang, a series of questions were asked to determine at what age they first associated with the gang. Among 68 responses, most (42.6%) participated in ages between 11 and 13 years old, while 29.4% start at a younger age and 28% start older.

Figure 3. Clients age when they were first associated with gangs.



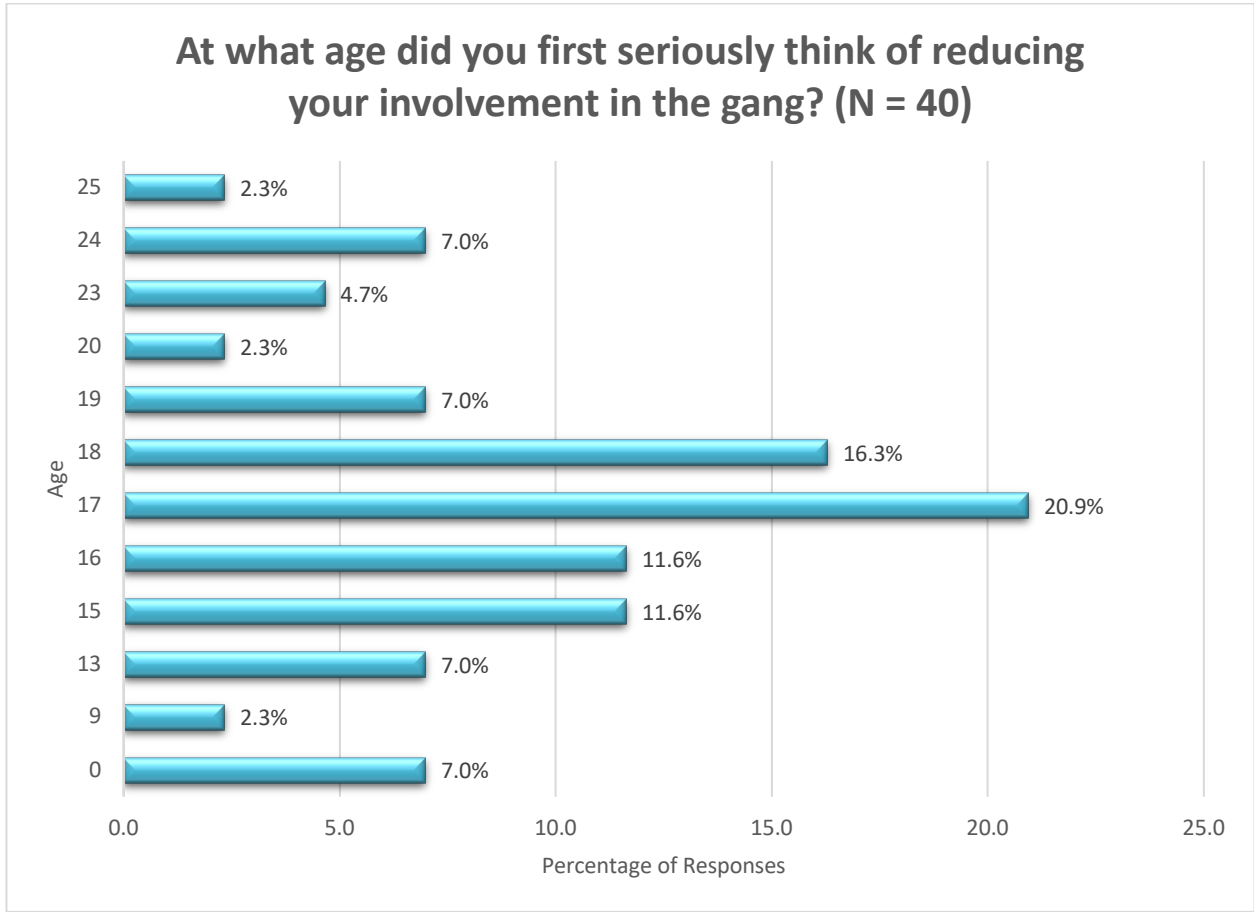
Despite these numbers, more than half (56.2%; N = 41) reported that they wanted to reduce their involvement in gangs.

Figure 4. Percentage of clients who thought about reducing their gang involvement.



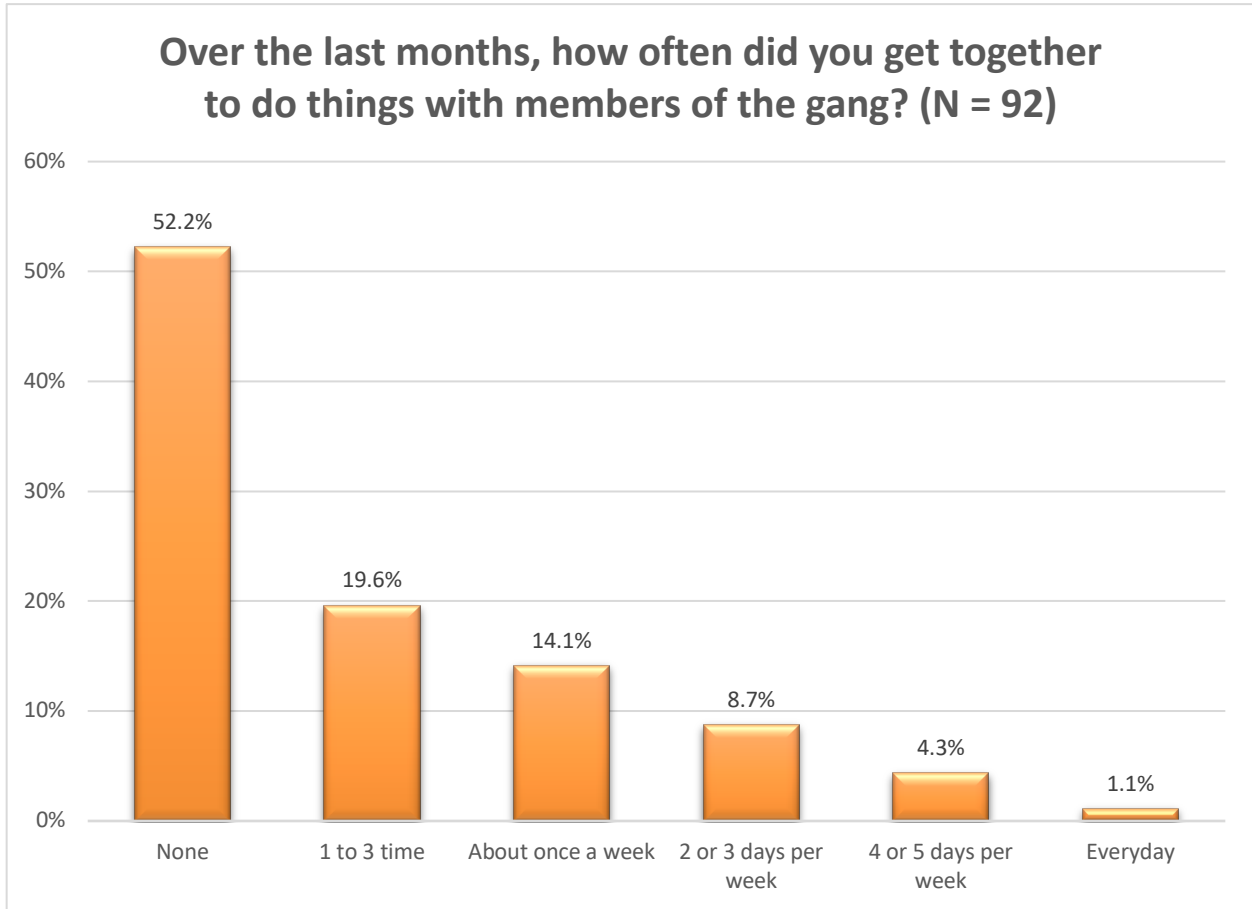
Among the respondents that indicated “yes” to whether they had ever considered reducing their involvement, the majority wanted to reduce their involve before the age of 17 (39.5%) and after the age of 18 (23.3%). At age 17 and 18, 37.2% wanted to reduce their involvement.

Figure 5. Earliest age clients thought about reducing their gang involvement.



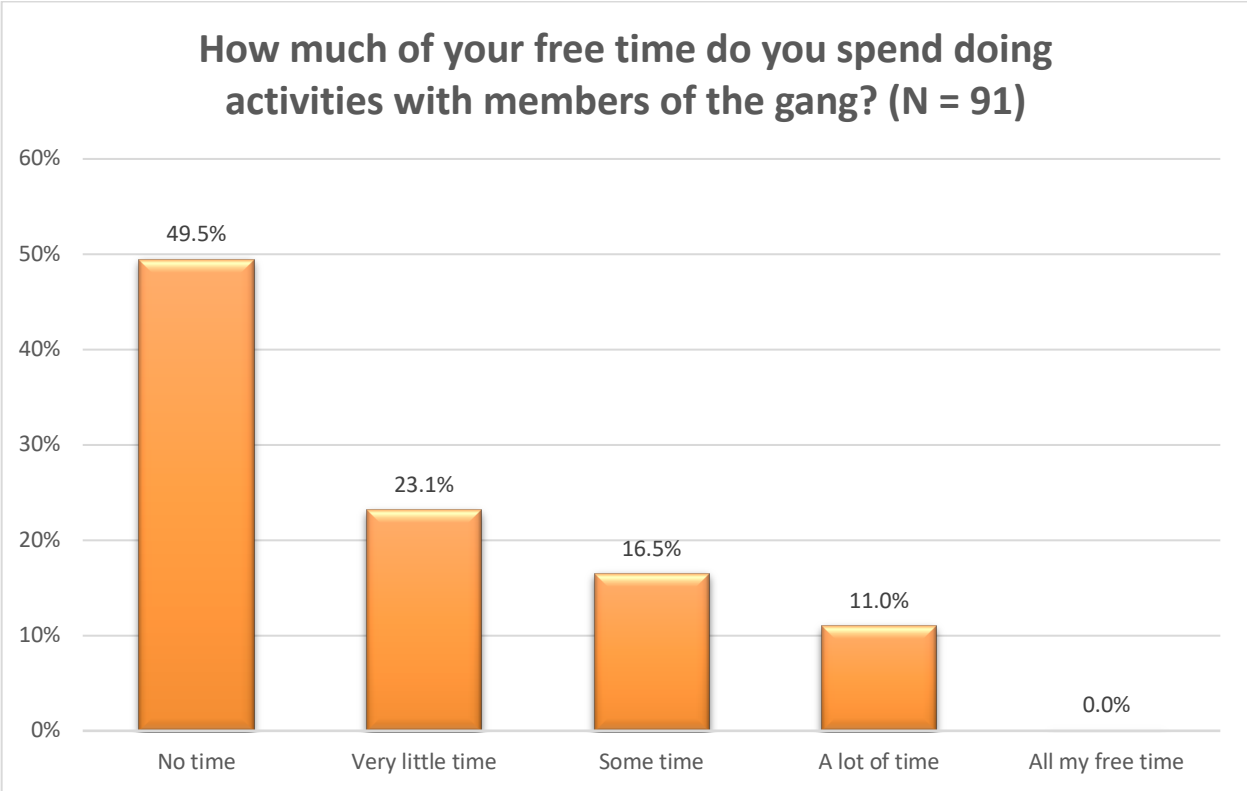
To assess how much the participant interacted with members of gangs, two questions were asked. In terms of the frequency of getting together to do things with other gang members, most were not involved (52.2%; N = 48). For those who had involvement with gang members, 19.6% (N = 18) reported having done so *1 to 3 times*, 14.1% (N = 13) reported *once a week*, 8.7% (N = 8) reported *2 or 3 days a week*, 4.3% (N = 4) reported *4 or 5 days a week*, and 1.1% (N = 1) reported *every day*.

Figure 6. Frequency of get-togethers with members of gangs.



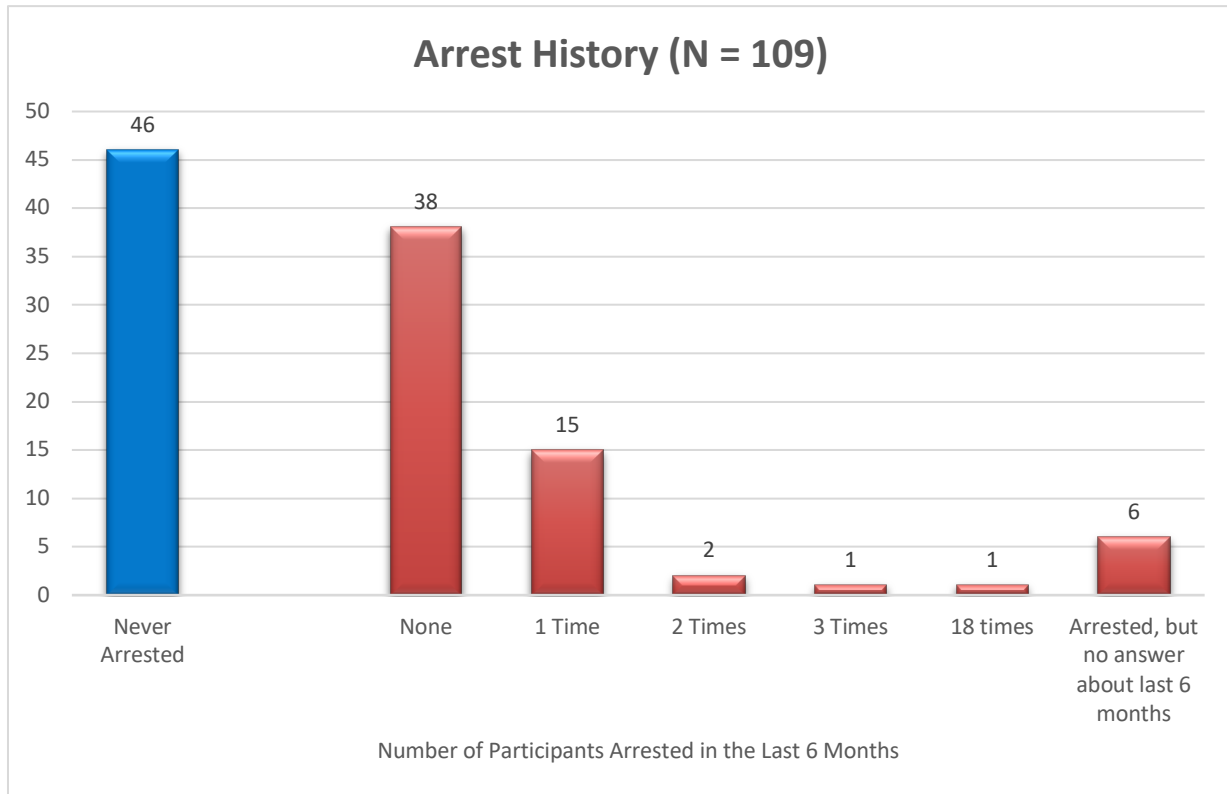
Similarly, when asked about the amount of free time they spent doing activities with members of a gang, about half (49.5%, N 45) said *none*, while 23.1% (21) reported *very little time*, 16.5% (15) reported *some time*, 11% (10) reported *a lot of time*, and 0% reported *all my free time*.

Figure 7. Amount of time clients currently spend with members of gangs.



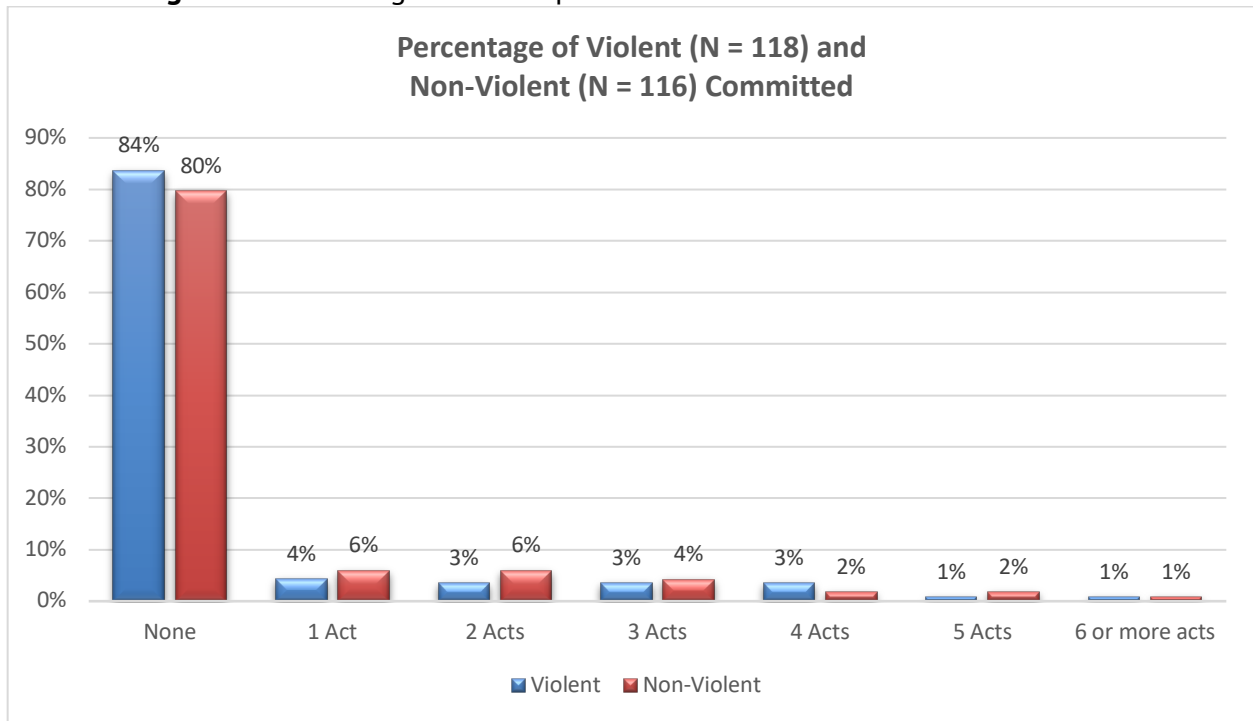
History of Arrest. With regard history with law enforcement, 57.8% (N = 63) of participants have been arrested in the past; among those who have been arrested, only 28.6% (N = 18) of these arrests have occurred in the last 6 months.

Figure 8. Clients' arrest history.



With regard to prior criminal activity, two separate lists were presented to participants with examples of 1) non-violent (e.g., purposely destroyed property that did not belong to you, sold drugs such as marijuana or prescriptions) and 2) violent behaviors (e.g., kicked, attacked or hit someone with your fist, carried a weapon, been involved in fights). The complete list of non-violent and violent crimes are presented in Appendix C. Each participant was then asked to read each list and indicate the number of different crimes that they have done in the past 6 months. With regard to non-violent crimes, most indicated that they did not commit any non-violent crimes (79.7%), while 11.6% committed 1 to 2 acts and the remaining others reported 3 or more. With regard to violent crimes, most indicated that they did not commit any violent crimes (83.6%) with others reporting 1 to 6 violent crimes (16.4%).


Figure 9. Percentage of self-reported violent and non-violent behaviors.



CalVIP 1st Participant's Awards Breakfast

Summary. The first annual CalVIP Participant's Awards Breakfast was held on July 12, 2019 at the VOA Compton Alameda St. location at 10:00 AM. The event was led and organized by the CalVIP team and included light breakfast snacks and refreshments. A program was made available to attendees and brief remarks were made by the program manager, coordinator, and two job developers. The evaluators attended the event and took notes.

The Participant's Awards Breakfast was developed to recognize the achievement of the first "cohort" of the CalVIP clients that had completed program requirements and had secured




gainful employment. Preston Dagon reported at the beginning of the event that the awards were being given to clients with 100% placement rate, which was considered part-time/full time employment or part-time/full time enrolled in school.

The evaluators arrived early to the event and assisted with some minimal set-up support and took pictures of CalVIP clients holding awards for the program (i.e., photos not available to evaluators). The event was well attended by at least 10 awardees and their family and friends. About another 10 awards were available (but not present) totaling about 20 awards. Mr. Dagon provided short anecdotes about each client and personally handed each award to each client. Then, Mr. Dagon posed with each client and a photo was taken. Throughout the event, attendees applauded and seemed engaged. It is our opinion that the awardees seemed very happy about their progress. Overall, the speeches were well received and the entire event was successful.

CalVIP Staff Interview Summary

An interview was conducted by the evaluators with a CalVIP staff member. The interviewee asked a set of semi-structured questions (Appendix A). The interview took approximately 42 minutes and was conducted at the VOA Bullis Rd. office.

Role. The interviewee stated that his formal primary and secondary roles on the CalVIP project. In his primary role as a job developer, his responsibilities involved developing relationships with the employers, identifying different training components, and developing opportunities for clients to participate in free trainings. The interviewee noted that he spent




considerable time researching free programs and organizations that could potentially assist CalVIP clients. A secondary focus has been on developing partnerships and relationships with community and support services. The interviewee noted that he has had success developing good relationships with the Sheriff's Department, Parole, Los Angeles County Recreational Department and the Compton Recreational Department. He noted several strategies used to develop positive connections to these organizations:

....building a relationship ... that comes with consistency and ... dealing with their clients, and our participants, it's about making sure we track it together....it also enhances the relationship even with the clients themselves you know, and knowing that there is some real support going back and forth holding each other accountable for it. So as far as with the sheriff's department, we have a great relationship with Sergeant Raeford Orleans who's he's really a community-based guy; that interacted with the city of Compton.

There have been other direct benefits from these positive connections which has included access to use facilities for outreach at these organizations.

Challenges/Opportunities. The interviewee noted some challenges which included identifying different partners for the CalVIP clients that could offer free services. Some of his research has led to finding programs but many are for-profit or require individuals with more experience to be considered. The interviewee said:


I guess the main component of that would be providing the avenues for trainings. You know, because that's funding based. And like I said, we got blessed with the welding component [company], but anything outside of that requires us to be able to, you know, invest some money into with the individual, and we would have the dollars to do that. And with this particular population, you know, one thing is that you know most of them is coming in inexperienced because of their youth.



Client Outcomes. In general, clients are doing well in the program. With regard to whether CalVIP clients see themselves differently as a result of participating in the program, the interviewee expressed the positive view that clients were indeed benefitting from the program. He remarked that the clients experienced positive changes in self-esteem and confidence. He attributed the changes to an increased sense of empowerment from the information and program support the clients receive. He said:

It's just—the lights just come on. It is just really hard to really put a word on it, other than, consistency. You know at first... you wrestle with the participants in—you know, “I need you to be here. I need you to get here. I need you to be on time” and then have that that talk with them about why is it so important. But then when you empowered them with information, and then if you go over here and these are things you expect and walk them through it...then once they see the field or even obtain something out of it, they come back and debrief that and then they know that we help navigate that then it becomes more clear to them, ‘Okay this is going to be a process let's get down now’ instead of me telling them what's their priority. Let's talk about now what you think now would be your priority. So that goes back to empowering them you know. This is not, I'm here to assist you--I'm not here to tell you, dictate to you what you should or need to do. It's about, you know, me being a part of your process on achieving the goals that you set for yourself.

When asked whether the program had any effect on reducing gang violence or participation in gang-related activities, the interviewee remarked that ***the program has changed the way in which they interact with their gang-involved friends.*** The interviewee noted that clients are talking about positive changes in their life and talking about the CalVIP program to other people. He noted:




Yeah, I think—I believe that it changes their involvement, but it changes their involvement in how they communicate, more so than associate. You know, it's hard to let go of a friend, so they gonna back to, you know, their associates. But sharing the information in which they have received, or the things that they're doing that's becoming more enlightening to them is the difference. Instead of just idle talking now they're having talks of substance. So that's the difference and that brings about a new attraction, so now when I go out to these parks and recreation, now I get a few other individuals approaching me about their curiosities, 'I hear you're over there helping so and so.' You know so obviously, that conversation has started amongst them, where now it's coming back to me. You know "this is what, honestly - I have to be honest, this is not a quick fix, it's really up to you. So you may not be ready, you know, but I'm here to support you through that process and when they see that success' — it just takes one.

While clients have not expressed specifically that they are spending less or more time with gang-involved friends or acquaintances, the interviewee noted that working full time and having new positive experiences will result in less involvement over time.

Exception to the rule. The interviewee only mentioned one client who initially expressed a lack of commitment not only to CalVIP but parole obligations. In part, he worked with the client and discovered that the client's spiritual beliefs were creating compliance issues (i.e., more time spent practicing religion versus finding gainful employment). Following conversations with the client, he got onboard and began to comply with both his parole obligations and CalVIP.

CalVIP staff/coworkers. The interviewee contended that the CalVIP staff and management are working very well as a team. Some of the critical issues raised in the interview included the need to hire more staff and need for more work space (to address confidentiality and privacy issues). The interviewee also mentioned that additional resources




to pay for more training components would be ideal (e.g., Class A training and certification, substance abuse training, solar panel training, roofing training, etc.).

Reaching program goals. With regard to program goals, the interviewee thought that they were partially meeting the goals for providing life-skills/positive youth development training. He surmised that this was due to time constraints (e.g., not enough time with clients) and being short-staffed. Additionally, he thought the team was doing a good job providing opportunities to connect with clients and connecting clients to wraparound services or follow-up care.

CalVIP Participant Focus Group Summary

Two semi-structured focus group interviews were conducted by the evaluators. The interviews took place on January 9, 2020 and lasted 35-40 minutes; each focus group had two current CalVIP participants. Below is a narrative summary with emerging themes (common or related responses given across participants). The complete transcripts for each interview are presented in Appendix E and F.

Participants. A CalVIP staff member asked 10 participants to volunteer to participate in focus groups prior to January 9, 2020. Although multiple participants agreed to participate in the focus groups, only four participants showed up to the scheduled dates. Due to confidentiality, we have changed the names of the CalVIP participants that were interviewed. In group 1, Manny (Hispanic Male, enrolled in CalVIP for 1 month) and Albert (Black Male, enrolled in CalVIP for 1 year) were interviewed. In group 2, Ivan (Black Male, enrolled in



CalVIP for 3 months) and Dennis (Black Male, enrolled in CalVIP for 1 month) were interviewed.

Comparisons with other programs. When asked about how they heard about the program, the four participants stated that it was primarily through referrals (e.g., probation officer, HOPICS/shelter, VOA staff). Most participants shared that they had concerns prior to enrolling in CalVIP given that they had poor experiences with other support services or programs. Manny stated the other services were not responsive and wasted his time, especially as they made referrals to other services that did not follow through. Another participant, Ivan, mentioned the lack of support in the parole process.


Manny: [The previous program] just referred me to go to somewhere to find a job and I went. And they wouldn't answer or I would go and nobody was really there; so it was just like a waste of time. I just got out of prison so it's like a day gone...this place [CalVIP] really works; so I'm grateful for that. That I found a place like this.

Albert: Yeah, they've got a lot of good resources.

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Ivan: They [CalVIP] helped me transition out of prison. Because [the parole officer] didn't do nothing at all. And that's a shame... I felt so scared to even want to ask for [a] supervisor because I don't want to get targeted.... A lot of these guys that work for CalVIP got out of the cycle. (Dennis agrees) We're in that same cycle.

Responsiveness of CalVIP. When asked what they liked about the program, the responsiveness of CalVIP staff and supervisors were repeatedly highlighted, and it was the staff and program commitment that encouraged them to continue in the program. This



responsiveness included feelings that the staff were genuine in their ‘want to help’ as well as their consistent and timely support they provided.

Ivan: They’re [CalVIP staff] just genuine. They’re really like family. Like real. That’s how I feel. We’ll be in here laughing so hard. It’s like we’re not even in here. [Laughs with Dennis]

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Dennis: When certain people talk to you, you can tell it’s like, a lot of the stuff they say it really doesn’t mean anything to them. They’re just speaking out of their mouth. But when they [CalVIP staff] speak to you, it’s like, “we really need you to do this so we can help you. We really need you to come back so we can help you. You need to help yourself.”

Ivan: She [CalVIP staff] just made it her obligation to try to really look out for me. She introduced me to all of the CalVIP community, got me all over out here in Compton, and just has given me so many resources with these guys. These guys have been so helpful.


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Albert: Like when we first started the phone, he [CalVIP staff] hit me up like every day, you know. He’d keep me updated or see how I’m doing or whatever, see if I’d done anything in the day. Like meeting with him, I think we met once or twice a week, I forget.

--

Manny: Yeah, he was very consistent. I call him up and he’s all “alright, I’ll come right down and we’ll meet” and then I met him. He sent me the information where to go online to sign up for the census and everything like that.

When providing support, staff were recognized in terms of their follow-through with their services. This involved completing a project from start to finish (e.g., resume, identification



card, job application) and following up on existing ones (e.g., job interviews, college admission).

Albert: When we first started meeting, we were just making the resume and basically started from scratch. Made the resume, filled out – he sat right there with me and filled out for jobs. And he ended up sending me to this one place in downtown LA ... actually I'm working with them today doing the Caltrans thing, they've got a little program. But he sent me there.

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Ivan: ...She got me into Glendale community college... She was hitting me up. Every email - she was callin' me all the time no matter what I'm doing. [indistinct] She called me and texted me all the time, "where you at?" - making it her duty. That's one thing.

--

Manny: For me it's been new experiences like the interviews. I never gone to an interview, all my jobs were freelance jobs. I was getting paid under the table, things like that. So, with the interview they prepare you for that, I remember some lady prepared me for that. She asked me questions, she recorded it to see how it looked, just to be like "Oh, I need to work on this. Oh, I need to work on that." Those change your mind in a way to where before it was like, man I don't think I would have been able to come do all this. Now look at me I got a job already, I went through that interview and it was all good. So, in that sense yeah.

Motivation. Participants credited the responsiveness of the staff and their ability to provide support and trainings as key factors that motivated them to start and continue with the program.

Albert: I guess the motivation would be like the get up and go, like if you want it... He [CalVIP staff / Preston] wants to see you doing something positive. So...I got to – and he let you know - "want it for yourself first." But all the inspiration he gave me. It's like



dang I might as well – like I got to do it, at least make him proud. Yeah, very motivational though.

Manny: For me, so I just got out right [of prison]. I wasn't trying to go back to the same thing. So it was only like a self-want thing... It's possible you know. Like how he has all the certifications and it's through here. That motivates me to come even more, you know and like be there. Not just be going out and doing some other stuff.

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Manny: Yeah, it's simple. Some people don't want to – some people are scared to take the help, but this place helps you out a lot. And that's what sometimes you need, what sometimes people need a little extra push just to get there. That little motivation or whatever it is. You [inaudible]...

When participants share their participation with ***family and friends***, this further motivated their desire to continue with the program.

Manny:...They [friends and my family members] ask me “Oh where'd you go?” I'll be all like Volunteers of America... they're happy to see me like “Oh see you could do it. We've been telling you that you could do it. You just have to want it.” And they were proud of me because you know I've been doing good and it's all thanks to this program too you know. If not, I would have been searching for a program or like searching for a job on my own and it's kind of even harder. You don't get reached out at hand, like he said they got me through and that's the cool part about it.

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Ivan: These people were helping my relationships and family issues. Seriously. Because when my family know I'm coming here and how I'm handling my business and how I tell them I'm here, and my girlfriend, every time it just motivates me to keep coming. That's what really happened because I almost fell off. I was so tired and depressed. ...She [girlfriend] told me no - you have to build something for yourself, and when people are trying to help you, you have to take their resources.



Training / Services. When participants discussed their involvement with the program, they emphasized the amount of staff support, services, resources, and training opportunities. This included providing services and opportunities, like job fairs and trainings, encouraging them to continue what they are doing, and teaching them to be persistent and patient about the training and job searching process.

Albert: When we first started meeting, we were just making the resume and basically started from scratch. Made the resume, filled out – he [Preston] sat right there with me and filled out for jobs.

--

Albert: Trainings, they did out of OSCA [Occupational Safety Councils of America]. Yeah, I've gotten plenty of trainings. I just don't use them, so I don't really know. Because right now I'm kind of stuck in the rut, my own damn fault, right now, trying to make it up this little thing. And then, because I completed the welding class, I got a welding certification, [training from] OSCA, disaster sights, I've got a forklift [training]...And I got a hazmat... the 40-hour haz-worker training...I've got a lot of certifications.

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Manny: For me it's been new experiences like the interviews... So, with the interview they prepare you for that, I remember some lady prepared me for that. She asked me questions, she recorded it to see how it looked, just to be like "Oh, I need to work on this. Oh, I need to work on that." Those change your mind in a way to where before it was like, man I don't think I would have been able to come do all this.

--

Manny: It's possible you know. Like how he has all the certifications and it's through here. That motivates me to come even more, you know and like be there. Not just be going out and doing some other stuff.

Albert: The thing about all those certifications man, is it was free... Yeah, they've got a lot of good resources.

--

Manny: So they bring up the opportunities and then you grasp it, you go for it. It's like what do you have to lose? Nothing, you know. It's something positive you're going to gain at the end.

--

Albert: I feel like there's no way to change it because it's, like they give you everything you need to complete the mission or do what you got to do. Like if you've got to go somewhere, they give you bus tokens.

--


Ivan: I just feel like I have more to keep going for because I've already come a long way. [Dennis agrees] [indistinct] I feel like I'm way better off and I know what resources they have and where it's at. All I have to do is keep coming consistently. I feel like I'm in a better position as long as I keep in contact with these guys. You just gotta more stable.

Change Mindset / Thinking Positive. Regardless of the amount of time they were with enrolled with CalVIP, each participant shared how the program changed how they viewed themselves, interactions with others, and outlook on their life and career. For example, in one focus group, both participants discussed how the program helped them break free from the *'traps' and 'cycles'* of negativity:

Ivan: It's all money. It's a trap. It's like a cycle and these guys are trying to help us get out of the cycle. A lot of these guys that work for CalVIP got out of the cycle. (Dennis agrees) We're in that same cycle.

GG: Do you think the program has changed any way that you interact with your friends?

Dennis: Yeah because they let you know not to be around the negativity (Ivan: You gotta go) and not to be around people who are just standing by. If they're in the same position as you and they're just standing by and they are doing nothing about it, you shouldn't be around them, people leeching off of you.



Ivan: People are texting my phone and I'll be at appointments. I say, "I'm handling my business. I'm handling my business." Like people been textin' me [indistinct]. It makes people want to do things and be better as well.

Similarly, members of the other focus group emphasized an individual level motivation (or 'self-want') to improve their situation:

Albert: [CalVIP] Makes me think better. Because like you going to do something positive to help the situation instead of hinder it. So it's like making you think a lot better on the positive side. That's one of the ladies right there.

GG: Yeah that's Pat. So along that, do you think that it's made you think in a better way?

Albert: More positive.


--

Manny: So it was only like a self-want thing. If I wanted it. So, I just kind of distanced myself from that. Because I stayed in the valley so, but I'm still here. So I could stay away from all that. Because nothing is ever the same [inaudible]. Just a bunch of bullshit [laughs]....Yeah. You know it showed me I could do something than just go around with friends or whatever....Like how he has all the certifications and it's through here. That motivates me to come even more, you know and like be there. Not just be going out and doing some other stuff.

In terms of how participants view a ***long term (career goals) versus short term ('a quick dollar')***,

CalVIP was consistently credited with creating more positive outlook and patience for a long-term career.

Manny: When you look at it work wise, like alright if I get a job, it's just for right now and get some money. But then thinking about it more, and I hung out for all these things, it's just like instead of just getting the job for right now I could go and make a career out of something you know. It could help you make a career out of something



not just get a job at McDonald's and work there my whole life you know. Do something that's actually different.

At welding they pay good. I've seen guys with welding tools in their trucks and the big ass trucks, you know. I want to get like that. I don't want to be in my old ways, stuck for like who knows when. That's not my thing.

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Albert: At first it was all about trying to get a quick dollar, but as I could see, as I realized, that's not going to work. It's not worth it. Make it fast, spend it fast. So it's better to earn an honest paycheck, you know like my mom always told me. But they help you.

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Dennis: So like the first time coming here, I was just hoping it would be something good out of it. You feel me? Something to make me want to come back....Every since that first time, I've come back multiple, multiple times. It's always been something good. I feel like this program is about letting you know to be patient, take it step by step, take care of yourself, and everything will be alright. They reassured me that everything is going to be alright.

These outlooks were reinforced when they see results among members in the program. This is highlighted with Ivan's story about his knowledge of successful CalVIP participants.

Ivan: ... know there are enemies [gang rivals] in this program. And I know that this changed a straight gang member. We wouldn't be around each other, now we're really cool. Wesley. He's in this program. (Dennis: Yeah, Wesley.) These guys changed him. Completely changed him. He was crazy like. He's not like that now - no rowdy, no nothin'. He's a whole different person. Now he works for this place... think the people showed him that he can have more! That's what I'm saying. He's just like these guys now.....Because these guys, whatever they did, now they have a house, a car, income coming in, insurance, 401K plans. Now, Wesley got all of that. That's where they are trying to get us. Basically, we're the new generation. Other people - they keep helping, they keep leaving. Now it's just our time to take advantage of it.

--

Manny: So then I checked that out and then I came down here and when I got here people were coming out of the door talking about “Oh we just got hired” and all happy, so I was like damn so this place probably does work, you know. So, I was like let me check it out and then ended up signing up so I could go get a job and I already got a job, it’s on the way, just need to go through the process and steps.

Barriers / Commute Time. At the end of the focus group, members were asked about challenges and areas of improvement for the CalVIP. Interviewees expressed a need to address *transportation and commute times*. While they agreed that participating in CalVIP had multiple benefits, traveling to meetings, works, and interviews was difficult:

Ivan: ...the commute. That’s really the biggest problem. Nobody knows how we’re going to do it without a car and no money...It takes a lot. Especially if you got family members sick, and then you have other programs.

Manny: It’s not a waste of time because like I said I take two busses just to get here, it takes like an hour and probably 30 minutes. To me it’s worth it because I wanted to be putting in the work and they’re willing to put their part too, helping me out.

One member stated that the program was ideal, and the free *bus tokens* address some of the transportation issues:

Albert: I feel like there’s no way to change it because it’s, like they give you everything you need to complete the mission or do what you got to do. Like if you’ve got to go somewhere, they give you bus tokens.

One interviewee suggested *expanding CalVIP to multiple locations*, while another wanted to expand the age-limit so others can join.

Dennis: I would just duplicate the same program, but put it in another location.... Keep putting this program in different locations.

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Albert: Yeah but I – when I first heard about it and I came up here, I tried to get my homeboy in but he was over the age limit or something like that.

Hope Scale Data Analysis and Summary

Vision for a positive future. A key outcome measure is participants’ vision for a positive future. This involves two components: First, *pathway thinking* involves identifying different routes to success or finding ways to achieve one’s goals; second, *agency thinking* is the perception that one has the skills and drive to pursue those routes to success and goals. The Hope Scale utilizes an 8-point Likert scale (1 = definitely false; 8 = definitely true)

General Findings. Among the clients (N = 111) enrolled between August 24, 2018 and October 28, 2019, the findings generally indicate that clients were able to identify pathways to success, but do not feel as positive about the skillsets and resources (i.e., agency). Means for items grouped along the main subscales are presented in Table 4. Furthermore, Figures 10 and 11 show plotted means for the *pathway thinking* and *agency*, respectively.

Table 4. Hope Scale Means.

	Mean	SD	Qualitative Rating
Agency Subscale			
2. I energetically pursue my goals.	6.24	1.33	Somewhat True
9. My past experiences have prepared me well for my future.	5.54	1.70	Slight True
10. I've been pretty successful in life	4.89	1.50	Slightly False

12. I met the goals that I set for myself	5.05	1.67	Slight True
Total (average)	5.43	1.28	Slightly True
Pathway Subscale			
1. I can think of many ways to get out of a jam.	6.32	1.19	Somewhat True
4. There are lots of ways around any problem.	6.33	0.90	Somewhat True
6. I can think of many ways to get the things in life that are important to me.	6.47	1.01	Somewhat True
8. Even when others discouraged, I know I can find a way to solve the problem.	5.87	1.24	Slightly True
Total (average)	6.25	0.88	Somewhat True

Figure 10. Pathway thinking mean score distribution (N = 111).

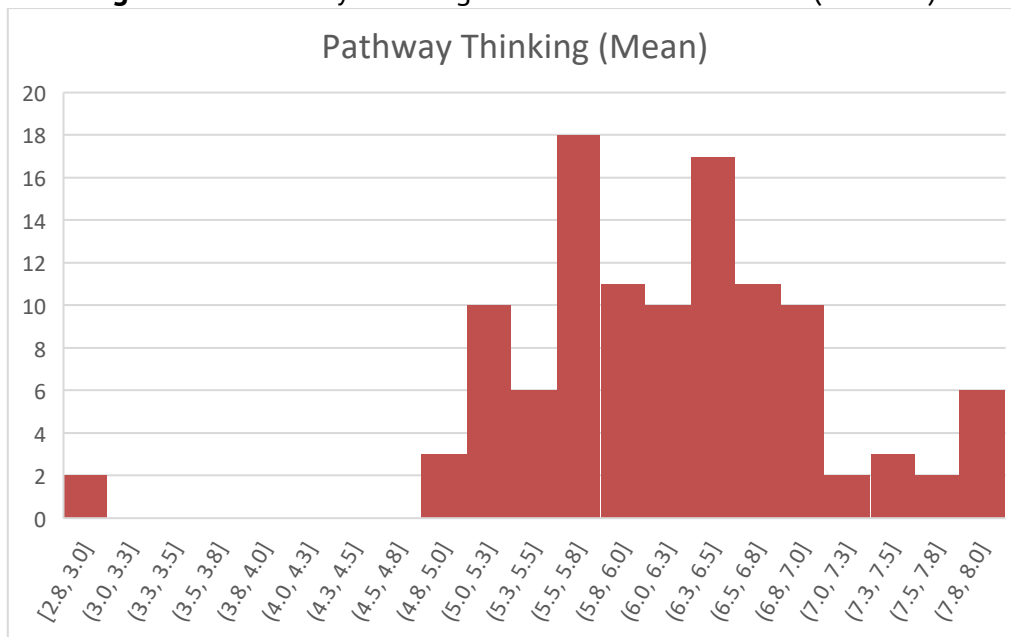
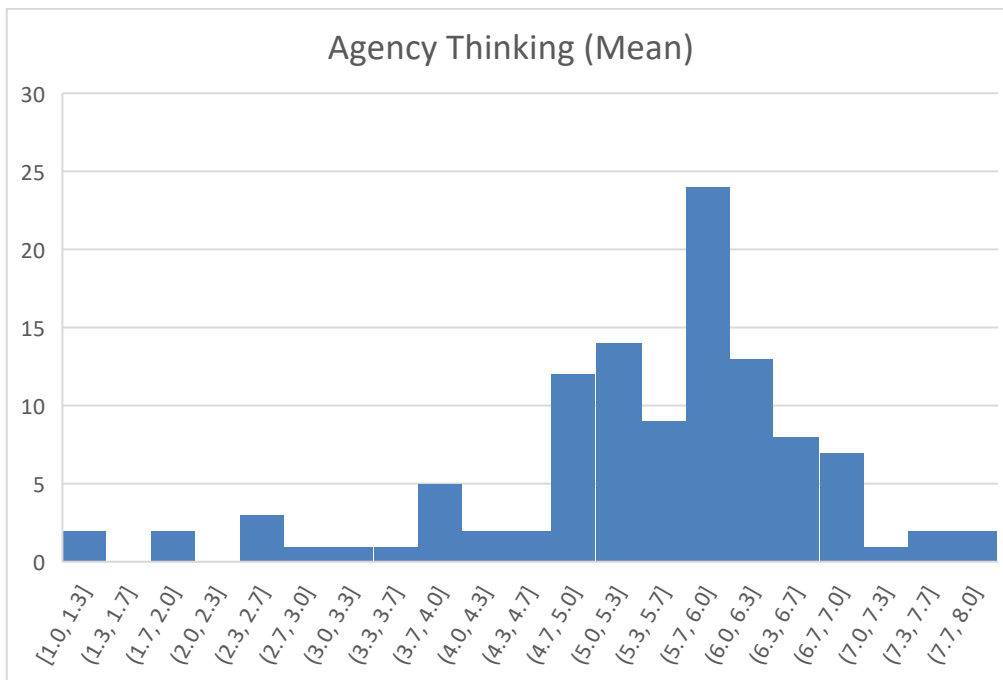


Figure 11. Agency thinking mean score distribution (N = 111).



Cluster Analysis Results. Cluster analyses is a useful statistical procedure that classifies participants on the basis of their responses on variables into a number of different groups in a way that similar participants are placed in the same group. A cluster analysis was conducted using client data from the Hope Scale. Although 2-5 cluster models provided good fit, a 4-cluster model was deemed more appropriate and is described below. The labels were developed by the evaluators to describe the overall pattern of the groups (i.e., clusters) compared to the average for both agency and pathway thinking:

- Cluster 1 (“Agency believers”) is the largest (47.7%) group of clients; this group has low beliefs about their ability to identify different routes to success (low pathways), but they are somewhat motivated to reach new goals (moderate agency);

- Cluster 2 (“Pathway believers”) consists of 29.7% of the clients; they believe there are different potential pathways to success (high pathway), but are indifferent in their beliefs that they can reach those goals (low agency);
- Cluster 3 (“Optimists”) consists of 13.5% of the clients; they have high beliefs in both their ability to identify different routes to success (high pathways) and are motivated to develop to pursue new goals (high agency);
- Cluster 4 (“Pessimists”) consists of 9% of the clients; they have lowest beliefs about their identify different routes to success (low pathways) and lowest beliefs in their ability to develop the skills and drive to be successful (low agency).

The 4-cluster model results along with mean scores on the Hope Scale subscales is presented in Table 5. In addition, a visual representation of the four clusters is presented in Figure 12.

Table 5. Four cluster model results displaying the size and mean scores for each cluster (N = 111).

	1. Agency Believers (47.7%)	2. Pathways Believers (29.7%)	3. Optimists (13.5%)	4. Pessimist (9.0%)
Agency Thinking	Moderate	Low	Highest	Lowest
Pathway Thinking	Low	High	Highest	Lowest


Figure 12. Visual representations of the four clusters (N = 111).



Note: The means for Agency Thinking (5.43) and Pathway Thinking (6.25) are represented by the horizontal lines.

Conclusion


This report summarizes key CalVIP activities and data that have been collected from the 2-year program (2018-2020). One of CalVIP’s primary goals was to provide services to 300 participants during a two-year period (i.e., 150 participants per year). Other broad goals of the program included preparing at-risk youth in Compton to secure and sustain employment and reducing gang-related violence perpetrated by program participants by increasing their employment and prosocial opportunities.



In general, the evaluators regularly communicated with the CalVIP team with regard to the completion of key program activities to reach the annual goals of the project and developed both brief reports and two annual reports. With regard to enrollment goals, a total of 206 at-risk transition aged youth (22.2 average age, SD = 2.23, 74.3% African American and 18.4% Latino) were enrolled. For year 1, CalVIP reached 130 clients (86.7% of its 150 goal); for the shortened year 2 (due to COVID-19), the program was on track to reach its 150-client goal with 76 clients within the first 6 months.

In terms of services provided, CalVIP was able to provide a host of services to the program participants. These included developing individualized goals (e.g., identifying services and referrals, specific trainings and educational opportunities, employment opportunities and placement, housing, and legal issues) for 100% of the participants. Of these individualized goals, 100% had at least one employment-related goal (e.g., obtaining, maintaining, promotion, job training, tools / certifications) with 62.4% reporting two or more sets of individualized goals (e.g., employment, housing, case management, education).

With regard to employment outcomes, individualized employment plans (IEPs) were developed for 190 (92.2%) participants and 120 (63.2%) participants met with job developers. Among the participants, 81 (42.6%) were placed into a job, with 58 (30.5%) being hired onto permanent jobs, while the remaining attained part-time or temporary jobs. Focus group interviews corroborated these data with participants noting the responsiveness of the CalVIP staff and their ability to provide support and trainings as key factors that motivated them to



continue with the program and developing more positive outlook and patience for a long-term career.


Reports of reducing gang-involvement was noted by the participants. Among 160 participants who completed the gang assessments survey, 68 (42.6%) reported being involved with gangs with 41 (56.2%) reported that they wanted to reduce their involvement in gangs.

Recommendations

Although there are many strengths of CalVIP, several recommendations to improve the program address issues with transportation, identifying additional partners, funding, staffing, and data entry.

Transportation barriers for clients. Many of the CalVIP clients that participated in the focus groups discussed various challenges related to transportation. The clients discussed at length how difficult traveling to CalVIP meetings, activities (including job fairs, on- and off-site workshops, trainings) or jobsites due to the extended travel time or lack of transportation. Although CalVIP offered bus tokens to alleviate costs associated with public transportation, we recommend other forms of transportation support; these include partial reimbursement for gas and rideshare (e.g., uber, lyft) as well as a CalVIP vanpool.

Identifying for/non-profit partnerships. CalVIP staff discussed the importance of identifying additional for-profit and non-profit employers that are willing to hire CalVIP clients, given their level of experience. Expanding the partnerships would produce more employment opportunities for clients.



Funding for additional for-profit trainings. CalVIP staff indicated that access to free trainings was limited. There are paid training opportunities that are overlooked because of the cost associated with them. Unfortunately, some of these paid trainings expanding client experience and increase the opportunities for employment.

Supporting staff retention. CalVIP team experienced significant turnover in key management and staff (with changes in project manager, job developer, case managers, and recruiters). The evaluators recommend 1) hiring at least two program managers (or a manager and an assistant manager) to address potential turnover and delay issues, and 2) creating training, resource, and/or protocol documents to keep all managers and staff updated.

Supporting timely hiring. While the VOALA were successful at attaining CALVIP funding, there were delays in hiring (e.g., case managers, job developer) and understaffing. This resulted in delays in the program start date and recruitment as well as creating burdens for managers and frontline staff as they took on multiple roles. We recommended reducing the amount of time between grant approval/fund disbursements and the start of the program by at least 2 months, and hiring at least 80% of budgeted staff by the start date.

Data Entry Protocols. Training in data management software and protocols for data entry are needed to ensure accuracy and consistency in data. This includes distributing and checking for completion of physical survey assessments (e.g., Gang Assessment Survey, Hope Survey), intake, and updating client information (including services received). Protocols can be created for regular data entry and updates.



Appendix A

Focus Group Interview Questions

Welcome

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed for this program. I appreciate your willingness to participate and the time you have taken to talk with me about your experiences in the CalVIP program.


Introductions

My name is Gino Galvez and I am an external evaluator and will be conducting this interview today. I'm part of a team that was hired by VOALA to evaluate the program that you are in. My role is to learn as much about your experience in the program.

Purpose of interview

The reason we are doing interviews is to understand what your experience has been. I am here to understand how you got involved in this program, what you think about the program, your experiences in the training and I have some questions about your life.

This interview is completely voluntary. If at any time you do not want to answer a question, you want to skip a question, or go back to one, you are free to do so. If at any point you do not wish to continue, we can stop the interview.



Recording Permission. We would like to audio-recorded this interview. This will allow us to get review your responses and be detailed in our reporting. We will only report summary results and will not use your name in our reports to protect your privacy and confidentiality. Is it ok to record this interview?

I will share a few ground rules for our conversation:

- There are no right or wrong answers
Every person's experiences and opinions are important. We are doing more interviews.
- What is said in this room stays here
I want you to feel comfortable sharing and know that what you say will be kept confidential (explain what confidential means if interviewee doesn't understand the word).
- Please turn off your cell phone please (and I will do the same)

Most importantly, I want you to feel comfortable sharing your honest and open thoughts with me. Any questions before we start?

1. Let's start with some introductions. Would you tell me a little about yourself? How old you are? What do you do for fun or during your free time? If you are working, what are you doing, things like that.

2. How did you hear about the VOALA program? Why did you choose to participate in in the program?

3. Could you briefly describe what you did in this program (e.g., participation, training, activities, meeting people, resume, etc)?


4. Did you meet with the program staff? And how often did you talk with them (e.g., phone, in-person, groups, events)? How we you treated by the staff?

(Probe for reasons for interactions, and type of staff)

5. How do you feel about the program that you've been in?

6. Do you think that being in the program has had any impact on you or helped you in any way? If so, in what ways? (Probe for various possibilities; e.g., work-related, training, social involvement with peers / friends / members of the community / gang members)

6a. Does the program make you think about you changing your involvement with gangs in any way?

- 
- 6b. Does the program make you think about you changing your perception of gangs?
- 6c. Did the program change your view about yourself? (your perception of your future, goals, gang involvement)
7. What do you like most about the program?
- 7a. Are there any specific parts of the program that were better than others?
- 7b. How would you improve the program if you could?
- 7c. Would you recommend the program to others?
8. What do you like least? (*Probe for any challenges experienced*)
- 8a. What would you change (add / remove / make easier to get access) to make it better? (*Probe for what resources were needed or lacking*)
9. Are there any other VOALA programs or other programs that you participate in? (*Probe participation in any other programs, services such as housing, etc.*)
10. Is there anything that we have not covered today that you'd like to discuss about your experience in the VOALA program?

Appendix B

Staff Interview Questions

Welcome


Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed for this program. I appreciate your willingness to participate and the time you have taken to talk with me about your experiences in the CalVIP program.

Introductions

My name is Gino Galvez and I am an external evaluator and will be conducting a brief interview today. As you know, I'm part of a team that was hired by VOALA to evaluate the program.

Purpose of interview

The reason we are doing interviews is to **understand what your experience** has been as a staff member. This interview is completely **voluntary**. If at any time you do not want to




answer a question, you want to **skip a question**, or go back to one, you are free to do so. If at any point you **do not wish to continue**, we can stop the interview. The interview will be **audio-recorded** and I can stop the recording at any time at your request. We will report the results in summary form.

Any questions before we start?

Tell us about your role on the project? *(Probe for roles on specific project and/or VOA-related work, description of what they have done on this project)*

1. Do you interact with other community / supper service staff (e.g., sheriffs department, parole officers)? And how often do you talk with them (e.g., phone, in-person, groups, events)? *(Probe for reasons for interactions, and type of staff)*
2. In general, how have things been going for you on this project? *(Probe for global evaluation of the project from their perspective)*
 - a) *How have things been going working with the City of Compton?*
 - b) *How have things been going working with the Sheriff's Office?*
 - c) *How have things been going working with the parole office, other agencies?*
3. What do the clients think of the services? Are they satisfied?
4. **Are there any specific issues or challenges that you have encountered that have made it difficult for you on the job?** *(Probe: What would you do differently? Would doing this change your current opinions?)*
5. How you feel about VOALA/CALVIP staff management?
6. Do you think that the program has had any impact on the clients you are working with in any way? If so, in what ways? *(Probe for various possibilities; e.g., work-related, training, social involvement with peers / friends / members of the community / less involvement with gang members)*
 - a) Did the program change your clients' involvement with gangs in any way?
 - b) Did the program change your clients' views about themselves? *(their perception of their future, goals, gang involvement)*
 - c) If you could extend the program, would you? Why or why not?

- 
7. What do you like most about the program?
 - a. Are there any specific parts of the program that were better than others?
 - b. How would you improve the program if you could?
 - c. Would you recommend the program to others?

 8. What do you like least? (*Probe for any challenges experienced*)
 - a) What would you change (add / remove / make easier to get access) to make it better? (Probe for what resources were needed or lacking)
 - b) Do you think there is staff and support to carry out project (to meet goals of project)?

 9. Let's talk about the goals of the program and get your thoughts on these. Let's go through them one by one.

Do you think we have met our goals in terms of:

 - a) Educating clients? (probe for vocational training, training to work, GED);
 - b) Providing life skills and positive youth development training (Probe for improved vision for a positive future);
 - c) Providing employment opportunities;
 - d) Providing opportunities to connect clients with wraparound services;
 - e) Providing appropriate follow up care [hold off until follow up interviews].

 10. How do you think we should proceed next year with the program? What do you think about the future of the program?

 11. Is there anything that we have not covered today that you'd like to discuss about your experience working with this program?

Appendix C

CALVIP Gang Involvement Assessment

Instructions: Please complete with client at Intake and Exit

Interview Completed (circle one): Intake Exit

Date _____

Approximately how many weeks have passed since the client entered the program? _____

Think about a clique or set that brought you to our program. For this interview, I'll call this group your "homies," ok? [If client injects to using the word "homies" let client choose an alternate name and write it below.]

1. Name chosen for Client's [GROUP]: _____

If client has NEVER BEEN in [GROUP], write "No GROUP" above and skip to Question 5.

2. How old were you when you first associated with [GROUP]?

Younger 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 older

3. Have you ever thought about reducing your involvement in [GROUP]? Y N

If yes, at what age did you first seriously think of reducing your involvement in [GROUP]? Write in age: _____

4. In some groups, members do things together frequently, and in other groups members rarely do things together at all.

a. Over the last month, how often did you get together to do things with members of [GROUP]?

(USE SHOWCARD 1)

- 0 None
- 1 1 to 3 times during the last month
- 2 About once a week
- 3 2 or 3 days per week
- 4 4 or 5 days per week
- 5 Every day

0 1 2 3 4 5

b. How much of your free time do you spend doing activities with [GROUP] members?

(USE SHOWCARD 2)

- 0 No time
- 1 Very little time
- 2 Some time
- 3 A lot of time
- 4 All my free time



0 1 2 3 4

5. What number of different things on this list have you done in the last 6 months?

(USE SHOWCARD 3)

A Purposely destroyed property that did not belong to you? [e.g., broke a window, tagged a building]

Sold drugs such as marijuana or prescriptions?

Sold hard drugs?

Stolen or tried to steal something worth less than \$50?

Stolen or tried to steal something worth more than \$50?

Gone into or tried to go into a building to steal something?

Stolen or tried to steal a car or other motor vehicle?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6+

(USE SHOWCARD 4)

B Kicked, attacked or hit someone with our fists?

Stolen money or things from a person? [not with a weapon]

Carried a weapon? [a knife or a gun or something else]

Been involved in [GROUP] fights?

Threatened to hurt someone to get them to do what you want?

Attacked someone with a weapon? [a knife or a gun or something else]

0 1 2 3 4 5 6+

5a. Have you ever been arrested? (circle one) Yes No

5b. If yes, how many times in the last 6 months? _____



Appendix D

CALVIP Staff Interview Transcript

Date: July 22, 2019

Location: VOA 700 Bullis RD, Compton

I: Interviewee (CALVIP staff)

G: Gino

M: Michael

[Introductions, confidentiality]

G - ...the program. And really there aren't any sort of wrong or right answers. This is just we wanna get a sense from your point of view, how things are going. I think there are some questions about, even when we'll ask, what you think what the clients are getting out of this and what's your experience been like. So, we have some questions here, Michael and I, you know, were the external people, so we sort of do this kind of reporting. And in fact that is why we were meeting with [name removed] the other day here it's because we wrote up a preliminary report for them about where their numbers are at, what they're doing, and this is part of that we said we would interview some staff, some client eventually, and really just to get a nice full report on what's happening. So that's sort of the goal. Are you okay with us recording?

P - Yes that's okay.

G - Okay, one thing you should know too is that we are going to summarize what we talk about and we will always share it with you. And you can take a look at it. For us there isn't any issue like if you say 'you know, I don't like how that was framed or how you guys are...what I meant was or you captured this wrong' so we will send that to you.


I - Okay.

G- And it will be more like a summary type of a thing. So any questions at all before we get started?

I - No, no questions.

G - All right, cool.

G: So this is kind of like a warmup. Tell us about your role on the project. What do you do for the CALVIP project?



I – Well, Actually I was signed on as a job developer and that responsibility is more so building relationships with the employers, different training components, and because we came on with no money, regarding training, just look and research out the free trainings that may be available for our client base. With that, build a report with those particular entities, whatever agencies there may be in regards to that and have them to pretty much trust our screening process and allowed us to send individual into their programs that will give them the best opportunity for their success. The conversations we would have with that is that because their funding would be coming from other resources that allows them to do the free component which means they'll do a screening process also in the interview process to get it checked again individuals into that program. It's been working out really great in that regards. I have a welding program we're a part of that's been doing really, really good. Last night. In fact they're having a graduation this coming Saturday. No no, I'm sorry. It's the certifications, state certifications are this Saturday and the graduation is August 3rd. Out of the 24, 23 individuals we end up sending a between to collaborate or agencies only one participant didn't go through and that was very from the very beginning so he didn't—it wasn't a waste of time.

G- Oh I see. So they were enrolled, but they didn't go.

I –Yeah, and didn't go. So that wasn't really much of an issue.

G- what do you mean by the “free training”? What'd you mean by that?

I –Well everything, to a lot of the participants, it's free. Giving them the opportunity to come in and do the full day of being trained for that four-month period of time; the equipment, everything.

G- So you made those partnerships with those organizations and they basically offer all of these services for free. The training and all that.

I –Mmmhmm. The training. The only thing that's not free in that component was the...is the test. They have to pay \$50 per test for the certification for the state and then County.

G- Ok.


I –Mmmhmm...Right

G- So are there other training programs that are not free?

I –Oh, A lot of em!

G- A lot of them. Ok. What do you think? I mean, obviously, there wasn't money or budgeting for those things, but do you see them as very different in what they offer or what would be the benefits, sort of differences between sort of a paid training program and a free one?

I –Well, no difference, really in as far as the way it's conducted. And, and actually...the blessing is, with this particular welding component is that they are... they're having a gateway towards the union as well. They're offering everything that you're capable of learning in the field of choice. That allows you to have the opportunity to be a part of their union. Job opportunities are offered. So it's doing



everything, that if we would've had to pay THEM. They're doing their own Outreach in parts of their funding resources but that's their way of giving back. Which is, that's why they created their particular screening process for the interviewing and everything for to make sure the right individuals are in there who's willing to do the Long Haul.

G- Ok. Tell us a little bit about your interaction with other community or support service staff. Kind of like the sheriff's department or the parole officers. What's that like?

I –Great! So we've been really building some—and like anything else, it's based on rapport. You know, and building a relationship and that comes with consistency and, you know, dealing with their clients, and our participants, it's about making sure we track it together. That's what the relationship is, with that. And it helps, it also enhances the relationship even with the clients themselves you know, and knowing that there is some real support going back and forth holding each other accountable for it. So as far as with the sheriff department, we have a great relationship with Sergeant Raeford Orleans who's he's really a community-based guy; that interacted with the city of Compton. We did a tie event with the high schools, you know we did several Outreach programs with the after dark in the park programs with them. He's just been a great liaison to go to and just getting some resources from as well. He does, with his peers, they do a monthly Wednesday. It's a Wednesday component they do Wednesday night in the garage type of meeting in the garage thing with the participants or just doing mentorship things. So it's, just really been a great piece over there. Probation has just been really helpful. It took us—it didn't take us that long but it took us a minute to build a rapport with them in a sense that I guess they had a relationship and then it was broken. It had a broken piece up in there. And that would probably fall short because of staff. It just was a short staff, nobody to really follow up. But at this point everything is all mended and the relationship is great. They've been doing a phenomenal job in sending individuals over. We've been following up with them so they've been really trusting of that. Most of the guys and girls who's been a participant of the probation office has been successful at some of the things in their IP that they wanted to strive for. like obtaining certifications, education, and even employment, you know. So it's been a great a great journey for them to know that back and forth that we're working as a team.

G- Ok. Are there any other; so there's probation, there's the Parole are there any other support services that you're involved with?


I –Yeah, so we are...we deal with the Los Angeles County Recreational department and also with Compton Recreation Department so...

G- Recreation?

I –Yeah, Recreation. Parks and recreations.

G- Ok.

I –Which been really really-I really can't seem to speak highly enough of them as far as the assistance they've been able to provide us with, allowing us to utilize their facilities for the outreach piece, and some clients, from their geographic. What's been helpful with them is that we have a client base that is very difficult for them to come from one geographic to the next. And so that location, you know



because of the risk high risk is that this particular entity over here can't go over in this particular area—or even come over here for that matter. So what we did is ummm...Me in particular speaking with the liaison whoever the director or whoever that may be at that part and ask them could we have access to the computer labs in order to conduct certain workshops. And just pretty much kind of bring the safety to the community with the kids where they don't have to go, you know, across the barriers in which they may have fear of, and that's been the barrier piece right there so with us being, you know, it's just three of us, Me, [name removed], and [name removed]. The time management has been kind of difficult sometimes. However, the opportunities are there for us to actually provide and go out and do the services on the sites. So that's where Recreation really comes into play, giving us that particular location to get the services.

G- And they've just been lending you the space?


I –Oh,Yeah I built a great rapport with them. They love seeing me come. They love my family. And it gives me an opportunity, you know, to learn the community even more too, and I build that relationship within the community.

M- Are there-let me ask a question. To continue your idea, are there any specific-I'm trying to touch upon a little on your specific issues or challenges, that you've encountered that made it a little difficult to do your job.? Or you and your staff to do your job.?

I –Yeah and I guess the main component of that would be providing the Avenues for trainings. You know, because that's funded based and like I said we got blessed with the welding component, but anything outside of that requires us to be to be able to, you know invest some money into with the individual, and we would have the dollars to do that. And with this particular population, you know, one thing is that you know most of em is coming in inexperienced because of their youth. Then we got the other barriers with probation and parole. We have those other areas with, you know, lack of education. So you know what having that component piece, where we have money set aside to actually put them in like truck drivers certifications, you know, welding, carpentry, whatever they may be becomes a benefit, but if you don't have that Gateway, you know, It limits us to really kinda work harder on the front end to try to do something. So that's a real big barrier. Because we really need to educate them in order for them- and then as they do that. And then you know putting in work experiences in projects where they're gaining to build their resume up.

G- So would it be fair to say that there is a lot of work and time is invested in those partnership and those training programs? Because they are free though, but it actually required you to work a lot on those relationships?

P-Yeah, It does though. Because we don't want to lose them. If we were really built this relationship with those who actually like, you know, giving us the opportunity to send people to be a pipeline for their organization. We want to make sure we send the right, you know, cohort out there to make sure that's going to be solidifying that particular opportunity. Maybe at, you know, down the line, they become a voice with reason for other organizations, how it is working for them. Where we could also be, you know, some type of avenue for that another organization might have opportunities that can do things like that as well.



M- Ok. So, um, I mean, going back for a bit, what do you think the clients think of all these services that are provided? Are they satisfied? Dissatisfied, overwhelmed, however you want to interpret it.

I –Well, I mean, if anything, people love free and giving things, right? You know, it's just part of the nature. But helping them regulate that is probably the areas of when a teaching moment comes in. How they're regulated. And what I mean by that, is that they can get, they can become comfortable with obtaining a bus card, a tap card of some sort; and get in the habit of asking for that instead of actually putting in the work to receive that incentive.

G- I see.

I –So, you know, it could be they think they take Liberty. They wanna...they think that's actually part of, you know, when really is the caveat is that we will...we will assist you through this process from the beginning. Once you obtain employment in the first month you should be able to you know take. You know, be responsible with that particular responsibility. And it's just helping them to identify with that. You know, but other than that, they love the opportunity. Love it to have that you know somebody to be able to assist them with transportation, clothes and things of that nature.

G- Ok.

I –And we have other organizations that we tap into that partner up with us as far as, you know, helping with tools and things like that which was a great help, you know.


G- Have any clients ever expressed like dissatisfaction with anything? Any particular aspect of the program or any even just little components or pieces. Have you ever heard of anything?

I –One. I had one that. But he's on board, full, fully on board right now. But he had his area of-and it's because his spiritual beliefs. It was his spiritual principles, that he wasn't really sure of, which was having conflict with his parole–probation. Once I had a talk with him, and regarding, you know, the need. How this become simplified for him if we work through the plan this way, how easy your relationship will be with your probation officer and how this doesn't go against God's plan. Then he saw the value in and jumping on board. And now he's fully committed, education and everything.

G- So, so like what specifically like for example...what was-I mean I think you mentioned him before that he had some very, you know, rigid beliefs. But what was it about the program that was–

I –I don't think it really had nothing to do with the program. It was just about, you know, he wanted to spend more time working for God, than working–than trying to work. So it didn't have anything to do with the program, it just had, you know, being dictated to on what he should do prior to just following his own belief system. And once we had that particular spiritual talk, then I think–well, I know, he came around and started seeing different kinds of lights in that. But that was my only barrier with that. Other than that, the participants have been great. You know, they're a little more active.

G- Let's see. Do you think that the program has changed how the clients view themselves?




I –Oh yeah, absolutely! Self-esteem and everything, comes into play. Confidence, you know. When you're empowered with information—you see some success. It changes their viewpoint, and their drive becomes different. So yeah, they—

G- How do you see that?

I –It just manifests in so many different ways. It's just—the lights just come on. It is just really hard to really put a word on it, other than, consistency. You know at first, it's like, you know, you wrestle with the participants in—you know, “I need you to be here. I need you to get here. I need you to be on time” and then have that that talk with them about why is it so important. But then when you're empowered them with information, and then if you go over here and these are things you expect and walk them through it and then once they see the field or even obtain something out of it, they come back and debrief that and then they know that we help navigate that then it becomes more clear to them: Okay this is going to be a process let's get down—now, instead of me telling them what's their priority. Let's talk about now what what you think now would be your priority. So that's that goes back to empowering them you know this is not I'm here to assist you--I'm not here to tell you, dictate to you what you should or need to do. It's about, you know, me being a part of your process on achieving the goals that you set for yourself. Now but how about how are we going to do that. Let me be just the mediator on how we can do some things with that and make it clearer for you what might be the discrepancies in reaching that and when they see; cuz everything is a quick fix in this field. Everybody want a quick fix. You know, cuz everything seems to appear to be an urgency you know and they're still young; They're 16–18 years old to 20—I mean, you still got a lot of time here but they taking on responsibilities that doesn't belong to them, most of them. And with that in mind, it brings up the reunification with their families. Their family doesn't know how to really help navigate that as well and so what they do is try to take on that responsibility as if they're capable of it. And but they don't have the means. And you know, what you do is try to help them become selfish in these moments, and then let's look at all the other things that we need to take care of for you as your Independence grows so that you can be a better service to your family--which you would like to do, I see. First you got to take care of you. So once they grab ahold of those things and then they become successful in the one or two or three two or three things--it just becomes, they're thankful and, you know, the gratitude changes.

M- A question specifically about CALVIP. Did the program, you think, change your clients' involvement with gangs and violence in any way? A particular way? A general way?

I –Yeah, I think—I believe that it changes their involvement, but it changes their involvement in how they communicate, more so than associate. You know, it's hard to let go of a friend, so they gonna back to, you know, their associates. But sharing the information in which they have received, or the things that they're doing that's becoming more enlightening to them is the difference. Instead of just idle talking now they're having talks of substance. So that's the difference and that brings about a new attraction, so now when I go out to these parks and recreation, now I get a few other individuals approaching me about their curiosities. “I hear you're over there helping so and so.” You know so obviously, that conversation has started amongst them, where now it's coming back to me. You know this is what, Honestly - I have to be honest, this is not a quick fix, it's really up to you. So you may not be ready, you know, but I'm here to support you through that process and when they see that success—it just takes one.



G- So, you know, if they're working, and they're working full-time? Many of them. I mean, they - it's less likely that they're spending time engaging-in crime.

I -Most definitely.

G- Have clients ever talked to you about, you know, not spending as much time with people from their neighborhood or anything like that?

I -They haven't. You know, they haven't brought that conversation to life. You know, like you said you know, my objective is to have them as busy as possible, which takes away from all the idle timing. As much idle timing as we possibly can take from them in that regard. But you know what it comes to gang activities, it was more--the more meet and greets is evenings. So if they have a nine-to-five you know, the social activities is basically after 6 anyway so it doesn't stop them from actually going out and meeting and greeting and kicking it with their friends, however they're doing that because that's when they really collaborate most of the time so doing a bunch of whatever they're doing. But the difference is that they're having different kinds of conversations.

G- They're talking about what they're doing?


I -That's the positive. Or you know "hey, I'm not going to be able to hang out as much because I gotta get to work now or I got this training in the morning that I have to go to." You know, so they're like "training? Where you going?" So now it's like "What you doing??" This is what's happening with that component right there.

M- So, is there some way you could imagine extending the program? Like, if you could extend the program, in what way? How would you do it? Would you do it?

I -Yeah, so you know adding the training components would be big.

G- The paid ones, the money to support those.

I -To support those, because, you know we talked about more career than quick fixes. If we can get those pieces in where it lightens the stressor because that's the barrier. The big barrier. A lot of the kids they want to do something, I'm hearing the conversation, but on the back end is, they don't have the finances so they do the hustle. Some of them was actually. It's ironic that some of them is actually, even though they're out in the streets, when I have a conversation, you know "I'm over here so and so with fiber optics, so you know. They still, they're trying to do something even without CALVIP. It's just now, if they had that real support, then it makes a real difference because when you do activities that's go'n tire you out, and it's career-based, it's gonna be more tiring to you. It just simplifies it. So those are the things--one of the things we'll roll out, even in the housetraining with them--with their life skills, helping them understand and help them with that having that stage of confidentiality where we can talk more in depth about some of the things that's a barrier to them. It helps with them to be able to take that to their households. Because that's what households is lacking, those information. Because we're in an environment where the anti-social looks prosocial to them.



G- What do you mean?

I –So, if you see a girl and a young man outside fighting and having a real fist fight, a real physical abuse activity, nobody’s gonna intervene with that or even call the police for assistance on that. The environment dictates that this is okay. They’re gonna work it out. Where if you’re over here in the Suburbs and you see something like that, police are gonna show up. But over here, it’s something like a pro-social—it is what that is. So, the identities are different. You know, helping them to understand certain things. How to use their words to bring safety into their environment., is a different concept.

G- What ideas do you have as far as maybe the program, or you know, just any ideas as far as reducing sort of the gang involvement, the gang violence? What do you think could be done to really decrease that?

I –You know, something new, in regards of just activities, I would think. You know, showing them something different. Incorporating field trips. Even though they’re young adults, just incorporating new explorations into their heads. Museums.


G- Oh, ok. Field trips. Not just career-based. Jobs. You’re talking about other things.

I –Other things of viewing other than the neighborhoods and the poverty which they’re maybe seeing. Let them be exposed to new things from a physical point and have a dialogue, create a dialogue from it. Even activities, a basketball game of some sort, that they may, cuz you know, they’re not getting out like that. They’re spending a lot of idle time amongst themselves. So I think field trips would be something that could be injected into it along with the training component. Because, when they see that you’re putting in some effort—in some family-oriented things, that could maybe take place once a month, maybe. Every 60 days or something, where they can incorporate their household with them. On the expenses, nothing big and extravagant. Just, you know, an outing or some sort. It makes a difference in word of mouth, becomes you’re marketing piece. Like, “Oh man, they’re really helping out over here. They helped my son look at something different. Man, they took us out on—a trip to, whatever, you know. We just never knew that existed.” You know, a rap studio. You know, something that just—that strikes their interest. Putting it into play. We’re talking about this age, you know, this millennium...that we got going on...is just different, the techno is just all different for them. Just taking them out of that environment. Something that would just take them away from that environment for a minute.

M- You mentioned some paid programs and—this is just for me—what were some examples of, you know, I know you mentioned some certificate programs. What were some examples of paid programs you would like to--?

I –Like truck-driving for Class C’s, I mean class A’s, certification, maybe some substance abuse training, for drug and alcohol classes. Trainings on solar paneling, roofing—you know, all these things injected into the—maybe some type of union. You know.

M- You mentioned something that they were actually doing that but this is an out-of –pocket cost for them.



I –Yeah, right.

G- I mean, there could possibly be something in the future, right? with these grants and these reports; if they ask for more money.

I –And it helps! You know, especially with this population here, it's like, they don't know anything. So, how do we support, other than—you know, we can only do so much, verbally. You know, and – yeah we wrestle with some things but we want to send them with a tag-in that says employment. But if they don't have a work history, you know, or any experience in anything, and then we have to scramble on that, it makes the employment part real difficult. Uh, yeah we can encourage education. We have those available access—you know, to put them into the educational programs; they're all over the city. But just that, giving them trainings, the vocational trainings, is makes a big deal.

G- What do you think about the program now? kind of – look at the whole program and what's happening. What do you like most about the program? What do you think it's working? What do you think its-?

I –Um, I like the—I think what I would liked the most, you know, it takes a good team, you know, to really roll out the plan. Um, to keep the plan effective, um—

G- And team you're talking about you're coworkers?

I –Coworkers, yeah. It really takes a good team to do that. Because then everybody understands what's the—where their strengths and their weaknesses are and move forward from that. And collaborate from that point.

G- Ok. How would you improve the program if you could? What would you like—besides I think, the funded training. Are there any other aspects that you would like improved, or areas where more attention can be?


I –Yeah, um, it's hard to say cuz we lack space. You know, um, space plays a role with the confidentiality.

G- You're talking about your space here?

I –Yeah. Cuz, when you're talking to the clients, you'll get more information and more—you know so, we get this access, and I'm glad we got this today. You see how hard we had to look around for that, right. So, space plays a big role in obtaining and seeking out information from the client. And in order to know the services they're really in need of, you know.

G- So, you're talking like on the phone. If there's not enough privacy, even on the phone, maybe?

I –Even on the phone, you know, you don't have much privacy.



G- So if you have like a cubicle? Or bigger space, maybe?

I –We expect the team, itself to be involved, and the clients do too. But when you have several teams involved, it makes a difference, right? But, um, outside of training, that um, the improvement, you know, service point. When we try to capture this – we try to capture the story, um you know, simplifying that—to where we can put that information like, I have an experience with service point with—like, this was just employment, there’s only one category, that I know, that I see, to put the—to actually put some form of employment in. But that’s typed in, uh, the activity—well, not the activity, in the assessment category, with um, employment verification, and I’m not sure if it’s really capturing that piece, when we do the printout for that—cuz it’s in there, when you type in all the verification, information in the—this person’s making 18 dollars an hour, what they’re working in, the schedule. But I’m not seeing where it’s capturing. Little things like that. We—I just had a glimpse, just the other day, last week, when it came to the services. When in an activity, so as in activities, the service is being provided, like life-skills, whatever that may be, what it looks like. Um, it’s no longer on the board. I don’t even know how that wiped out. Right from orientation. Like “life-skills—where did this go?” So just, you know, little things like that, that would allow us to uh, you know, put the story out there. Just put the story out there.


G- Ok.

I –Some participants is difficult—more difficult than others.

G- Do you think that there’s um, enough staff and support to carry out and meet the goals of the project?

I –I don’t. um...Me and [name removed] as job developer slash, you know, case workers. And it limits us in the time management in which we can maximize some things regarding uh, locking in employers, locking in trainings, where now we have to do database work where, we be doing it, I be doing it—locking in ourselves to do case management, follow-ups, things like that. You know, where we’re doing two jobs in one. Where, you know, even with the job rarities component, the JRT component, becomes difficult to be able to manage in a structured environment, when you only got—when we’re doing everything else—you know, the consistency of structure, where they’re getting the details of the information, and the real training. That’s where it’s really difficult. Whereas if we had two case managers with the two job developers, the job developers could have the component of the JRT. Where we can lay out, cuz we know what the employers are looking for, we can lay out the plan through the course of the week. With these individuals going forward, being more detail with them, obtaining the information—learning the skillset, and getting prepared for job interviews and the mock-interviews and things like that more rigid. Whereas where everything more watered down, then it’s less pop—you know, less worthless. Then it’s a—it’s a pass-on. Now we finish with them with a note, pass that on to the case manager, to do the IEP, then they can do the things that they need to do; identification, whatever they need to do to get all the bills up, when I—when they pass it back to the job developer, we’re working on getting them landed to where their goals are. It’s not—the flow is not there.

G- Yeah. It’s not there.



I –Yeah, it’s just, it’s double work and you now, um, we’re still figuring it—we’re still figuring that out. We’re trying to do the best we can in that regards, which limits us to—if we’re putting numbers in, at the pace that we know we can, because, you know, we have to time manage this. We have to time manage that. Um, so we doing two persons jobs.

M- So what do you think about like the overall kind of staff management of everything?

I –Staff management is good. I mean, it’s just, I mean, [name removed] is wonderful! Once we got her, and you know, she’s been a great help because she knows the field and she’s actually been—she took some responsibilities off of us. Um, but I mean like, with the flux of people, it just—it can be overwhelming because of the data input, you know. And here we are, and we need to meet with the employer, and then we have to go over to a vocational center or something, right? And then, that’s two days out the week, you know going out the office. And I got clients, you know, calling me all the time, like and then, you know, it’s just, you know.

M- And what do you end up telling clients who end up calling you all the time? Like do they know that—structurally that, you’ll get back to them, or that--?

I –Oh yeah! You know, we’re pretty good on following up –

M- Especially with all your load.

I –Yeah, you know, I try to make sure I don’t put too much on my table with the follow-up process. Um, but we do the best we can at making sure that, if it’s an immediate need, of some sort that needs to take place then, you know, we’ll prioritize that. Um, what I do with my clients though, because we’re linked in with SHIELD, families and different organizations who give us certifications, pro–free programs, what I do is I get the calendars from them—my partners, and I blast the calendar out to my client base or who wants to get these particular certification on what date. Now I make sure I give them—I type a message in making sure they give me a week notice so that we can make sure we get them aligned for those particular trainings.

G- Okay. Well, so I think we’re getting close to the end. I’m gonna ask you this one question, which is related to the goals of the program, and I’m going to kind of go through the main goals and if you want, you can simply just say something about that—like if you think you’re meeting the goals, the program’s meeting the goals. Um, we can go one by one.
So, do you think that you are meeting the goals in terms of educating clients?


I –Yes.

G- Ok. Um, providing life-skills, and positive youth development training?

I –Uh, 50/50.

G- 50/50. And why 50/50 on that?

I –Time.



G- Just time.

I –Yeah, You know, you can't get that in-depth with the time, you know.

G- With the client?

I –Yeah. Short-staffed.

G- Mmhhh. Okay. Providing employment opportunities?

I –No, yeah, we good with that.

G- Okay. Providing opportunities to connect with clients, or to connect clients to wraparound services?

I –Yes. We good there.

G- And providing appropriate follow-up care?

I –Yeah, we're pretty good there. Yeah.

G- Okay. Is there anything that you want to bring up today? Something, some topic that we haven't covered at all; anything that you'd love to share with us and with the team.? Anything?

I –No, I feel like we covered pretty much just about everything. I don't want to sound redundant in some areas.


G- It's all good!

I –We pretty good. We good.

G- Do you have any closing questions?

M- So we wanna do similar, well, not as in-depth. We want to identify clients that would—that you would think would be appropriate to—or that you would recommend, to also do these interviews with us. Basically about their experiences with CALVIP. And the goals of CALVIP, and just overall, kind of how they got involved and what they're doing. Um, do you have any clients that you would recommend, or so, individually, that you would recommend. And then, would you, the structure for these interviews; would you also recommend that we do these interviews individually or in maybe pairs or teams.

I –I don't know. Pairs or teams. I don't know that. I do have a few that may be willing to, if they have the time. To maybe possibly sit down with you and go through some things.



G- Okay, I think so we can follow up via email. And just, maybe send us a list and maybe their number. And then we can try to contact them and see if we can talk with them. But we're looking at like 30-minute, 40 minute interviews, kind of things like that.

P-Okay.

G- Awesome. Great, so, any questions for us at all?

I –You know, I tell my clients and my participants. Cuz I teach over at Healthwright 360, right. That's the adult juvenile MCRP program. I always say, "Everyday's an interview. Everyday's an interview." And then that's funny, then I always ask them at the end of the day, "do you have a question for me?" and they always look at me like "uhhhh" you know. So it's fortunate, but unfortunate, today, I honestly don't have any questions because we went through the format pretty thorough, I believe. We spoke about the service point, we spoke about the client base, the leads, so at this point, I don't have anything. The only thing, any questions I would ask is "What kind of money are we looking at?" right? Other than that...

G- CALVIP 2!

I –CALVIP 2, right?! What that look like? But other than that, I'm good.

G- Alright. Well, thank you [name removed], I really appreciate your time. We'll get going.

M-Thank you. This was great. Thank you so much.

I –Alright. Thank you guys.

G-Thank you again.

P-Yes, sir. I appreciate it. Yes, sir.



Appendix E

Focus Group 1 Transcript

Location: VOA 700 Bullis RD, Compton

Focus Group #1 [2 clients]

Length: 35 min, 15 sec

Moderators: Galvez & Giang

Participants: Albert (A) & Manny (M)

GG: Moderator 1

MG: Moderator 2

Transcriber: Reyna White


GG: Thank you for agreeing to participate in this focus group. We really want to thank you for coming out because I know it takes time, you guys are taking time out of your day to meet with us. My name is Gino Galvez and this is Michael Giang and we are both external evaluators and we'll be conducting this interview today. And I'm part hired, as I had mentioned before, by VOA to evaluate this program and really our goal is really just to learn as much as we can about your experience in the program, that's simply the goal.

We want to understand what your experience has been so we have questions here where we might ask you about your experience, we might follow up with questions like whether you liked it, disliked it, or what can be done differently. We'll ask you some questions about your training experiences and maybe even some questions about your personal life related to the program, right? This interview is completely voluntary so if you feel like you don't want to answer a question you can skip it, you don't have to answer every single one.

We hope that you will, but again you can choose to not respond to something if you want to pass or something like that. We are recording and we do ask for your permission to do that. The reason we do this is so we don't have to take frantic notes we'll actually review this later on and we'll write up things that you say and then we'll even include some quotes and things to kind of reflect a general understanding of what was said in the groups.

The good news is there aren't any write or wrong answers, this is all about your personal experiences so don't feel like you should be saying this, it's really your personal feeling about things. And then whatever is said in this room, should stay in this room. This is kind of a point we have that right now within this space we really should keep what we hear, what we talk about kind of private to this, so talking about confidentiality. So I think with that last point, you know the goal is to just try to feel as comfortable as you can with the questions and to answer honestly as possible.

And do you have any questions for us before we start?



A: No sir.

GG: No? No questions? Ok. So, let's start with some introductions. Feel free to just say your first name, tell me a little bit about yourself like maybe how old you are and what do you do for fun during your free time, something like that.

A:Alright I'll go first. My name is Albert, I'm 26 years old and in my free time you know I just chill, play my video game.

GG: What game do you play?

A:Uh, NBA 2k 20.

[Slight laughing amongst group]

MG: Oh yeah I play those games I always have a kid kick my ass every single time I play that game [group laughs] it's like, it's always – I bet you it's just some 5 year old beating me like oh my god. [group laughs] Uh, well my name is Michael Giang, I am a faculty member at Cal Poly Pomona, and I guess age wise I am what, 43. [group laughs] I do some games here and there much but in my free time I usually kind of just look for food. [laughs] Especially my free time. Tacos and burgers, and whatever I can find locally, or you know in my area, a little bit further away not too far, and that's what I do for fun. Yeah.

GG: Ok

M: Me? Oh, my name Manny. I'm 25 years old. I mean what I do in my free time is uh, hmm... might just hang out with my girl. That's what I do.

[Sounds of confirmation from group]

GG: Ok. I'm Gino, I'm 41 and think about that once you get older you got to, you got to think a little bit about that. And one of the things I like to do for fun is I have a 1 year old puppy and I'm just training him, taking him out to parks, walking him, so he walks all nice and stuff, so I'm spending a lot of time with him right now. So that's kind of what I'm doing for fun.

A:What kind of puppy is it?

GG: So it's kind of like a brown, like lab kind of dog. Like a Labrador kind of like a brown –

A:[inaudible – “I like that?”]

GG: Yeah, really cute. Really cute, cute guy.


MG: Too much energy.

GG: Yeah.

[Group laughs]

[inaudible]

MG: Alright uh, so we just start with a very general question in terms of how did you hear about CALVIP or this program and why did you end up participating in the program – how did you end up participating in the program? Very general question.



A:Ok, well my probation officer pointed me into that direction. And then, basically that's it. [inaudible]

GG: Do you remember what they said?

A:'Cause I was telling them like you know I haven't had worked in a while or whatever and he was like you know "Hook up with these people and then they get you a job or they get you enrolled or you know point you in the direction of what you got to do." And then I... [doesn't continue thought]

[Long pause in group]

M: Um well me I found out 'cause I was going to group for the [inaudible] that I was staying at. So I had to go to group, so I went to group and they were talking about trying out this welding class.

Then some other guy that was there he was all like "Oh you should check out Volunteers of America that's where I got – that's where I ended up finding resources for that."

And I'm all "Oh alright."

So then I checked that out and then I came down here and when I got here people were coming out of the door talking about "Oh we just got hired" and all happy, so I was like damn so this place probably does work, you know. So, I was like let me check it out and then ended up signing up so I could go get a job and I already got a job, it's on the way, just need to go through the process and steps.

I talked to Preston about that welding class. He said it'll start around March probably, but he'll let me know. Um... and all I got to say is I just got to be patient and you know I trust in the process too because he does you know. Like he texts me he tells me 'Oh are you going to be here for the interview', when he keeps updating with me.

Because I was going to the [Yorkshire?] Center and then they just referred me to go to somewhere to find a job and I went. And they wouldn't answer or I would go and nobody was really there so it was just like a waste of time. I just got out of prison so it's like a day gone is a like a [inaudible].

So, this place really works so I'm grateful for that. That I found a place like this.

[Sounds of agreeance in group]

A:Yeah, they've got a lot of good resources.

GG: Okay, could you briefly describe what you did in this program. What did you do as part of this program?


A:Participated basically.

GG: Yeah.

A:Whatever they had going like job fairs and a lot of good resources.

GG: So, like the job fairs, would Preston let you know about these job fairs and you would go and interact?

A:He'd keep me updated, he would text – he's like the homie. [Sounds of agreeance in group] He'd let you know about every little event and everything.



GG: As part of this CALVIP program did you come in here to meet with Preston and get trainings or anything like that?

A:When we first started meeting, we were just making the resume and basically started from scratch. Made the resume, filled out – he sat right there with me and filled out for jobs. And he ended up sending me to this one place in downtown LA [GG sounds of agreeance] the CEO and they – actually I’m working with them today [GG sounds of agreeance], doing the Caltrans thing, they’ve got a little program. But he sent me there [long pause] ... they still working me and stuff.

GG: So, when you said with Preston you sat down and you worked on a resume, were you filling out job online application forms with Preston?

A:Yes.

GG: Okay. So, you did that. Did you ever do any other type of training or any kind of... yeah, any other trainings either with Preston or with Volunteers of America or CALVIP?

A:Trainings, they did out of [inaudible... OSCA?]. Yeah, I’ve gotten plenty of trainings. I just don’t use them so [GG sounds of agreeance] I don’t really know. Because right now I’m kind of stuck in the rut, my own damn fault, right now, trying to make it up this little thing. And then, because I completed the welding class, I got a welding certification, [GG sounds of agreeance] OSCA... disaster sights... I’ve got a forklift...

GG: Oh okay.

A:And I said OSCA ten, right? And I got a hazmat... the 40-hour haz-worker training. [GG sounds of agreeance] I don’t have it with me, that’s the thing, because my wallet got wet, so I had to take them out.

GG: That’s okay.

A:I’ve got a lot of certifications. [inaudible]

GG: We’re just trying to get a sense of how many different trainings or programs you completed through this program. That’s a pretty good list. Manny how about you?

M: Well me, I just started in December so when I first got here, I decided to enroll or sign up. He took a look at my resume and he went over it with me and we fixed it a little bit so it looks more professional. He sent me an email [inaudible] resume. And then he told me to come in for the census and I did and we’re already in the process of finding a place. And then he’s going to keep me updated about the welding class. And so yeah, I mean I’m here and it works so is this guy [H] he’s got all those certifications. That’s motivation for me to keep coming. Cause like you know those are all good things to have too for maybe trying to get into construction or whatever you know, welding...


[Sounds of agreeance in group]

A:I’m thinking of going back to the class and I think it’s April. Think it’s April...

M: April?

A:But yeah, to get the other two certifications because I have two certifications in welding.

GG: Okay.



MG: We touched up on this a little bit, how often – it seems like it’s very often – but how often, let’s say throughout the program of beginning, middle, end, did you communicate with program staff? It could be Preston, it could be someone else. It seems like Preston was the primary person. But how often were these communications. Either in phone, in person, in events?

A: Like when we first started the phone, he hit me like every... I’d say every day, you know. He’d keep me updated or see how I’m doing or whatever, see if I’d done anything in the day [GG sounds of agreeance]. Like meeting with him, I think we met once or twice a week, I forget.

GG: Once or twice a week?

A: Yeah.

GG: Okay.

A: To like check-up and stuff.

GG: And how long did that go on for? Meaning at least once or twice a week?

A: [long pause] It just kind of stopped when I got a job. So, it went on for like at least three months.

GG: Okay. Did you call interacting with other staff members? Did you ever interact with anyone else? Or was it directly just Preston?

A: Like if he sent me to a training, does that...

GG: No, kind of more like the VOA staff, like other people on the project.

A: Oh. Like they wouldn’t... I guess I only do my personal stuff with Preston. But I interact with everybody else, everybody cool.

GG: Okay.

M: Yeah, he was very consistent. I call him up and he’s all “alright, I’ll come right down and we’ll meet” and then I met him. He sent me the information where to go online to sign up for the census and everything like that.

He keep me updated, he’s like I remember you as... like did you sign up, did you do the test, did you do everything. I’m like yeah, I did all that. “Did you call in to the front desk to make your appointment?” I’m like yeah, I did all that.


He keeps you updated, makes sure you get through it, you know like unlike other places you know they say they have resources, but they never do that. Like a whole month pass and they barely even know like “Oh did you find a job?” I’m like “Yeah no thanks to you guys.” [inaudible] But yeah checks in consistently just to make sure you’re doing good, you know keeping busy.

GG: And you’ve been in the program since December?

M: Yeah, like the middle of December.

GG: Of 2019, right?

M: Yeah.



GG: Okay, and how long have you been in the program?

A: I think January of last year.

GG: Oh, so you're at a year anniversary now.

A: Yeah.

GG: Okay. Alright, how do you feel about the program you've been in? And I know it's only been a month, right. But how do you feel about the program. I know that you might have similar or even different responses to this, given just how much time you've been in it, I know you just started. But, how do you feel about the program?

A: I guess the motivation would be like the get up and go, like if you want it, [inaudible]. It's motivational.

GG: Why do you feel that way? What is it about the program that you feel that way?

A: I don't know it's like, he wants to see you doing something positive. So, it's like man I got to – and he let you know “want it for yourself first.” But all the inspiration he gave me. It's like dang I might as well – like I got to do it, at least make him proud. Yeah, very motivational though.

GG: Ok. Manny, I know its early days but how do you feel about it?

M: I feel great because I'm already having results. You know I just got here and I already have results. It's not like some other place where there's nothing going on and they're wasting time.

A: [Agreeing]

M: I got here, I got things done. Even if it's little things like the resume or you know just something. It's not a waste of time because like I said I take two busses just to get here, it takes like an hour and probably 30 minutes. To me it's worth it because I wanted to be putting in the work and they're willing to put their part too, helping me out. And I really appreciate that too. Yeah, he's a really cool dude. He does care, he checks up on you, he motivates you. When I got in here I was just tooting my horn, my heavy hitter [inaudible]. He's positive, positive vibes.

GG: And you've worked on some resume stuff already, have you applied to jobs already? Like online?

M: I have online, yeah.


GG: You have online? Okay. Cool.

MG: Sort of extending on that a little bit, can you think of areas that you think the program – being involved in the program has helped you, has impacted you in your life in any particular way? Like it can be more personal, it could be more professional workwise, social with other people?

A: So wait basically... can you say it one more time?

MG: So like do you think being in the program has impacted you or helped you in any particular way?

A: Oh yeah, yeah. Makes me think better. Because like you going to do something positive to help the situation instead of hinder it. So it's like making you think a lot better on the positive side. [GG sounds of agreement] ... That's one of the ladies right there.



GG: Yeah that's Pat. So along that, you think that it's made you think in a better way...

A: More positive.

GG: More positive. Do you think it's changed you in any way, with any of the ways you interact with your friends? Or people you're working with, interacting with?

A: I don't really like, when I be around people, I kind of keep it short or whatever. I'm not really a talkative person or nothing like that. I just blend in, be cool. I have casual conversation and that's it. I just try to keep it cool instead of arguing at a person, telling them what they're not doing. You know I just kind of worry about myself. But I don't know, it made me think more positive.

GG: Okay. Yeah.

M: For me it's been new experiences like the interviews. I never gone to an interview, all my jobs were freelance jobs. I was getting paid under the table, things like that. So, with the interview they prepare you for that, I remember some lady prepared me for that. She asked me questions, she recorded it to see how it looked, just to be like "Oh, I need to work on this. Oh, I need to work on that." Those change your mind in a way to where before it was like, man I don't think I would have been able to come do all this. Now look at me I got a job already, I went through that interview and it was all good. So, in that sense yeah.

GG: Okay.

MG: Has the program changed your involvement with gangs or your perception of gangs?

A: I don't gang bang or nothing, but I never was into that type of stuff. So, I don't know.

GG: Okay.

M: For me, so I just got out right. I wasn't trying to go back to the same thing. So it was only like a self-want thing. If I wanted it. So, I just kind of distanced myself from that. Because I stayed in the valley so, but I'm still here. So I could stay away from all that. Because nothing is ever the same [inaudible]. Just a bunch of bullshit [laughs].

MG: So this definitely helped change your view of yourself, and your involvement, and what you want to pursue...

M: Yeah it did.


MG: And that changed your involvement or idea of wanting to go back to anything that was before.

M: Yeah. You know it showed me I could do something than just go around with friends or whatever.

MG: Okay.

M: It's possible you know. Like how he has all the certifications and it's through here. That motivates me to come even more, you know and like be there. Not just be going out and doing some other stuff.

A: The thing about all those certifications man, is it was free.



M: Yeah see that too. That's money right there too. And it's helping you to better your future. Especially if you have like a felony it's kind of harder to find certain jobs, so it can help you get into that.

MG: Could you think of yourself – you've been here one month so within the last – think of yourself 30 days ago, and you've been here for a year, where were you one year ago and how is that the same or different to where you are right now? Can you see your earlier self and how would you describe that person, and how would you describe yourself at this particular moment?

A:At first it was all about trying to get a quick dollar, but as I could see, as I realized, that's not going to work. It's not worth it. Make it fast, spend it fast. So it's better to earn an honest paycheck, you know like my mom always told me. But they help you.

M: Yeah, I agree with that too. And it's like... what was I going to say? What was the question again?

GG: A month ago...

M: Oh a month ago.

MG: You've been here a month. Where was your mentality about a month ago compared to, with just a short period of time, where is your mentality now?

M: Okay I remember what I was going to say. Okay so like at first it was like how he said too. When you look at it work wise, like alright if I get a job, it's just for right now and get some money. But then thinking about it more, and I hung out for all these things, it's just like instead of just getting the job for right now I could go and make a career out of something you know. It could help you make a career out of something not just get a job at McDonald's and work there my whole life you know. Do something that's actually different.


At welding they pay good. I've seen guys with welding tools in their trucks and the big ass trucks, you know. [sounds of agreeance in group] I want to get like that. I don't want to be in my old ways, stuck for like who knows when. That's not my thing.

GG: Okay. We're trying to ask now about really specific things about the program. So, in your opinion, what do you like most about the program? Can you think of one thing that you really like about the program?

A:That it's just simple. You know, it's not too hard it's basically just "Are you free this day? Cause you can make it here." If you say "No" you're probably going to feel bad inside, like man I'm not doing nothing now when I could've been doing something positive.

M: Yeah, it's simple. Some people don't want to – some people are scared to take the help, but this place helps you out a lot. And that's what sometimes you need, what sometimes people need a little extra push just to get there. That little motivation or whatever it is. You [inaudible]...

I don't have to want it or nothing and they're not going to do nothing about it. So they bring up the opportunities and then you grasp it, you go for it. It's like what do you have to lose? Nothing, you know. It's something positive you're going to gain at the end.



A: Yeah, they hold your hand through it with you, you know. Like they give you bus tokens... so it's like real healthy. It's that same motivation, they motivate you to want to do at least something for yourself.

GG: Okay. And what one thing do you not like about the program? Can you think of anything you don't like about the program?

A: If I could say – I'd just say getting there.

GG: Just getting there?

A: Yeah.

GG: Yeah. What's...

A: Because I don't like driving as of right now. So, getting there but you got to get there some way somehow. I know that I shouldn't even be complaining about nothing like that...

GG: No, it's – I think it's real.

A: ...but that's just me personally.

GG: Yeah. Okay. Let's see, if you could improve the program in any way, right, what would you recommend?

A: There's nothing really to improve though. They have everything you need to make it work, you know. They got all the equipment you need.

GG: What do you think, no?

M: I don't really know I haven't found anything yet.

GG: Okay. Would you recommend this program to other people?

R and A: Yeah.


GG: Have you?

M: I kind of done it – not [inaudible] but things like the job, [inaudible], the census. They ask me "Oh where'd you go?" I'll be all like Volunteers of America you know like my friends and my family members, they're happy to see me like "Oh see you could do it. We've been telling you that you could do it. You just have to want it." And they were proud of me because you know I've been doing good and it's all thanks to this program too you know. If not, I would have been searching for a program or like searching for a job on my own and it's kind of even harder. You don't get reached out at hand, like he said they got me through and that's the cool part about it. [GG sounds of agreeance]

A: Yeah but I – when I first heard about it and I came up here, I tried to get my homeboy in but he was over the age limit or something like that.

Group: Oh.

A: So, it was like I don't know but he's got a job and stuff now so he's doing good. He's got kids and stuff now. He figured something out.



MG: I want to extend that a little bit more in terms of like, what were – you said the transportation one ... and time and effort putting into it was another. Can you think of... this is going along the lines of challenges. What, as you went through this process, what were some of the – whether it was here, whether it's elsewhere outside of CALVIP and Volunteers.

What were some of the challenges that you've experienced and how would you try to change that?

A: I feel like there's no way to change it because it's, like they give you everything you need to complete the mission or do what you got to do. Like if you've got to go somewhere, they give you bus tokens.

MG: Okay.

A: It's just you wanting to get up and put in the footwork basically, that's just up to you. It's just your motivation, how do you feel about it. Is you going to get up and do it or are you going to sit down and chill? They behind you 100% like hey man, you know like you grown but they just telling you hey you need to go here if you want to do this. And it's up to you.

MG: You can sort of think of if you needed something, if you needed a particular resource. Whether it's bus tokens or whether it's access to something, they're very responsive. They'll get you there, give you whatever resources they have. They haven't really said no to you in any particular way.

GG: Is that right?

M: Yeah for me.

A: Yeah that's right. But I only have experience with like bus tokens and stuff like that. I've never really had to use the other things. I only kind of use the bus tokens. It was right there whenever I needed it.

GG: Ok. Alright, are there any other Volunteers of America programs, or even other programs outside of this now, that you've participated in?

A: Like I said, I participated – they sent me to CEO, Center of Employment Opportunities. It's on 7th in Alameda.

GG: Oh, this is the one in downtown LA?


A: Yeah.

GG: So it's a program that you've joined now?

A: Yes.

GG: Okay, what's that one about?

A: It's like a class. A week class basically and they teach you and train you how to do the Caltrans and then they send you to work for... I forgot how many days, how many days you could do. But they send you like three days a week and they pay you that same day. And they've got a job developer too, basically like what Preston do. He help you look up jobs but you've got to meet. It's like a little process you've got to meet throughout the week, like you've got to meet with him, do a couple days of



the Caltrans, and then you get like some off days. It's like a pretty cool program, a job developer they sit with you for at least like an hour a week or something like that.

GG: Okay. So, part of this program, they recommended it to you, they got you in another program. So, one other program in addition to what you've been doing at Volunteers of America.

A: Right now, yes.

GG: Okay. And Manny how about you?

M: They didn't recommend me to a program but hopefully soon or something. They [inaudible] let me know things like what there's been but...

GG: Okay.

M: Like I said I've tried other programs like [Yorkshire?] Center and it was just I had to go sign up. Well now at the end it was always just a waste of time. The day when I went to go sign up, the day I went to go meet with them for something and then they told me to call these people but they never answered and call these other people and they were same thing, just a bunch of waste of time. And I came here, it was right [snaps] there and then, it was like here sign this up, fix your resume. And then I come and they're going to have another – because people got hired when I came, a bunch of people got hired for the census, and then just come – I don't remember how long it was – but they told me to come and I came and now I'm just waiting for the call so. Pretty much everyone who went and got hired. So sounds good.

GG: Okay.

A: Yeah, even if you don't get hired you should ask them about the CEO program.

[Sounds of agreeance in group]

A: It's pretty cool, you just got to sacrifice a week it's 8 hours a day for a week. But it's pretty cool.

GG: Do you get a certificate after that? Like training?

A: I believe so, they did give me a little certificate. I got a couple of certificates so it's hard to keep up with sometimes.

[Group laughs]

MG: That's good though.


GG: A lot of training experience now.

A: Yeah.

MG: Put that all on your resume, it doesn't matter how many you have, it's better to have more.

A: Oh yeah I make sure they on my resume.

MG: Okay. We've covered a lot of topics today and is there anything that's – maybe you need to think about this for a little bit – is there anything that we have not covered that you would like to discuss about your experience with CALVIP and Volunteers?



A: [Inaudible] I can't say nothing bad about it.

M: Yeah, I can't say nothing bad about it. If you come and willing to put in the work and it's there, you know it's just up to one to want it, that's it. I mean it's pretty simple, you come down here and you just follow simple directions and that's it. Like you'll see a good outcome out of it. It's not like "Oh I'll come and they're telling me to come again and still nothing or this and that." It's easy, you know it's easy, it's not that hard. You've just got to come and show up and that's it.

GG: Well, excellent. Thank you. The last thing we have here, before we are going to end this, is we have a quick little survey here which will take maybe a minute or so to do.

[Passing out of materials]

END OF FOCUS GROUP 1

Appendix F

Focus Group 2 Transcript

Date: January 8, 2020

Location: VOA 700 Bullis RD, Compton

Focus Group #2 [2 clients]

Length: 39 min, 06 sec'

File name: STE-001.wav

Moderators: Galvez & Giang

Participants: Ivan (I) & Dennis (D) GG:

Moderator 1

MG: Moderator 2

Transcriber: Carissa Loya

GG: Ok, so quick introductions. We told you a little bit about ourselves, but if you could tell us a little bit about yourself. Maybe start off with how old you are and what you like doing for fun during your free time.

I: I'm Ivan. I'm twenty-three and like sports - lots of sports. GG: Well, what do you like to watch?

I: Man, I love all sports. Mainly, football. (GG: Football?) Basketball. GG: Yeah? Alright.

D: My name is Dennis [indistinct]. I'm twenty years old. I love playing sports. I love music, art, chess - all the things in the world.

GG. Yeah. What kind of music? D:

Uh, mostly R&B and hip-hop.

[someone is opening up a wrapper]

GG: Ok. Alright, so I'm Gino and I'm forty one. [GG laughs] Shh, shh, shh.

I: [indistinct]

[Everyone laughs]


GG: Got this gray going. D:

That's wisdom.

GG: Uh, I just got a puppy about a year ago now. He's still young. I love training him and playing with him. So, a lot of my free time right now is hanging out with my dog.

[Ivan laughs]

I: What kind of dog is it?



GG: He's like a brown looking thing. [Ivan laughs] Like, I don't know. He's cute. He's cute. MG: [chuckles] My name is Michael. How old am I? Forty three? I'll say about forty three. GG: Yeah he's older, look at his white hair! [laughs] Ivan: He just aged well. [Everyone laughs]

MG: I've aged very poorly. [everyone laughs] In my free time I just like to move around and find different foods. I just like to eat, unnecessarily. I'll probably have another donut after this.

[more laughing]
[wrapper opening]
[indistinct]

I: You got a good metabolism like me.

MG: I don't know when you get aged - my metabolism was much better ten years ago than it is now. It takes a lot longer to go down.


[MG and Ivan laugh together]

MG: Alright well thank you. So, that's a little bit about me and about us.

GG: Yeah.

MG: So, we'll start off with some real general questions. How did you hear about the volunteers program, Volunteers of America? How did you hear about CalVIP? Generally how did you hear about it? Why did you choose to participate in it?

I: Ok. I was out of prison with nothing but the clothes on my back. And uh, my parole officer didn't help me get no resources at all. He really didn't give an effort and started to make it out on me to get resources and see him every week. With no bus money! I'm just trying to get on the bus, just showing him my prison ID. Like man, "can you please let me on the bus." No clothes. No nothing. Just out there, really. The perfect word for it, [I think he said "stuckin"] [indistinct] You know? [Laughs] I didn't have nothin, bro. And it's like making me want to commit crimes [indistinct] I didn't commit. I'm like man, I just know it was like, "what - what can I do right now?" I just took it, sleeping on buses, got on the bus always falling asleep, falling out my hand. I'm at the bus stop falling asleep. I don't know, just sleep deprivation. Uh, some dude one day, I was sleeping on the bus [indistinct] and my phone fell out of my hand. He was like, "Hey man." When we got off the bus downtown, he said "you know they got places where you can go, you know, lay at," whatever, whatever. He's like, "all around, you know people do it." I'm like, "what?" He's like "look" and it said a note. And you know, I don't even want to trust stuff like that. I'm like skeptical all the time because you gotta be skeptical out there on the streets. Especially out there in LA. (D: Downtown) So, it had a number. It said, "if you need emergency shelter, call this and ask for - I don't know if it said ask for James or something. [tries to recall] Yup, it said James, and it might be the same dude who I just talked to. There's this dude named James on property, but he did shared rooms and pilot programs paid him to house homeless people. I think he must've set up some free houses. People just go and



go lay down some nights. And um, I went like three or four times. Um, like the fourth time - I didn't go three or four times in a row [indistinct], but over a period of a week or two weeks - I went like three or four times. He finally told me, [indistinct - something about stopping at the toilet]. He's like, "yeah man, um, you know you can go over there on Broadway - 38th and Broadway - and we can get you a place and put you in housing." I'm like, "Yeah?" He's like, "Yeah." I'm like, "Ok." I went over there and it was a shelter. I'm like, "Ah, na." I know about shelters. They're dangerous and there's all types of diseases and nasty stuff. I'm like, na. The man shelters, not women's. [indistinct] The man shelters are way more horrible. So I'm like, no! But this one was kind of look [I think he said hip], cool and clean. He was like, "Man, go over there to hopics." This is how I know about VOA. He's like "Go down to hopics on Broadway and 59th." I went. And I went in there and I waited. I said, "Can I get into that shelter down there?" They told me and asked me all of this stuff. And I said, "Yeah, I need help" and they wrote me a referral. I went there and was sitting down. There was this woman named Becky who worked for VOA, which is pathways. I said, "Man, do they really help you here?" She's like, "What you mean? We can help you. Watch. How old are you?" She just made it her obligation to try to really look out for me. She introduced me to all of the CalVIP community, got me all over out here in Compton, and just has given me so many resources with these guys. [GG agreeing] These guys have been so helpful.

GG: Alright. So, is this where you're from? Is this your area? I:


No.

GG: No? Okay, so are you from downtown?

I: I make a commute. [indistinct - wrapper opening] Sometimes we get here late. [says something about the system leaving and that sometimes they're there more], but it's the commute, the money. (GG: yeah, you're traveling) Yeah and there's gangs and [indistinct]. We almost got into an altercation. Some dudes are just trippin' for no reason. You know, it's just like that. It's dangerous doing that.

GG: Yeah. How did you hear about CalVIP, Volunteers of America?

D: Basically the same thing and exact situation from the start of his story - getting out of prison, you know parole. Going to check in with my parole officer on the first week. He wants me to check in. I told him I had no address. I had no home. He thinks I'm lying. Like, he thinks I'm just trying to hide an address. He's like, "I'm not going to be in your house." I'm like, "Literally, I'm homeless, I'm fresh out of prison and I have nowhere to go." Since then I've had like three different parole officers. Moral of the story past that, he had me checking in every week without having nowhere to go every night. One day I was leaving his office and as I was walking out, it was the van - the hopics van. I guess they ride around in the van sometimes. Then, hopics picked me up. I asked them, "what does the hopics mean?" They were telling me how it houses homeless people? I was tellin' them like, "I'm only twenty years old, I have nowhere to go, fresh out of prison." And they were like, "Get in the van and we're going to go to the hopics on 58th and Broadway." And then we went hopics and they wrote me out a referral. Then they sent me to VOA, but that wasn't right away. Even before that, I was standing at a youth shelter on 52nd and Vermont called, "Home at Last." I wasn't even done with my 90 day program there and then I got into an altercation. A lot of stuff went down. I ended up getting stabbed in my face by a mental health patient. Right after I got kicked out of there, I had



to go back to the streets. It's just been a lot. I'm not even in VOA anymore. I just got timed out. But, I came back to Preston and Preston plans on helping me.

GG: Okay.

D: But Ms. Becky did introduce us to everybody in Compton. She told us we - GG:
How long have you been in the CalVIP program? Or when did you start? I: two months ago.

D: two months ago.

GG: You started two months ago? D:

More than that. Since January. GG:

Oh, January of last year?

D No, I'm saying this January. So we - I:

October will be three months.

GG: October? Okay.

D: Probably like three or four months.

GG: [talking to Dennis] Three or four months for you? Okay. Alright. What have you been doing in this program so far?

I: Four months, actually.

GG: Four months. What have you been doing? What activities? Have you done any training?

I: Well, at first they had to help us because we had no identification or anything. No ID. Nothing. So we couldn't get no jobs, get nothing. They had to help us get our birth certificates and all that. You know that takes time, especially me being born out of state. (GG agrees) So, they got to get that and then they had to get the ID to go apply for it. Then it takes two more weeks to get the ID. (Dennis interrupts indistinctly) (GG: Same thing? [talking to D]) I don't even have my ID and we've been in this program for three months. We've been in this program for four months, but we don't have our proper documents for those four months.

GG: So was that CalVIP people helping you get your ID's? (I: Yes.) Okay. Alright, so you've gotten that.

Ivan: She got me - Nadia got me in college. She got me into Glendale community college. GG: Did you enroll?

I: Yeah. She's the one who showed me all the college courses. [indistinct] She tried to get me to go to El Camino Real, but I was like, "no." She asked me what I wanted to do and I said I want to go to school. I got her in all of my emails. She was hitting me up. Every email - she was callin' me all the time no matter what I'm doing. [indistinct] She called me and texted me all the time, "where you at?" - making it her duty. That's one thing. Yup, they do.

GG: Alright. Have you come in for any type of training? Anything?
[Ivan and Dennis indistinctly speaking at the same time] Dennis: In
this exact room, we did job training before.
GG: Ok, what did you do in that job training?

I: We talked about forklifting services and stuff. [Ivan and Dennis indistinctly speaking at the same
time]

GG: Mhm.

I: Oh, oh, oh! They made applications. They made resumes. Pa - Patricia. GG:
Patricia helped you with that? You too as well?
D: Yeah, resumes.

I: Uh, yeah, resumes.

GG: So it sounds like you've done at least one training so far? You've done forklift training. You've
come in for some resume development. You've finished that, and then you've done your paperwork
stuff. (I: And then we're coming here today) Because it's only been three or four months right?

I: Uh, Yeah.

D: If we would've been consistent, we would've had way more done with that. It's just, a lot has
been going on. Like literally, everytime we came, there was something that was going to help us
take the next step. It was never a waste of time coming here. It was a hard time getting here, but -
(I: That's the only problem.)


I: That's the biggest problem - the commute. That's really the biggest problem. Nobody knows how
we're going to do it without a car and no money. [indistinct] It takes a lot. Especially if you got
family members sick, and then you have other programs. Like me, I got to go to [I think he said
Kedren Mental Health], I got to go to parole, and so it all intertwines. That's what it really is too. I'll
be like, "Oh! I'm supposed to be there today," but there's only five days in the week that you can do.
You know? (GG agrees) Then, you don't know if it's a holiday in them weeks or what. So it's like,
these last few - these are the holidays these last couple of months. [I think he was trying to say
that it was hard to get here] So, everybody's schedules was hectic.

GG: Okay. Alright.

MG: So I hear Ms. Becky. I hear Natalia? I:
Nadia.

MG: Nadia. I hear Preston. I hear Patricia. I:
Elsie and Craig.

MG: Elsie and Craig. So you meet with a lot of program staff?



I: Oh, and I'm not in this program, but my brother's in this program. Robert! Carlo. Or Robert. It's Robert.

MG: [indistinct] It sounds like you have very consistent communication with them. So, I just want to get an idea. How often do you talk with the program staff?

I: I talk to them all the time.

MG: All the time? In person? On the phone? Text?

I: In person, on the phone, text. I got all of their information. GG:

"Once a week? Twice a week?

I: At least once a week. GG:

At least once a week? I: At least.

GG: For the past three or four months. Ivan:

At least.

GG: What about you? D:

Same.

GG: Same? At least once a week. Okay. (MG: How would you -)

I: By phone is the only way I have not talked to them. [indistinct] It broke a couple of times, for like a week, two week - I went two and a half weeks without a phone. Not just two and a half weeks straight, but over like - [indistinct - I think he said I would see a text and when I got on my gmail] I'd always hit back.

MG: How would both of you describe these interactions? That's a very general question, how would you describe - (GG: Like, how do they treat you?)

I: About just really having to better ourselves (D: Now just now, we just had -) About how we got family members and how we have to be on time for our appointments. [D: indistinct [mentions something about priorities]] We have to be responsible. [indistinct] We have to step up.

GG: How do you feel about the program so far? What's your general feeling?

I: They are my advocates and my mentor. That's how I feel. That's why I call him. [Dennis laughing in the background]. I tell people when I go to scholars and I call Pat or my advocate, [indistinct] they don't like that sometimes. Other programs or like parole - they be tryin' -

MG: Who's your mentor? Or who do you identify as your mentor?

I: All of them because I'm in all of their programs. I'm really siked up because in CalVIP [indistinct: think of them as brothers]. All of them. I'll go over there and then I even go over here to the other facility, which I'm going to go after we leave here and go see Nadia again. They're over there at the um, [indistinct.] You know what I'm talking about? [I think he's asking Dennis]



GG: Now you mentioned - you said the word “genuine.” What do you mean by that?

D: When certain people talk to you, you can tell it’s like, a lot of the stuff they say it really doesn’t mean anything to them. They’re just speaking out of their mouth. But when they speak to you, it’s like, “we really need you to do this so we can help you. We really need you to come back so we can help you. You need to help yourself.”

I: [advocates] These guys really want to help people. They want to use whatever funding they have to really help people [Dennis distinctly interrupting in the background] because they want us to bring in everybody we can bring in. They really want us to help. There were supposed to be more people coming in the program today. Um, John. [speaking to Dennis] Is his name John? Or some other dude? No, John! John should’ve been in the program. John is about to excel in this program now. He’s kinda older. He’s like three years older than us and they have a good program for him. Man, he’s so happy and so excited. Yesterday, he didn’t even know he could get all of these jobs this quick and all that. (GG: That’s good.) [indistinct - I think he said they want everybody]

GG: Okay.


[Pause]

MG: Uh, okay. So, this program probably impacted you in many different ways. Think about that a little bit. I want you to think about how has the CalVIP and volunteers impacted you and helped you in any area of your life?

I: They helped me transition out of prison. Because - (D: the parole officer] they didn’t do nothing! At all. And that’s a shame. That’s why I always state that. I felt so scared to even want to ask for your supervisor because I don’t want to get targeted. It’s crazy because there are certain things that you’re required to do because still [I think he’s trying to say they are still at stake]. (D: [indistinct]) As we’re on parole, California State of Corrections is still getting funded for us and [indistinct]. How are you going to stop recidivism if people are getting out of prison and you’re not housing them? And not doing this and such and such. Yeah, people are going to keep dying and you can’t blame it on the new propositions. [indistinctly talking about blaming the propositions]. People are getting out early doing what they need to do, but then they’re rushed back in and they don’t know what to do. Their backs are up against the wall. Like on parole, you’ll be like, “Ok, I got family who lives out of state. I could move out there and get free [I think he said living].” But, why do I have to be out here when I can go get a fresh start out there? [Frustratingly asks] Why are you holding me back? [mumbles indistinctly] It’s all money. It’s a trap. It’s like a cycle and these guys are trying to help us get out of the cycle. A lot of these guys that work for CalVIP got out of the cycle. (Dennis agrees) We’re in that same cycle.

GG: So it’s been three or four months since you’ve started the program. Do you think the program has changed any way that you interact with your friends?

D: Yeah because they let you know not to be around the negativity (I: You gotta go) and not to be around people who are just standing by. If they’re in the same position as you and they’re just



standing by and they are doing nothing about it, you shouldn't be around them, people leeching off of you.

I: People are texting my phone and I'll be at appointments. I say, "I'm handling my business. I'm handling my business." Like people been textin' me [indistinct]. It makes people want to do things and be better as well.

GG: Okay.

MG: Are you going to continue?

D: Yeah, and then at the same time you could try to motivate the people around you, but if they're not willing to switch their life around, then you just have to stay away from them.

I: These people were helping my relationships and family issues. Seriously. Because when my family know I'm coming here and how I'm handling my business and how I tell them I'm here, and my girlfriend, every time it just motivates me to keep coming. That's what really happened because I almost fell off. I was so tired and depressed. Even though I came and they timed me out of the shelter for nothing. Well, not for nothing. You have to sign in every three days. I signed in on the third day which is what you're supposed to do, but they just [something about signing in the late book]. They didn't see it and they already timed me out. I said, you didn't see and then they timed me back in. So, then I had to wait for a period of time and I was about to give up. My girl said, [indistinct - I think "you got to go back to the place"]. I'm like, "why? You got a spot?" She told me no - you have to build something for yourself, and when people are trying to help you, you have to take their resources.

MG: Now, uh, I lost my train of thought. [laughs] Both of you said this program has changed your relationships with other people and family. Has this program changed your involvement and your perception of gangs or gang involvement for you two?


D: Well like me, I just never really cared for the gang stuff. I really don't look up to them. You feel me? [Speaking quietly] I don't feel [indistinct - I think he said like a shadow like a million people. They want you to be] the big bad guy. I don't care about none of that. We grew up in that, but we have to get out of that. You got to get your family out of that. You don't want to be in that position. It's a lot of violence.

GG: So would it be fair to say that the program hasn't really changed the way you feel about gangs?

D: Um, well no. I never really got into -

I: He said he never went into gangs. (GG and Dennis: Yeah) [indistinct - I think he said "He's not in them anymore."]

GG: What about you?



I: The way I look at is - actually this, I'll tell you this right here. Something right here. I know I'm gang affiliated and I know there are enemies in this program. And I know that this changed a straight gang member. We wouldn't be around each other, now we're really cool. Will. He's in this program. (Dennis: Yeah, Will.) These guys changed him. Completely changed him. He was crazy like. He's not like that now - no rowdy, no nothin'. He's a whole different person. Now he works for this place.

GG: So, what do you think that can be now? (I: He's a young dude too) Yeah, how can that be?

I: Young, young dude! (GG: do you think the program has changed -) I think the people showed him that he can have more! (GG: Okay) That's what I'm saying. He's just like these guys now.

Because these guys, whatever they did, now they have a house, a car, income coming in, insurance, 401K plans. Now, Will got all of that. That's where they are trying to get us. Basically, we're the new generation. Other people - they keep helping, they keep leaving. Now it's just our time to take advantage of it.

MG: So you two have been in the program for three months and four months. (GG: Three or four months) So, I want you to think and reflect on yourself about three or four months ago. Okay? Now have that as a thought. Now, reflect upon how you are right now. (I: way better) So, how has the program changed your view of yourself. From then, how would you view yourself until now, as you are still going through the program?

I: I just feel like I have more to keep going for because [indistinct - I think he said I've already come a long way]. [Dennis agrees] [indistinct] I feel like I'm way better off and I know what resources they have and where it's at. All I have to do is keep coming consistently. I feel like I'm in a better position as long as I keep in contact with these guys. [indistinct] You just gotta more stable. You know? [GG agrees]

GG: Alright.

D: Same thing. Same thing. I feel like back a couple of months ago I was a little more impatient. I was just ready to - I don't know, just not be myself. I guess as I would call it. I was just doing stupid stuff. I don't know. [Voice perks up] So like the first time coming here, I was just hoping it would be something good out of it. You feel me? Something to make me want to come back. Every since that first time, I've come back multiple, multiple times. It's always been something good. I feel like this program is about letting you know to be patient, take it step by step, take care of yourself, and everything will be alright. They reassured me that everything is going to be alright.

GG: Alright. So, now I'm going to talk about specific stuff about the program. If you could say one real good thing about the program, what would it be? What do you like most about it? Can you name one thing?

I: I like the staff.



GG: You like the staff?

D: Yeah, the staff.

GG: Okay. Why do you like the staff? We've talked a little bit about it, but -

I: Like you said, they're just genuine. [GG agrees] They're really like family. Like real. That's how I feel. We'll be in here laughing so hard. It's like we're not even in here. [Laughs with Dennis]

D: [Laughing] Just thinking back, we have memories.

I: Watch this, I can show you I think I can probably show you from months ago. [I think he's looking something up on his phone] Actually the director, um, Craig. [Dennis laughs] Do you guys know Craig? Tall, tall guy.

MG: Hmm.

GG: Ah, I don't know. I'm short. [indistinct]

D: You see him always wearing the suits. He has the big office to himself. GG:
Oh, Craig! Over at the VOA on Alameda?
[Dennis, Ivan, and GG all agree]

GG: Yeah, yeah I know him. Alright. Now, think about if you could do anything to change the program to make it better, what would you like to focus on? Like one improvement that the program could make to make it better.

I: Better transportation.

D: I would just duplicate the same program, but put it in another location. GG:
[sounds like an unfortunate] Ohhhh.
D: Keep putting this program in different locations.

GG: Alright. Where would you want it? For you, where would it work best?

Dennis: Well like, right now I reside in South Central.


I: He's right. It needs to be [indistinct] [video playing in the background] [everyone is laughing] That was September. Actually, we've been in this program for four months.

D: Told you.

I: That was September, 2019. We've been here way - a good four months.

D: And that was after being comfortable. [Ivan coughs and laughs] [indistinct]

GG: Alright. So, transportation, more locations - that would be the improvement. Okay. That's important feedback. [coughing in the background] I actually heard from two other people that that's



the same issue as well. So, you guys are on to something. Alright, let me ask you this real quick. Would you recommend this program to other people and have you?

I: I have

D: I have

I: I have. I have a card in my backpack.

D: You got to ask them for cards everytime you come. You run out. [indistinct]

I: I got numbers saved. All I got to say is, "Siri, call Preston." [GG laughs] That's what I just did today. You know they have to move back and forth from this building? (GG: Yeah.) We've been in this building already, but I remember where this was at too. I just kinda got here, and [Dennis laughs] [indistinct - says something about how he was thirty minutes away from a park]

GG: Okay.

MG: So, similar to what we asked about what you liked about the program, what did you like least about the program? What were challenges that were part of being in the program?

I: I don't see no challenges.

D: Na, there was not at all. The first day we came in, [laughing] we was exhausted. We was on the bus. We were just hoping there were some snacks. [everyone is laughing] We was like, "man, just rejuvenate us."

I: Oh my god. Fed us. Fed us real fried chicken, biscuits, and all type of stuff! (Dennis indistinctly talking at the same time) They went out of their way and bought us food with their own money. She did. We didn't ask her for no food. (GG: Mhm) We looked in the kitchen, and then she ended up going out and buying all of it.

GG: Alright so, having some food is a good thing?

I: When you don't have it, yeah. [Dennis agrees] Especially with you guys helping me, I don't know where [indistinct]. I mean I have food stamps, but sometimes that food stamp card don't really do nothing man. I've been trying to save it so I can get my pilot program. [GG and MG both agree]


MG: So like, pilot program in terms of just saving money for certain things or?

I: Oh, no, the pilot program (MG: Oh the pilot. Yes, yes I know sorry) I got it. I just got to get the place and put a little bit of food in the fridge.

MG: Yeah.

GG: Okay, you're in CalVIP and part of VOA. Since the last four months ago, have you joined other programs? Other VOA programs? What are the names?

I: No. Let me think about it.



GG: Other VOA programs that you're in right now? Or is it just CalVIP? D

The other one.

I: This is the only program I'm in is - VO - .

D: I think we have to check that. No, we didn't sign up for anything else? GG:

Okay. Are you in any other programs?

I: I'm in programs at my school.

GG: Oh, other programs. Okay. I:

[indistinct]

GG: So, did CalVIP introduce you to other programs? Any that you've signed up for? Which ones?

I: The ones that I said they introduced me to were the programs at my school. There's a foster care program. There's a program for African Americans. They're not classes. They're programs. There's a program for - I qualify for all of them - African Americans, re-enter prisoners, and like I said, guardians, foster care.

D: Yeah, foster care.

GG: Any programs outside that CalVIP introduced to you? Any other programs that you're in?

D: So far, I remember they had (I: The people that -). I was gonna say, we was at a work career thing but it was actually inside VOA. But, all of the people who were in that room were outside of VOA. (MG: wow) Like college people and uh - [loud coughing]

GG: Was it the last one we heard? Career?

MG: Sounds like a fair. It was in the room with the big [indistinct].

D: No, it's not here but it's like that. I like when you have the people lined up and you just got to each one.

MG: That's a career fair. [Dennis agrees]

I: They came in here. Everybody sat down and they talked. Everybody talked and then we ended up going over. [Dennis agrees]


MG: Oh, alright.

D: So, it was a lot of programs. Actually, I -

I: But these were programs though! [indistinct]

GG: Alright. Cool.

MG: So, I asked you at the very beginning to think of stuff that you really wanted to say. So, essentially this is our last question. Is there anything that we did not cover today?



GG: Anything that we didn't bring up that you want to talk about. Anything that you want to say about the program?

D Thank you.

I: Good program.

GG: Okay.

I: Good people.

GG: Alright, well thanks again for your time. MG:

Thank you so much.

END OF FOCUS GROUP 2