



CaVIP Final Local Evaluation Report

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# City of Pasadena Public Health Department CalVIP Final Location Evaluation Report

## Background

The City of Pasadena Public Health Department (PPHD) sought grant funding support from the California Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program to implement a new violence intervention project: Project Safe Pasadena. The project was intended to target high-risk youth ages 11-24 in Northwest Pasadena and Altadena. Project Safe Pasadena is based on the Cure Violence model which is a public health approach to reduce gun violence (Butts et al., 2015).

Despite common perceptions about Pasadena (e.g., the affluent, beautiful home of the annual beloved Rose Parade seen around the world), the Northwest quadrant of the City and neighboring Altadena are home to many underserved, poor, and minority communities. The crimes committed by residents who live in Northwest Pasadena and Altadena affect all of Pasadena, but the violent crimes (i.e., homicide, aggravated assault, assault, rape, and robbery) in particular are concentrated in Northwest (est. population 50,000), see Fig. 1.

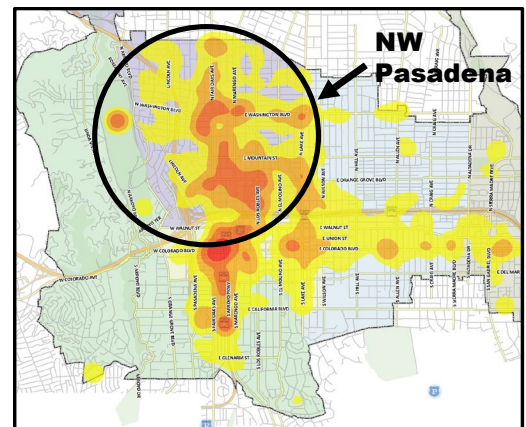


Figure 1: Violent Crime Density, 2015-2017 (Source: Pasadena Police Department)

Therefore, the project aimed to focus on the youth who commit and who are victimized by violent crime in this target area. However, due to a longer than anticipated start-up period, Project Safe Pasadena was extended for an additional year past the originally anticipated end date of April 2020. This meant that the COVID-19 pandemic's unprecedented effects required a shift in focus for the program in order to meet the needs of the community. Project Safe Pasadena staff became essential workers,

working alongside several community partners to coordinate food and other basic needs delivery to those who were affected most by the pandemic and related stay-at-home orders. This included low-income youth and families who relied on school meals for survival, seniors and those with immunocompromised systems that created additional risk for COVID-19 exposure, families who became unemployed or underemployed due to business closures, and those who became infected with COVID-19 and were required to quarantine at home.

Ultimately, due to this shift in scope, it is difficult to fully assess and evaluate the originally designed model of Project Safe Pasadena. However, there were various successes throughout the duration of the grant, as well as opportunities for further learning, which will be highlighted throughout this report.

## Original Design of Project Safe Pasadena

Project Safe Pasadena utilized the Cure Violence (CV) model, which stops the spread of violence by using community-based public health methods traditionally associated with disease control. Due to the concentration and overrepresentation of violent crime in the Northwest Pasadena area, Project Safe Pasadena targeted youth and young adults in this area. These youth are predominantly Black and Hispanic (92%), and 80% are male (Pasadena Police Department, 2017b). The youth reside primarily in NW Pasadena and nearby Altadena, which are highly diverse communities (80% of residents are non-white) and extremely low-income: the poverty rate for the 91103 and 91101 zip codes in NW Pasadena (19.5% and 21.8%, respectively) at the start of the project exceeded the State (15.88%) and County rates (17.8%). (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Project Safe Pasadena was created to support this population by using staff who are ethnically and racially similar to these youth and their families, who have similar life experiences (e.g., 'peers' who have previous gang or crime involvement), and can therefore provide services that are culturally appropriate, relevant, and effective.

The Cure Violence model was developed by a physician, and considers gun violence to be analogous to a communicable disease that spreads (or “transmits”) through a community like influenza. The model was first launched in 2000 in West Garfield Park, one of Chicago’s most violent communities. The number of shootings in the community dropped by 67% during the project’s first year (University of Michigan Injury Prevention Center, 2017; Slutkin, 2017; Butts et al., 2015). Since then, the model has been implemented in more than 50 communities in the U.S. and in other countries. In 2007, the Baltimore City Health Department launched their CV program, resulting in statistically significant reductions in violence including a 50% reduction in murders, a 44% reduction in shootings, and strong evidence of norm change in the community (University of Michigan Injury Prevention Center 2017 and Butts et al., 2015). New York City launched the first of its 18 CV programs in 2010 with funding from the U.S. Department of Justice. In Brooklyn and South Bronx, gun violence rates declined significantly, and participants reported declining support for violence as a means of settling personal disputes (Delgado et al., 2017). Studies at other program sites around the country have demonstrated similar results (Slutkin, 2017).

The Cure Violence steps to address youth violence are similar to those that would be used to control a communicable disease. Project Safe Pasadena adapted the model to fit the needs of the local youth as follows:

**1) Violence Interruption: Directly Interrupt the “Transmission” of Violence in the Community.** Project Safe Pasadena utilized Community Based Advocates (i.e., street outreach workers or “violence interrupters”) who were knowledgeable about the target area and had lived experience and street credibility. PPHD released a Request for Proposals (RFP) for a community-based organization to partner in this project. PPHD ultimately selected Harvest Village Ministries, a local faith-based organization with significant experience working with at-risk youth in the Pasadena/Altadena area, to



*Figure 2: Project Safe Pasadena logo, created in partnership with Harvest Village Ministries, John Muir High School students, and Pasadena Art Center College of Design*

launch the Community Based Advocate component. Harvest Village Ministries hired one Senior Community Based Advocate and four Community Based Advocates, all with lived experience that reflected that of the high-risk youth in Northwest Pasadena and Altadena. The Community Based Advocates worked in the community to develop relationships and build trust with high-risk youth in a variety of settings, including schools, parks, low-income housing projects, local businesses, and other areas where youth were known to congregate. They worked to prevent retaliatory acts of crime and

mediate ongoing conflicts and disputes to de-escalate tensions and prevent violence. Through trainings as well as individual interactions, they modeled de-escalation and mediation techniques that youth can use on their own. Between July 2019 and March 2020, Harvest Village Ministries' Community Based Advocates worked with over 2300 at-risk youth and young adults (see Appendix 1, Demographics of Participants Served, July 2019 – March 2020).

**2) Individual Change: Change Individual-level Behaviors that Can Lead to “Transmission” of Violence.** The Community Based Advocates referred high-risk youth and their families to Project Safe Pasadena's Case Manager for individual-level intervention. The Case Manager connected the youth and their families to existing programs offered by project partners including: 1) PPHD's internal social and mental health programs; 2) the Pasadena Parks, Recreation, and Community Services (PRCS) Department's robust menu of programs (e.g., recreation classes, educational classes (life skills training, anger management, etc.)), teen center and associated programs, youth sports leagues, summer employment for youth, and much more; 3) multiple partners who offer parent support/parent skill-building classes; and 4) the Foothill

Workforce Development Board’s Youth Employment Program, which offers connection to post-secondary training opportunities, career exploration/counseling, job placement, and more. The Case Manager was also a “peer,” which helped provide additional means of connection to youth and young adults. With support from the Community Based Advocates, the Case Manager conducted intensive follow-up and care navigation to identify barriers to service and provide proactive assistance in overcoming the barriers (e.g., transportation). The Community Based Advocates and the Case Manager coordinated activities closely, serving a caseload of 103 clients between July 2019 and March 2020. The Case Manager also made 680 cumulative referrals out to supportive service agencies on behalf of clients.

**3) Community Change: Change Community Norms that Support “Transmission” of Violence and Work to Improve Community-Police Relations.**

The community outreach component sought to “denormalize” violence by changing the social norms that perpetuate violence. Project Safe Pasadena conducted several community gatherings, trainings, and events in partnership with the Community Based Advocates in NW Pasadena neighborhoods most impacted by violence, such as the Kings Village housing project, to provide an opportunity for residents to meet with police, service providers, City representatives, and others. For example, Harvest Village Ministries and its Community Based Advocates hosted life skills classes for youth living in housing projects.

These classes allowed youth to learn valuable skills to deploy in their everyday lives, as well as healthy coping mechanisms in response to violence, anger, and/or



*Figure 3: Community WYSM Training*

bullying. Life skills classes were well attended, with classes at a local high school averaging 250 students per week.

Another particularly successful event was the “Why’d You Stop Me?” (WYSM) training series. PPHD worked with the Pasadena Police Department and Harvest Village Ministries to bring this training to police officers, nonsworn officers, and community members. WYSM seeks to bring together police officers and at-risk members of the community to better facilitate trust and communication. WYSM, which was developed by a former police officer, allows individuals on both sides to put themselves in the others’ shoes. WYSM was made a mandatory training for all Pasadena police officers in an effort to decrease police-involved incidents of violence. In addition, a WYSM training for youth and parents was conducted, with 79 community members in attendance. Pasadena police officers shared what they learned through WYSM and community members provided feedback for areas to be able to improve relationships between PD and the public.



### HIGHLIGHTS:

Over **2300** at-risk youth and young adults reached between July 2019 and March 2020

**103** youth and young adults received case management

**680** referrals and linkages made through case management

Life skills classes attended by over **250** students per week

## Modified Scope of Work

In March 2020, the Governor of California issued a stay-at-home order in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. All non-essential programming was halted and initially, Project Safe Pasadena activities were paused. However, PPHD and Harvest Village Ministries continued receiving calls and messages from Project Safe Pasadena clients and partners, as well as other impacted community members, seeking assistance in navigating these difficult times. With closures in several business sectors



came layoffs or reduction in hours. Combined with delayed ability to access emergency financial assistance and unemployment, countless community members were at risk for hunger and lack of other basic necessities.

Numerous studies have linked lack of access to food and other basic needs to increased rates of violent crimes. One European study found that children of low-income households that struggle with hunger are seven times more likely to harm themselves or be involved in violent crimes as young adults (Mok et al., 2018). A similar 2016 study by J.R. Caughron showed that in American communities, only a one percent increase in food insecurity leads to an increase in the violent crime rate of approximately 12 percent, holding other predictors of violent crime constant. With these alarming statistics in mind, PPHD requested a change in scope of work from BSCC to respond to the community's need in this time of crisis and to help prevent increases in violent crime.



*Figure 4: Community Based Advocates deliver food to community members during the COVID-19 pandemic*

The approved modified scope of work entailed Harvest Village Ministries' Community Based Advocates becoming essential workers for food and basic necessity procurement and delivery. Clients included youth and young adults from low-income households that previously relied on school-based food programs, seniors and those with immunocompromised systems that created additional risk for COVID-19 exposure, families who became unemployed or underemployed due to business closures, and those who became infected with COVID-19 and were required to quarantine at home. The

Project Safe Pasadena Case Manager worked alongside the Community Based Advocates to coordinate with food pantries, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, the Pasadena Unified School District, and local restaurants and businesses to collect and deliver groceries and prepared food to community members in need. Project Safe Pasadena staff also partnered with the local implementation of

Great Plates Delivered, a service that provided restaurant-prepared meals to seniors during the safer-at-home order. Moreover, Project Safe Pasadena assisted PPHD's other programs to collect and deliver free food and toiletries for distribution to people experiencing homelessness. All deliveries were contactless and followed strict COVID-19 related protocols to ensure the highest possible level of safety for all staff and clients.

Project Safe Pasadena staff also continued to provide case management services through a virtual setting. In addition to coordinating food and hygiene item delivery, the Community Based Advocates and Case Manager provided referrals and linkages to emergency financial assistance, housing/eviction prevention services, employment, medical/telemedicine services, and mental health services. In order to provide



*Figure 5: Community Based Advocates collect and deliver food for distribution to people experiencing homelessness*

Project Safe Pasadena's critical services for as long as possible, PPHD requested a budget modification from BSCC to pass through additional funding to Harvest Village Ministries. This allowed Project Safe Pasadena to continue through March 2021.

Appendix 2 illustrates demographics of Project Safe Pasadena clients from April 2020 through March 2021.

## Barriers and Challenges

PPHD experienced several significant barriers and challenges in implementing Project Safe Pasadena.

- There was a substantial delay in staffing the project. Although PPHD was able to begin with existing staff in terms of coordinating events and trainings, much of the direct service work could not begin without the Community Based Advocates. Unfortunately, the initial Request for Proposals (RFP) for a community based

organization to develop Project Safe Pasadena's Community Based Advocate component did not receive any qualified responses. PPHD subsequently re-released the RFP and conducted outreach to several community and faith based organizations to advertise the RFP. In addition, PPHD held a proposers' conference to present the project and answer any questions. The second attempt was more successful and PPHD received a number of qualified responses. PPHD ultimately selected Harvest Village Ministries for their connection to and familiarity with the local community and prior experience working with at-risk youth.

- Another challenge was a change in partner programming. When applying for the CalVIP grant, PPHD anticipated that Project Safe Pasadena clients could be referred to an existing internal program called Project Wraparound, which worked with youth and young adults with serious emotional disturbances and their families. Unfortunately, the Project Wraparound program ended prior to the ramp-up of Project Safe Pasadena and staff needed to find additional mental health and supportive services for clients. Ultimately, Project Safe Pasadena was able to partner with several community organizations for referrals, as well as new internal PPHD programs for youth and adults.
- The COVID-19 pandemic presented perhaps the most difficult challenge throughout the span of the project. While initially paused due to restrictions on non-essential services, Project Safe Pasadena was able to pivot and modify its scope of work to respond to the community's immediate and urgent needs. Although this modification allowed the project to serve hundreds of households each month, it did disrupt the intended model of Project Safe Pasadena, making it extremely difficult to successfully evaluate its efficacy. Although Pasadena saw a decline in homicide and rape in 2019, there was an increase in assault cases (Pasadena Police Department, 2020). In 2020, the number of homicide and rape cases increased, but assault cases decreased. It is unfortunately difficult to separate the potential effects of the Project Safe Pasadena intervention from other influences, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and related safer-at-home orders.

	2017	2018	2019	2020	Change from 2019
Homicide	7	7	4	7	75%
Rape	43	40	31	46	48%
Robbery	201	167	145	120	-17%
ADW	164	152	152	172	13%
Assault	344	283	293	284	-3%
Assault DV	234	252	262	218	-17%
Burglary Commercial	352	260	195	228	17%
Burglary Other	124	152	114	183	61%
Burglary Residential	408	278	294	257	-13%
Burglary Vehicle	484	535	509	547	7%
Theft	1286	1454	1566	1484	-5%
<i>Recovered Vehicles</i>	167	126	69	112	62%
Stolen Vehicle	333	276	228	339	49%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3980</b>	<b>3856</b>	<b>3793</b>	<b>3885</b>	<b>2%</b>

Figure 6: Crime Statistics, 2017 - 2020 (Pasadena Police Department, 2020)

## Successes and Highlights

Despite the numerous challenges, Project Safe Pasadena also had outstanding successes during the lifespan of the project.

- Project Safe Pasadena was able to bring the Why'd You Stop Me? (WYSM) training to Pasadena police officers and community members, facilitating a dialogue and learning experience from many perspectives. This unique opportunity provided important feedback to improve existing tension and negative perceptions of police.
- Project Safe Pasadena's Community Based Ambassadors connected with at-risk youth and partnered with the Pasadena Art Center College of Design to help design the project's logo. The logo was utilized in marketing materials and branding.
- Prior to the change in scope of work, Project Safe Pasadena was able to reach over 2300 youth and young adults through outreach and engagement. Community Based Advocates were able to disrupt patterns of violence amongst youth and teach life skills classes in order to develop healthy coping mechanisms, such as anger management techniques.

- Of the 2300 youth and young adults reached, 103 received intensive case management by Project Safe Pasadena staff between July 2019 and March 2020. Staff made 680 referrals and linkages to partner programs on clients' behalf during this time.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic, Project Safe Pasadena's ability to quickly shift and pivot its activities allowed the program to serve over 400 families (over 1000 individuals) on a monthly basis. In the first three months since the change in scope of work, Project Safe Pasadena gained 2041 new, unduplicated clients, illustrating the critical need for food and basic needs support due to the pandemic and related closures, employment, and housing difficulties. Project Safe Pasadena also assisted in providing food and hygiene item delivery for 75 unhoused youth and seniors at high risk for COVID-19 infection who received temporary motel shelter through PPHD during the initial safer-at-home order.
- Project Safe Pasadena resulted in several critical partnerships, including Harvest Village Ministries, Pasadena Unified School District, Pasadena Police Department, Pasadena Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department, and several local food banks, businesses, and non-profit organizations.

## Conclusion

The City of Pasadena Public Health Department is extremely grateful to the BSCC for the partnership and collaboration throughout the duration of the CalVIP grant. Although the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow the project to develop as originally anticipated, Project Safe Pasadena still positively impacted thousands of community members in need.

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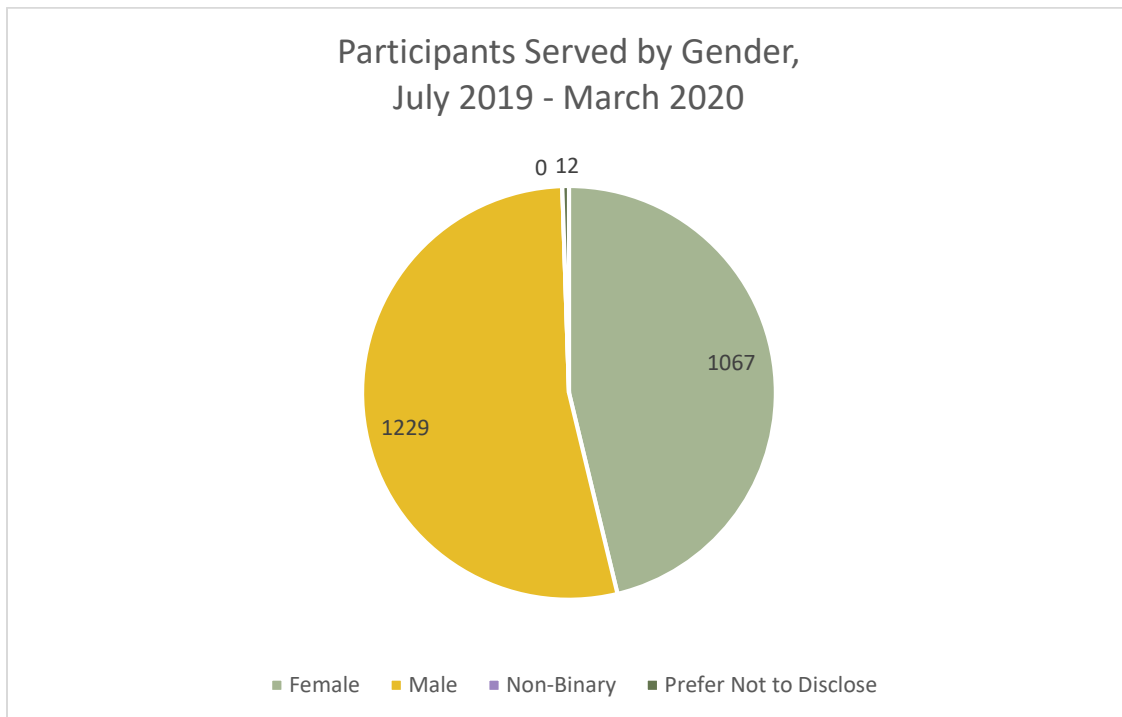
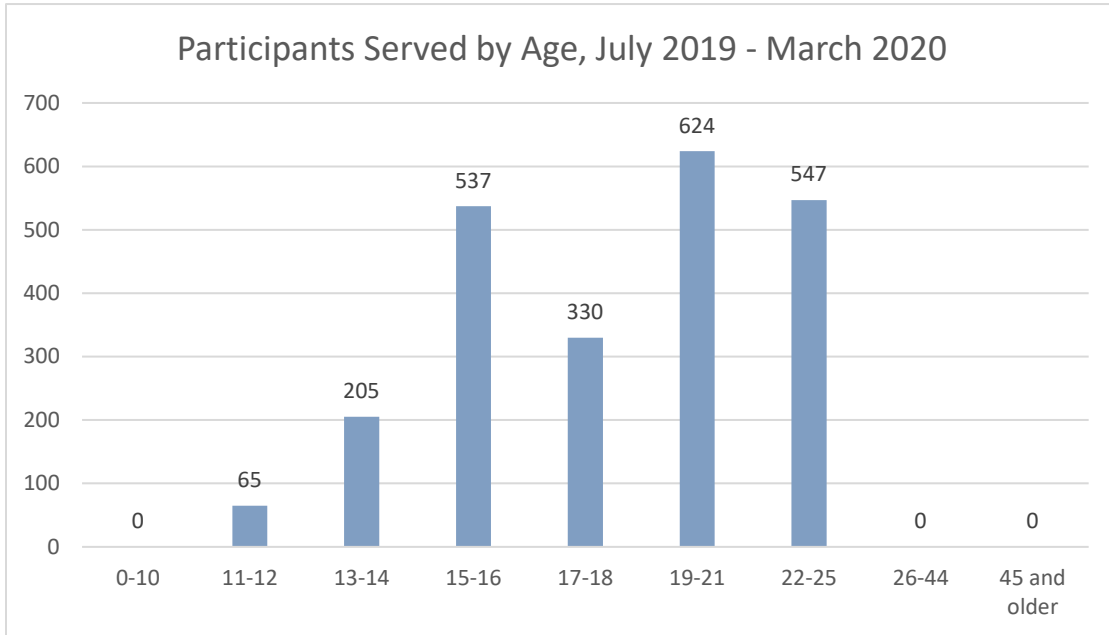
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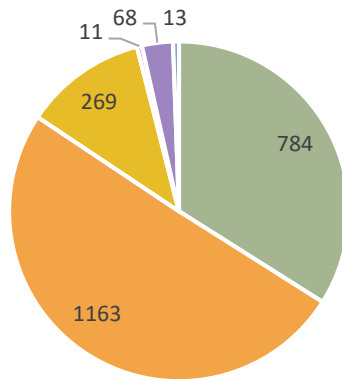
## Appendix 1

### Demographics of Unduplicated Participants Served, July 2019 – March 2020 (Prior to Change in Scope of Work)





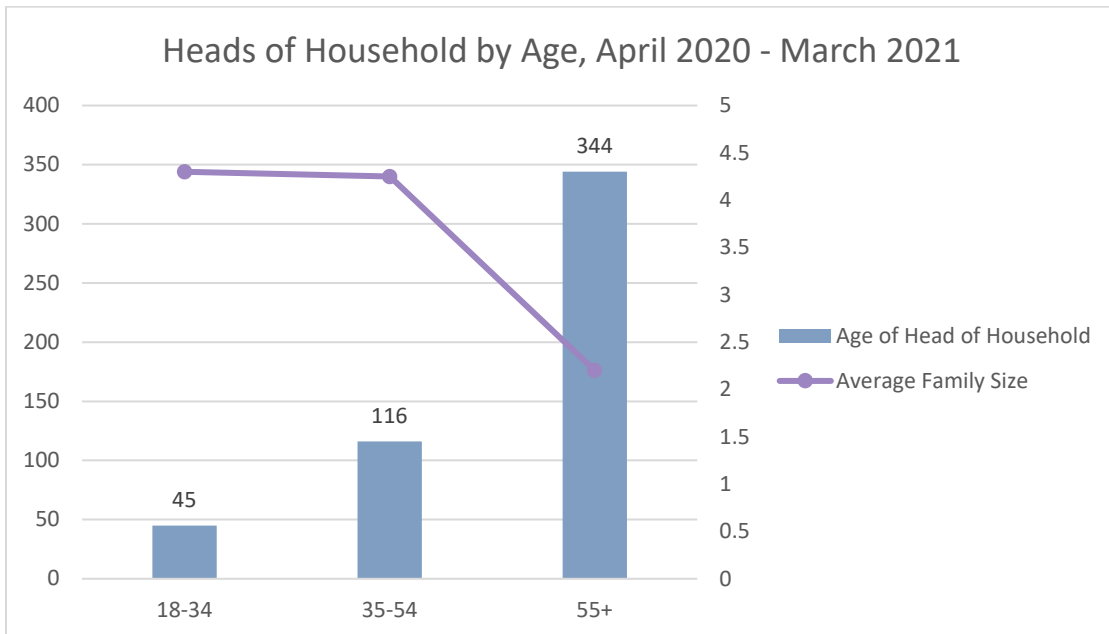
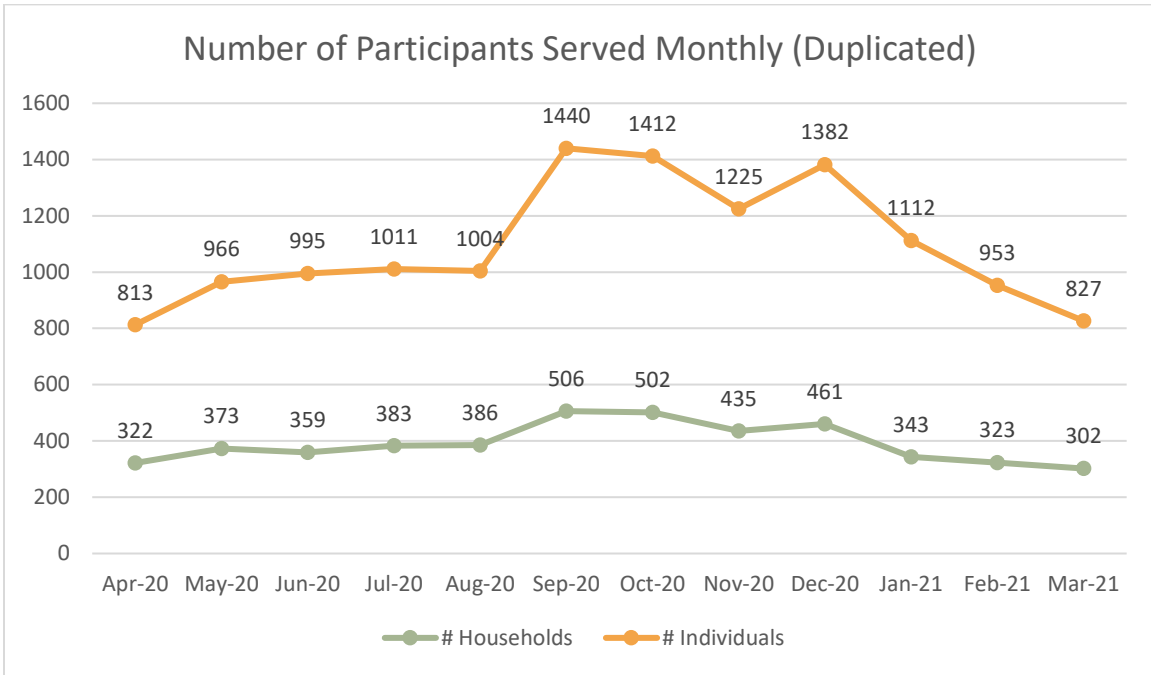
### Participants Served by Ethnicity, July 2019 - March 2020



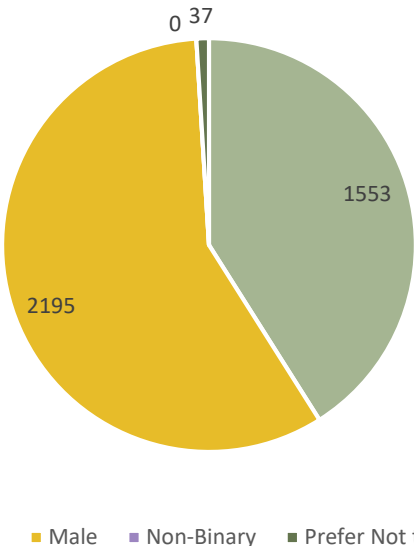
- Black/African American
- White
- Asian
- Hispanic/Latinx
- American Indian
- Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander

## Appendix 2

### Demographics of Participants Served, April 2020 – March 2021 (After Change in Scope of Work)



Participants Served by Gender (Unduplicated),  
April 2020 - March 2021



Participants Served by Ethnicity (Unduplicated),  
April 2020 - March 2021

