

City of Santa Rosa Guiding People Successfully (GPS)

Final Evaluation Report (2018-2021)



THE SANTA ROSA
VIOLENCE
PREVENTION
PARTNERSHIP

Funded by Measure O (2004)

Submitted to:
City of Santa Rosa
Office of Community Engagement



Submitted by:
LPC Consulting Associates, Inc
www.lpc-associates.com

The City of Santa Rosa Guiding People Successfully (GPS) program was made possible by California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CaVIP), funding from the Board of State and Community Corrections and partnerships with Sonoma County's Probation and Human Services Departments.

The City of Santa Rosa Violence Prevention Partnership's *Guiding People Successfully* (GPS) program is a multi-disciplinary effort of local government, law enforcement, faith community, schools, business, and community-based organizations working together to provide trauma-informed, wraparound services to help address the root causes of violence in the community, funded – in part – by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) CalVIP. GPS implements the Positive Youth Justice (PYJ) model, focusing on building life-skills and improving behavior and school attendance for at-risk youth ages 12-24 in Sonoma County, providing positive alternatives for youth and families by offering collaborative and integrated services including job readiness workshops, paid internships, in-home counseling, and support for substance use disorders. The GPS case management strategy incorporates an Individual Development Plan for participating youth, focused on setting goals and identifying targeted services to help ensure youth make positive choices to encourage a better future. **This Final Evaluation Report presents the City of Santa Rosa's achievement of goals and objectives for three years of Guiding People Successfully services funded by CalVIP, from October 1, 2018 to August 31, 2021.¹**

Progress Towards Program Goals and Objectives

Youth are referred from a variety of sources, including partnering agencies, schools, probation officers, and family. GPS utilizes evidence-based practices, including Wraparound Service (Wraparound), Motivational Interviewing (MI), Case Management Strategy, Tackling the Tough Skills (TTS),™ Paid and Unpaid Work Experience, Brief Strategic Family Therapy (BSFT),® and Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT). These services are provided by two partner Community Based Organizations, LifeWorks of Sonoma County and Social Advocates for Youth (SAY), as described in the sidebar.

Year 1 (2018/19) of CalVIP funding focused on implementation and start-up, including updating and upgrading the shared data system, Apricot. A streamlined consent process in Year 2 (2019/20) resulted in increased service delivery and improved outcomes. LifeWorks and SAY started Year 2 focusing on increasing the number of youth enrolled in and served, but by March 2020 had rapidly shifted to supporting current youth and families to survive the COVID-19 pandemic. The Year 3 extension (2020/21) allowed GPS providers to shift their workplans to focus on directly supporting youth's basic needs, as the pandemic continued into and beyond the funding's final year. Families were very grateful to receive GPS COVID-19 Emergency Grant Program stipends, a new component in Year 3, in light of under/unemployment due to pandemic and/or wildfires in order to increase

¹ The City of Santa Rosa received a no-cost extension from the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC) to continue GPS through August 31, 2021 (12 quarters).

LifeWorks of Sonoma County

The El Puente Program builds positive connections between youth, their families, and the community using a cognitive behavioral approach. Bilingual professionals use group and Brief Strategic Family Therapy® – a family-based intervention in the home designed to prevent and treat child and adolescent behavior problems by increasing family functioning and addressing substance abuse issues. Using proven behavioral health approaches, El Puente serves children and adolescents at-risk of school suspension or expulsion, or those on probation from Juvenile Hall, thus the program's focus on effective school engagement and truancy reduction.

Social Advocates For Youth (SAY)

SAY provides intensive Case Management, work readiness workshops, and paid Work Experience and Internship opportunities. Case Management services use Motivational Interviewing and Positive Youth Development techniques. SAY's work readiness curriculum is an interactive and customizable program designed to assist youth with little or no work experience and deficits related to the social-emotional skills required for workplace success. Workshops cover critical life skills related to attitude, responsibility, communication, problem solving, preparing for the workplace, self-esteem, conflict resolution, anger management, dealing with stress, critical thinking, and teamwork.

Guiding People Successfully is funded by the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC), CalVIP Cohort 2.

This final evaluation report was prepared by the CalVIP-funded GPS Evaluator, LPC Consulting Associates, Inc. www.lpc-associates.com



housing security, meet basic needs, decrease digital divide inequalities, all in an effort to increase youth resiliency to prevent violence and justice system involvement.

The provider agencies delivered direct services to youth and families, working toward the project's goals and objectives. During three years of CalVIP funding, **215 youth and 142 family members, a total of 357 unduplicated Sonoma County residents**, received services. A subset of those, 71 youth, received intensive case management services, completed a Release of Information, and were tracked in the shared data system, Apricot. In addition, 65 group events during the three years had a (duplicated) attendance of 357 people.

Challenges, Barriers, and Lessons Learned

The biggest challenge GPS encountered during the all three years of CalVIP funding centered on participant referrals and engagement, especially challenges securing a signed Release of Information (ROI) Form during Year 1, the impact of COVID-19 in Year 2, the uncertainty of re-opening in Year 3, and displacement resulting from wildfires during all three years.

During **Year 1**, the number of youth referred to the City and subsequently to the CBOs, dropped, and throughout the year, CBO providers faced challenges securing signed consents (ROIs) to include participant information in the shared database, Apricot. This limited the evaluation's ability to report detailed quantitative data, including improvement in PYJ domains. However, a streamlined consent form implemented during **Year 2** (Fall 2019) helped mitigate some of these challenges. Unfortunately, obtaining consents remained a challenge, and proved especially difficult in group settings, where forms had to be sent home for guardian's signature. In every setting, some participants were wary to share any detailed personal information on paper. Challenges in group settings in Year 1 proved to be insurmountable in Year 2, when all in-person group activities were cancelled due to state and county stay at home orders in Years 2 and 3. Even after California "re-opened" in June 2021, towards the end of **Year 3**, CBO partners were cautious about meeting in-person, concerns that were validated with the emergence of the Delta variant in July.

As the extended program concluded, CBOs continued to support youth and families the best they could under increasing case rates in Sonoma County and changing public health guidance. In response, LifeWorks created a garden plot at Bayer farm and has been able to use this space to meet with clients, who have "responded very positively to this beautiful, outdoor environment." A more detailed description of the impact of COVID-19 on GPS is presented in the next section. Despite these challenges, Table 1 on the next page demonstrates that the GPS program met or exceeded most of the goals stated in their original GPS CalVIP Scope of Work, reported quarterly to the Board of State and Community Corrections (BSCC).

Table 1 | Achievement of Project Goals (October 1, 2018 – August 31, 2021)

GOAL #1: GPS uses a Positive Youth Justice (PYJ) framework to serve at risk and/or underserved youth in greater Santa Rosa.	
Objective 1.1: By the end of the program, GPS will serve 180 unduplicated at risk and/or underserved youth ages 12-24.	A total of 215 unduplicated youth and 142 family members have received services (total of 357 unduplicated individuals) . Individual-level data is available for the 71 youth receiving intensive case management services. A total of 65 group events held had 357 attendees.
GOAL #2: GPS enhances protective factors and youth resiliency.	
Objective 2.1: By the end of the program, 75% of all GPS youth will show improvement in two or more Positive Youth Justice domains through participation in coordinated direct service and evidence informed practices.	Intake/Closure PYJ score comparison data available for 30 youth showed that 16 youth showed improvement in two or more domains (53%), and 70% showed improvement in at least one domain.
GOAL #3: GPS reduces recidivism by building youth resiliency.	
Objective 3.1: Over the two-year period, 75% of youth participating in GPS will not have a new or higher-level offense.	Of 49 closed GPS youth served over 3 months: 86% (42) did not have a new or higher-level offense during or after GPS. 84% (41) did not have a new or <i>more severe</i> offense during or after GPS. 73% (36/49) had NO offenses before, during, or after GPS. 90% (44) closed youth did not have any new or additional offense during or after GPS. 16% (8) had a new or more severe offense during (4) or after (2) GPS, or both (2). 88% of the youth with prior offenses (7/8) did not have any offenses during or after GPS.
GOAL #4: GPS youth experience improved educational and/or work experience conditions.	
Objective 4.1: 70% of youth will not be truant by the end of each semester as determined by the school district.	As of the end of Year 2, 100% of LifeWorks youth dealing with truancy issues were no longer truant by the end of the year. Staff believe that moving to online school played a large role in the initial reduction of truant behaviors. However, during Year 3, accurate truancy data became unavailable as time progressed with online school. Year 3 ended just as students returned to in-person classes, so overall truancy data is not available.
Objective 4.2: 75% of youth participating in Tackling Tough Skills (TTS) [™] will show improvement in the Positive Youth Justice Work Domain after 3 months of services.	Social Advocates for Youth reports that 87% of youth who successfully completed work experience and workshops showed improvement in a PYJ domain.

Impact of COVID-19

In March 2020, the evaluator added questions related to COVID-19 response to the Quarterly Progress Update form already completed by LifeWorks and SAY. From March 2020 to August 2021, CBO partners shared that the biggest challenges that they faced were ever-increasing need, ongoing school/campus closures that kept staff from campus, the challenge of meeting with and maintaining engagement with youth virtually, the lack of staff to

satisfy increased demand, and restrictions on transporting youth. CBO partners developed innovative practices including:

- remote and virtual service delivery to clients
- increased use of social media and online video
- use of virtual staff training
- changes to internal operations
- adjustments in space configurations and policies around safe program delivery
- offering new services previously not available
- building a virtual team culture
- adjusting fundraising plans
- re-focusing on services relevant during COVID-19
- increasing the use of outdoor spaces
- making technology loans to clients
- increasing ongoing communication with clients

Both CBO partners adjusted their programs in Year 2 to adapt to state and county Stay at Home Orders. While some components had to change more than others, both partners acknowledged the compounding stressors on youth and families from the pandemic and acknowledged how important their support and services are during this time.

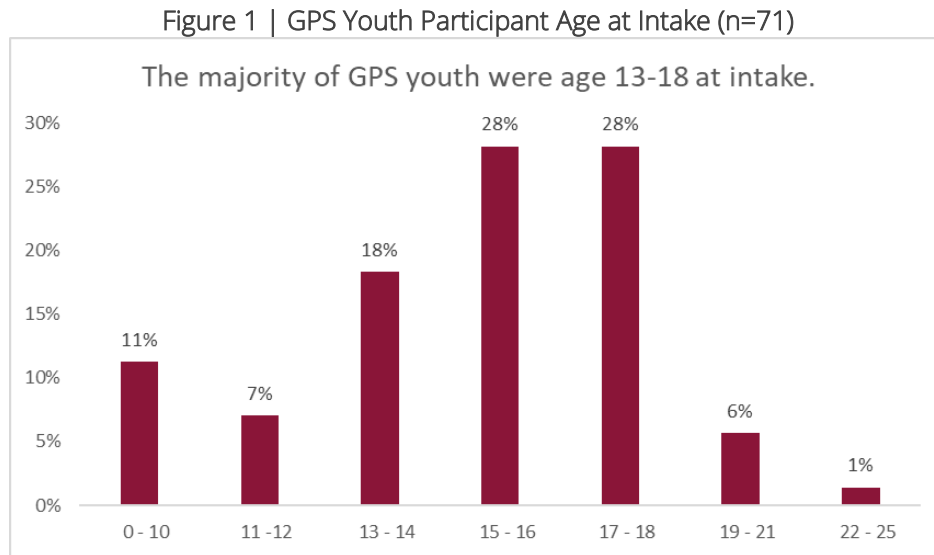
By Year 3, CBO partners had adjusted to providing services in a hybrid format, outdoors with social distancing and via virtual tools, such as Zoom. However, both CBOs shared the challenges of engaging youth for online supportive services. Unfortunately, as the pandemic continued throughout Year 3, CBO partners reported an increase in demand for basic needs services and goods (e.g., food and housing-related). Referrals were slow throughout the entire year, even though client need was high. One CBO reported that families struggled to commit to a new program and were hesitant to take on yet another additional Zoom meeting. Even if youth did not enroll for direct services, CBO partners shared information and community resources to help support families, and Social Advocates for Youth offered testing and vaccines to eligible clients.

Evaluation of Activities

At the onset of CalVIP Cohort 2 funding, The City of Santa Rosa contracted with LPC Consulting Associates, Inc. (LPC) to evaluate its programs funded by BSCC. The Evaluation Workplan developed by LPC includes both process and outcome measures collected from Apricot and the Quarterly Progress Updates submitted by LifeWorks and SAY. Leadership at both agencies remained the same through the first two years, with the Project Director at SAY changing midway through Year 3. Both CBOs consistently entered data into the Apricot system and regularly reported summary data each quarter. Unfortunately, the departure of the original City of Santa Rosa Wraparound Coordinator in Spring 2021 resulted in a lack of referral data entered into Apricot for the final six months of the project (after March 2021). However, the new Wraparound Coordinator had integrated into the program by the end of Year 3. The research questions answered in this section using available evaluation data frame the overall process and outcomes analysis.

What are the demographic characteristics of youth being served?

Characteristics of Patients Served | The 71 youth recorded in the Apricot data system from October 1, 2018 to August 31, 2021 were rather similar in terms of ethnicity, race, age, and gender; all youth were residents of Sonoma County. Approximately 87 percent of youth served during the first two years identified as Latinx; and participants were mostly male (63%). As shown in Figure 1, three-quarters of the youth participating in GPS services (75%) were between 13 and 18 years old at intake.



Risk Factors at Enrollment | To screen for and identify possible risk factors for violence, CBO partner staff reported risk factors related to gang-involvement in the Apricot data system. It must be noted that GPS was designed to serve youth with a variety of risk factors, including prevention and early intervention services for youth not yet involved in criminal activity: over three quarters of youth (81%) had no apparent gang association at intake. Slightly less than half of enrolled youth (47%) had the risk factor of residing in a high-need neighborhood. Just under one quarter (24%) were reported to be involved in gang activity. Slightly fewer youth (22%) had been arrested or had contact with law enforcement, 20 percent had been incarcerated in juvenile hall, jail, or prison, and 17 percent regularly used alcohol or drugs at intake in GPS, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2 | GPS Risk Factors at Intake (n=83)

RISK FACTOR	% of youth (n=83)*
Resides in high need neighborhood	47%
Has been involved in gang activity	24%
Has been arrested or had contact with law enforcement	22%
Has been incarcerated in juvenile hall, jail, prison	20%
Regular alcohol or drug use	17%
Uses violence as a method to resolve conflict	10%
Comes from a multi-generational gang family	8%
Self-identifies with a gang (tattoo, clothing, peers)	5%

*note: youth can have more than one intake.

What type and what number of services are youth receiving?

Youth Referred and Served | During the three years of CalVIP-funded GPS, 175 youth were screened by the Wraparound Coordinator, and 111 youth were identified as appropriate for referral to services by one – or both – CBO partners. A total of 215 youth and 142 family members were served by LifeWorks and SAY during the three years. A small subset of all youth had a signed a Release of Information form to enter their information in the shared database, Apricot. These 71 youth received a total of 1,113 services during the three years. The CBO partners also held 65 events during the two years with an attendance of 357 people, as shown below in

Table 3.

Table 3 | Youth and Families Served, October 1, 2018 – August 31, 2021

CalVIP-FUNDED EVENTS IN APRICOT from 10/1/2018 – 8/31/2021	
Social Advocates for Youth	
# of Attendees (<i>duplicated count</i>)	295
# of Events	56
LifeWorks	
# of Attendees (<i>duplicated count</i>)	62
# of Events	9
ALL CALVIP-FUNDED YOUTH SERVED TO DATE IN APRICOT from 10/1/2018 – 8/31/2021*	
Social Advocates for Youth	
# of GPS Youth Served (<i>unduplicated count</i>)	31
# of Services Provided	660
LifeWorks	
# of GPS Youth Served (<i>unduplicated count</i>)	41
# of Services Provided	453
CALVIP-FUNDED ACTIVITIES REPORTED IN QUARTERLY UPDATES from 10/1/2018-8/31/2021	
# of unduplicated Youth Served by SAY (goal: 148)	165
# of unduplicated Youth Served to Date by LifeWorks (goal: 180)	50
# of unduplicated Family Members Served to Date by LifeWorks (goal: 400)	142

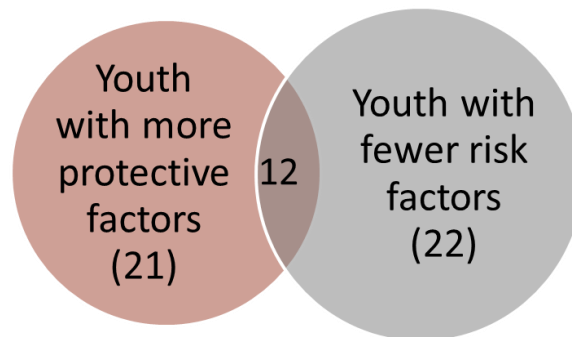
*one youth was served by both LifeWorks and SAY

Services Received | LifeWorks and SAY provided different services, depending on specific youth needs. A total of 165 youth received services from SAY, such as career readiness workshops, work experience opportunities, and/or tattoo removal. A total of 50 youth and 142 family members received supportive services from LifeWorks. From the subset of data recorded in Apricot, all 41 youth participants (100%) in the LifeWorks *El Puente* program received in-home case management services, and all 30 youth (100%) receiving intensive services from SAY received individualized case management. According to the sample of services provided by both CBOs and recorded in Apricot, **72 youth received a total of 1,113 services**, ranging from 1 to 92 services per youth, for a total of 2,211 hours of services during the three years, ranging from 15 minutes to 307 hours per youth, with an average of 31 hours of service per youth.

The Partnership, in conjunction with the Board of State and Community Corrections, established a \$15,000 GPS COVID-19 Emergency Grant Program. **Thirty GPS enrolled youth and families received \$500 emergency grants** for distance learning support or rental assistance.

Leaving GPS | By the end of the GPS program, 48 of the 71 youth receiving GPS services (68%) had a completed closure form; one-third (32%) completed the program, the remainder did not. Pre/post changes in the Positive Youth Justice (PYJ) domains was available for 30 youth, and **70 percent of youth showed improvement in the PYJ domains**. In addition, of the 48 youth with a completed closure form, **46 percent (22 youth) had a decreased number of risk factors and 44 percent (21 youth) had an increased number protective factors** between intake and closure. As shown in Figure 2, one quarter (25%, or 12 youth) had both a decreased number of risk factors and an increased number of protective factors.

Figure 2 | Increased Protective, Decreased Risk Factors



Outcomes Analysis

Evaluation outcome data focused on changes reported by individual participants and by the CBO providers. A pre/post comparison of PYJ for those leaving GPS was possible with the first two years combined, as the sample size was large enough to analyze for significant change. Unfortunately, since only one new closure form was entered during Year 3, the “closure” data directly mirrors the findings first presented in the Year 2 annual report. The recidivism analysis on page 11 is new in this report; the evaluator conducted this analysis with significant support from the Sonoma County Probation Department – Juvenile Division in the summer of 2021.

Is resiliency increasing as a result of participating in GPS?

Guiding People Successfully operates with the belief that building resilience contributes to a strong sense of purpose, a belief in successful adaptation to change and life-transitions and increased social competence despite adversity. As a result, increased resilience, measured by a decrease in risk factors and increase in protective factors, reduces the risk of youth violence, as well as justice system involvement and/or recidivism. In addition to the risk factors associated with gang involvement described on page 5, the evaluation explored change in protective factors (

Table 4) and risk factors associated with youth violence (Table 5) to assess increased resilience.

Table 4 | Protective Factors at Intake and Closure

Protective Factors	Change in % of Youth	Intake (n=83)	Closure (n=48)
Feels connected to school, As and Bs at school	28%	22%	50%
Has stable personal or family life; consistent parental supervision and appropriate disciplinary practices	22%	49%	71%
Feels connected to the community	16%	11%	27%
Has good and positive peer relationships	15%	54%	69%
Relies on legitimate financial resources	9%	39%	48%
Has access to positive leisure, pro-social activities, sports, culture	8%	57%	65%
Future includes further education	2%	52%	54%
Has a positive adult role model(s)	-1%	78%	77%
Wants to get work experience or has a job	-11%	69%	58%

The biggest increases in the percent of youth experiencing protective factors were that 28 percent more youth felt connected to school, 22 percent more youth had a stable personal or family life, and 16 percent more youth felt connected to the community. Only slightly fewer youth (2%) planned for further education and 1 percent fewer had positive adult role models. The biggest decrease from intake to closure was the percentage of youth who wanted to get work experience or had a job, although this decrease may have been a function of limited job opportunities in Sonoma County after years of wildfires (2017-2020) and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (since 2020).

Table 5 | Risk Factors Intake to Closure

Risk Factors	Change in % of Youth	Intake (n=83)	Closure (n=48)
Access to illegal drugs, underage alcohol use	-21%	46%	25%
Unsafe/unhealthy relationships	-17%	48%	31%
Exposure to childhood trauma	-15%	78%	63%
Proximity to violence at home, neighborhood, school	-9%	49%	40%
Abrupt changes/trauma recently	-6%	60%	54%
Relies on violence for problem-solving	21%	19%	40%
Unemployed, out of school	-3%	20%	17%
Access to firearms	-6%	12%	6%
Family not meeting financial needs	-2%	37%	35%
Actively engaged in delinquent or criminal behavior	0%	0%	0%
Financially dependent on illegal activities	3%	1%	4%

The largest decreases in the percent of youth experiencing risk factors were that 21 percent fewer youth had access to illegal drugs or underage alcohol use, and 17 percent fewer youth were in unsafe/unhealthy relationships. A smaller percentage of youth experienced each of the risk factors, except being financial dependent on illegal activities. Three percent more youth had this risk factor, although it is possible that this increase is due to increased trust between the youth and program staff, reflecting an increased willingness to disclose this risk factor at closure, compared to intake.

Most GPS youth face complicated and challenging home lives, and GPS has also anecdotally seen an increase in resilience among GPS participants.

For example, one SAY participant summarized her internship experience as "everything I could have asked for as my first job experience." She learned how to answer the phone, send emails, follow up with residents of the community to provide resources and a friendly environment for the community who visited the location. The participant mentioned that her greatest success was being able to maintain herself and support her mother with income to help her family. Before this internship, she mentioned that she was never occupied and didn't have a drive for anything. After participating in CalVIP-funded GPS, she is more determined with school and is eager to find a job so she can continue to help her family at home.

Another SAY participant shared: "This summer has been difficult for my family and I [sic]. After getting evicted from our home and having to stay at my aunt's house, my internship distracted me from what was going on. Knowing I could work and support my family was a great feeling. But also, being supported by the program and receiving the \$500 for COVID-19 support helped put a down payment on an apartment for my family and I, so thank you so much!"

LifeWorks of Sonoma County started working with a 15-year-old male with substance abuse problems, family conflict, poor grades, and attendance. He and mother initially were very resistant to therapy and very early, they stopped treatment. LifeWorks collaborated with the participant's Sonoma County Probation Officer, who encouraged the youth to participate in GPS. During treatment, the participant went back to the Juvenile Hall twice, but there was a change in client attitude and mindset for better. Initially, he said he did not want to stop drinking or smoking cannabis, but by the last session he was talking about wanting to stay clean. He also stopped saying he wanted to get off Probation to continue doing his substance use activities with his friends. In addition, he improved his relationship with younger brother and mother, is going to tutoring to get help academically, and is going to boxing classes. With support he received from LifeWorks and Sonoma County Probation Department – Juvenile Division, **the participant got of his ankle monitor removed and stayed out of trouble.**

Is there an improvement in work skills/readiness?

With CalVIP funding, Social Advocates for Youth (SAY) provided opportunities for youth to contribute to their community by completing environmental and conservation-related projects or supporting non-profits who work with the most vulnerable in our society. During Years 1 and 2, **140 work readiness workshops, including career exploration and job skills training, had attendance of 119 participants.** In response to COVID-19, SAY adapted the workshops to the virtual environment, which limited the number and size of workshops. In Year 3, work readiness workshops had an attendance of 22 participants. While COVID-19 restricted the number of youth and placement opportunities during Years 2 and 3, **over 25 youth completed meaningful, paid work experience.**

In addition to teaching the "how to's" for getting a job and providing on-the-job experience, participants received a letter of recommendation, a resume, and a certificate of internship completion. To support participants holistically, SAY workshops and case management services worked together to address personal issues, such as educational, family, or peer challenges that may impede their ability to maintain employment. The combination of skills, knowledge, resources, and support resulted in **several CalVIP-funded GPS participants getting their first job through the SAY Work Experience and Internship programs.**

One CalVIP-funded GPS youth initially was supposed to work with SAY during their Spring Internship program, but she was falling behind in school and was dealing with anxiety because of online learning due to COVID-19. The SAY Case Manager supported the participant by advocating for her and having her be transferred to a different high school to get more support and catch up with her credits. She got back on track with school and was able to finish her internship. The participant and SAY Case Manager worked together to transition into getting another job after her internship was completed.

Another CalVIP-funded GPS participant participated in the *SAY Tackling Tough Skills Workshops*, which resulted in an opportunity to work for SAY through the Summer Internship program. The participant was placed as a camp counselor and made many new friends through this internship opportunity. As a result, she was excited to start her first semester in-person high school. SAY Case Managers supported participants for success in both school and the workforce.

Social Advocates for Youth reported that **87 percent of youth who successfully completed work experience and workshops showed improvement in a PYJ domain.**

Is there a reduction in chronic absenteeism/truancy among participating youth?

Both SAY and LifeWorks worked with participants to increase school attendance. However, due to the abrupt move to online schooling midway through Year 2, this outcome cannot be reported with a program-wide analysis. This section describes truancy outcomes, year-by-year.

During **Year 1**, one GPS partner, Santa Rosa City Schools, looked up baseline attendance data for the 36 youth participants with signed consents. Of the 15 students for whom data was available for the 2018/19 academic year, 60 percent were not chronically absent, and 7 percent were not truant at the end of the year. The evaluator planned to conduct this analysis at the end of each year to measure whether there is a reduction in chronic absenteeism/truancy among participating youth during the grant funding period. However, the shift to distance learning in March 2020 limited the ability to gather data from the School District during Year 2. City staff and the Evaluator hoped work with the Santa Rosa City School District to determine a meaningful way to analyze absenteeism while distance learning due to COVID-19 by the end of Year 3, but ongoing challenges and demands on the school system due to COVID-19 and safely reopening schools precluded additional analysis.

Based on the analysis of Academic Year 2018/19, GPS adjusted its truancy indicator to a measure the number of participating youth who were “habitually truant,” or *irregular in attendance at school, or habitually insubordinate or disorderly during school*. During Year 1, three GPS youth enrolled in Santa Rosa City Schools (20%) were habitually truant and were referred to a school attendance review board (SARB) and to the Sonoma County Probation Department – Juvenile Division. The intention of focusing on this highest level of truancy was to concentrate on the GPS youth most highly disconnected from school. However, the abrupt move online due to COVID-19 disrupted this truancy analysis plan in Year 2 and Year 3.

Distance learning made tracking and enforcing absences more difficult for everyone working with youth. At the end of Year 2, LifeWorks reported that 100 percent of participants dealing with truancy issues were no longer truant by the end of the year, which they attributed to the initial move to online school. However, the combination of increasing Zoom fatigue and the lack of official attendance data precluded reporting chronic absenteeism for

Year 3. Both CBOs supported students to complete the 2020/21 academic year and prepare for the transition back to in-person classes, which started just as this CalVIP funding cycle ended.

The challenges students have faced over the past 18 months have been widely documented, but **GPS has anecdotally seen increased engagement with school among GPS participants.** For example, one SAY internship participant was able to practice time management while attending school and working afterwards. As a result, she had set her goals high and is hoping to get into Stanford University. She was ranked third in her graduating class, and her goal was to be valedictorian by her senior year. With the help of the SAY internship, she expressed that she was more confident with taking on more responsibilities.

Is there a reduction in recidivism among participating youth?

The Sonoma County Probation Department – Juvenile Division has been a critical partner within the Santa Rosa Violence Prevention Partnership since its inception. From January 2018 to March 2021, Sonoma County Probation Department referred 43 youth (25% of all referrals) to the Partnership for services. The Wraparound Coordinator reached out to families to introduce services and determine the most appropriate referral within the Partnership. A total of 40 youth (93% of all youth referred by Probation) were referred to a Partnership direct service provider, two youth (5%) could not be reached by the Wraparound Coordinator, and one (2%) declined services. Several of the youth referred to direct service providers were referred to more than one CBO, but unfortunately the majority of youth referred by Probation were not served due to a variety of reasons, including families not returning calls/being unresponsive, youth being currently incarcerated, youth being overscheduled with multiple services, or youth/family's lack of interest. A total of 11 youth referred by Probation received direct services funded by CalVIP from LifeWorks or Social Advocates for Youth.

Regardless of referral source, at enrollment, 22 youth (27% of all CalVIP GPS enrollments) were reported to have been incarcerated in juvenile hall, jail, or prison and/or have been arrested or contact with law enforcement. At closure, seven youth (15% of the 48 youth for whom Juvenile Justice System (JJS) involvement at closure was known) had some type of involvement, either Probation, community-based alternatives, or confinement at the time of closure. However, much of the JJS involvement in GPS data collection relies on either youth disclosure or updates during MDART meetings.

In order to have a more methodical analysis of recidivism, Sonoma County Probation Department – Juvenile Division generously partnered with the evaluator to analyze Probation records of GPS youth before, during, and after their participation in the program. To allow enough time after GPS program implementation to gather a large enough cohort of participating youth, recidivism data was collected in Year 3 for a sample of 49 GPS youth who had received services for at least three months and who had a signed Release of Information. The evaluator provided a list of eligible youth to the Probation Department, who returned a de-identified dataset for analysis.

The sample of participating youth was mostly male (67%) and Latinx (84%), which mirrors the overall CalVIP-funded GPS participant profile. Over half of the youth in the sample (57%) participated in GPS for less than six months, and 71 percent received fewer than 20 services each. Thus, the sample of youth in the recidivism analysis could be considered “light touch” participants. However, the youth in the sample reflect the overall sample of GPS youth recorded in Apricot: they represent 69 percent of all GPS youth recorded in Apricot (49 of 71 youth) and they received 84 percent of all GPS services provided (931 of 1,113 service activities) during the three years.

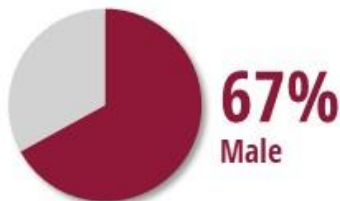
Although this sample is smaller than the number of participants listed in the goal, GPS exceeded its stated goal that 75% of participating youth will not have an additional offense during 3-year program: **84 percent of youth had no new or more severe offenses during or after their participation in GPS and 90 percent had no new offenses (of any severity) after leaving GPS.** It must be noted that over three-quarters of the youth in the sample (73%) had no offenses reported in the Juvenile Justice System either before, during, or after GPS, and only five youth (10% of the sample) had a new offense after their participation in GPS. The five youth with a new offense after participating in GPS were disproportionately female (60%) and Latinx (100%) and received the lowest level of services: all participated for less than six months, and 80 percent received fewer than 20 services each. A visual summary of findings is presented on the next page.

Guiding People Successfully Participant Recidivism Study

September 2021

In September 2021, the Sonoma County Department of Probation provided de-identified information for a sample of **49 GPS youth** who had received services for at least 3 months, and whose GPS cases were closed. Probation staff reported the *level, severity, and number of offenses* for each of the 49 youth before, during, and after their participation in GPS.

Sample Demographics (49 Youth)



84% Hispanic/Latino



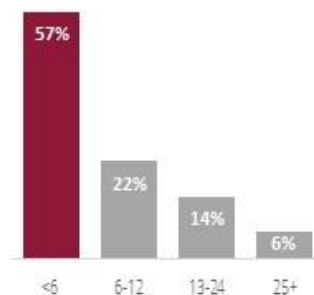
GPS Services Received

931 Services Received

The majority of sample youth (71%) received fewer than 20 services each.

Length of Enrollment in GPS

57%
of sample youth participated in GPS for less than 6 months.



GPS Program Objective

75% of youth participating in GPS will not have an additional offense during the 3-year program.

Probation Findings

73% (36 youth)

No offenses before, during, or after GPS

84% (41 youth)

No new or more severe offense during or after GPS

90% (44 youth)

No new offenses after GPS

10% (5 youth)

New offenses after GPS

60% were female

100% were Hispanic/Latino

100% were enrolled for <6 months

80% received fewer than 20 services

Note: Youth receive a variety of additional services from Probation and other providers that are beyond the scope of this analysis. CBO staff and Probation Officers often worked together to support youth and families, and GPS youth received other strength-based, family-centered interventions directly from Probation, including restorative justice, family counseling, gang intervention, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, and gender-responsive groups. Thus, the variety of services youth receive from different providers, agencies, and departments makes it impossible to tease out the effect just of GPS participation on recidivism.

While these recidivism outcomes are impressive, it is important to understand that GPS youth receive a variety of additional services from the Sonoma County Probation Department and other providers that are beyond the scope of this evaluation. As noted in the anecdote on page 9, CBO staff and Probation Officers often worked together to support youth and families. In addition, as noted on the infographic, GPS youth, including many youth in this analysis, received other strength-based, family-centered interventions directly from the Sonoma County Probation Department, including restorative justice, family counseling, gang intervention, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, and gender-responsive groups. As another example, SAY partnered with the Sonoma County Probation Department – Juvenile Division to establish a program at Probation Camp for youth to get basic welding and woodworking skills; those participants are not included in this analysis.

In short, the variety of services youth receive from different providers, agencies, and departments makes it impossible to tease out the effect just of GPS participation on recidivism. Even with the caveat that any reduction of recidivism is a result of a larger effort across many agencies and departments, including the Sonoma County Probation Department – Juvenile Division, GPS has played an important role in supporting youth, thanks in part to CalVIP funding.

Success Story & Lessons Learned

Unlike other funding that is restricted solely to the City of Santa Rosa, CalVIP provided the flexibility for Guiding People Successfully to serve youth and families throughout Sonoma County, including in smaller cities and towns that historically have had fewer funded community services. In Year 3, Social Advocates for Youth established a **Work Experience and Internships program serving Cloverdale, the northernmost city in Sonoma County** with a population of approximately 8,754 people (2019). Three children of farmworkers whose livelihoods had been devastated by wildfires and COVID were able to learn workplace “soft” skills and receive connections to local job opportunities within their own community. SAY was also able to help support their families with emergency COVID-19 financial assistance.

The internship participant described on page 9 shared, “[t]hank you for not giving up on me! At first, I thought I was never going to get a job because I missed the first opportunity to intern in February. But this program waited until I was on track with school, and I was mentally prepared to work. I'm thankful I got my first job because it was close to my home and now, I can start looking for a new job. Being from Cloverdale we don't receive services like this so thank you to this program for making all of this possible!”

With CalVIP funding, GPS could continue to serve youth and families if they moved around the county. Although the CalVIP grant was funded through the City of Santa Rosa, services were not restricted just within the City limits. However, one of the biggest lessons learned from Guiding People Successfully is that routing referrals through the City made family and youth engagement harder. The original Wraparound Coordinator was fondly known as “Señorita from the City,” but many families were reluctant to answer the phone when the caller ID displayed the City of Santa Rosa. In addition, routing referrals between CBOs through the City added an additional step that was often seen as inefficient, especially when all CBO provider staff knew each other through participation from Partnership, community, or case management-specific meetings. While referrals from and encouragement by Probation Officers helped increase connection to families, the established trust between CBOs and youth/families was often underutilized due to the structure of the program. Both LifeWorks and SAY have strong reputations within Sonoma County, which could have been integrated within the referral process to help increase engagement.

After CalVIP

Despite the end of CalVIP funding, the City of Santa Rosa, the Sonoma County Probation Department – Juvenile Division, LifeWorks of Sonoma County, and Social Advocates for Youth will continue to serve youth and families most needing services in a community continually reeling from multiple years of traumatic wildfires and evacuations, along with resulting challenges of securing affordable housing and basic needs. The additional burden of multiple years of COVID-19-related crises and stressors have no end in sight. While the extension of GPS for a third year provided the opportunity for LifeWorks and SAY to support youth and families to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the community, the need continues, and is likely increasing given the unknown long-term mental, emotional, and formative impact on youth after months of social isolation and distance learning.

The Santa Rosa Violence Prevention Partnership will continue to collaborate and provide services across systems and will continue to seek opportunities to fund direct service programs based on the lessons learned from GPS. Looking forward, the City plans to discontinue use of the Apricot system, so establishing a new shared data collection system will be critical to ensure communication and support case management functions. Maintaining the partnership between the City of Santa Rosa, the Sonoma County Probation Department – Juvenile Division, LifeWorks of Sonoma County, and Social Advocates for Youth will require the continuation of mutual sharing, support, and trust.

For the three years of the extended CalVIP-funded GPS program (October 1, 2018 - August 31, 2021), the City of Santa Rosa, LifeWorks of Sonoma County, and Social Advocates for Youth, along with partners throughout the County, supported **215 unduplicated youth and 142 family members, for a total of 357 Sonoma County residents, to heal themselves and their relationships, be successful in school, prepare to enter the workforce, obtain housing security, and increase youth resiliency, all in the effort to prevent violence and justice system involvement.**