

Proposition 64 Health & Safety  
Local Evaluation Plan

November 9, 2021

**Grantee:** The City of La Mesa

**Prepared by:** SANDAG and The City of La Mesa

Sandy Keaton and Greg Runge;

**Contact:** [Sandy.Keaton@sandag.org](mailto:Sandy.Keaton@sandag.org);

(619) 699-6933

**Project Time Period:**

May 1, 2021 – October 31, 2024

**Funding Source:** BSCC

**SANDAG**

# Proposition 64 Public Health & Safety

---

## Project Background

### Introduction

With the passage of Prop 64, in 2022 the City of La Mesa will have the highest concentration of commercial marijuana facilities in San Diego County, at 2.2 licenses per square mile and the only jurisdiction in East County that has legalized recreational cultivation and distribution of marijuana. La Mesa (LM) will also have the second greatest number of operational marijuana facilities in the County. With this influx, the LM community, City Council, and Police Department are concerned about the susceptibility of youth to marketing and “normalization” messaging these businesses could send as well as increased risk of DUIs as frequent the businesses.

To address these concerns La Mesa Police Department’s (LMPD) Proposition 64 Public Health & Safety Grant Program will be utilized to proactively address youth prevention and intervention, as well as public health and safety through a partnership between the LMPD, Code Enforcement, and the non-profit Mending Matters (MM) (a school based mental health organization). SANDAG will serve as the outside evaluator and conduct both a process and impact evaluation to inform implementation as well as document outcomes and success in achieving the intended goals.

### Program Model

LMPD will be using the Prop 64 funds to support prevention, compliance, and enforcement activities in response to the increased presences of dispensaries in their community. The prevention component will entail funding LMPD Officers who will focus half of their time providing drug education at LM middle schools and contracting with MM to provide group mental health services to high school youth in need of early interventions, or in the case of a high school youth who is arrested or charged with a crime and eligible for diversion. More specifically, the LMPD Officer will provide educational sessions in the classrooms to students, regardless of risk-level, at the age where substance use experimentation is most likely to begin. The program model for MM involves specially trained staff and clinicians using evidence-based and harm reduction strategies as applicable to high-risk youth. Students will be referred by Helix High School administrators (i.e., Principal, Vice Principals) to restorative programs when they breach a behavioral code at school (i.e., in possession, under the influence of, or distributing a controlled substance on campus, interpersonal respect, absenteeism, or academic dishonesty). The services are not limited to those youth eligible for diversion. The intervention will include small peer support groups and classroom presentations on mental health and substance use and misuse. The group presentations MM will provide brief case management in the form of referrals to school partners or outside resources if needs arise in the restorative programs.

MM is an experienced provider currently providing these services in local high schools. The grant funds will allow MM to enhance their services to include education on substance use risks and information to help build resiliency to avoid use. The intent is to open up a portal for critical discussions with youth who can ask questions in a safe, value neutral setting, and receive accurate information about the physical and mental health effects of marijuana and other drug use. The intervention services are expected to start at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year and reach 300 youth and the educational sessions are intended to reach as many youth as possible, with not set number.

The other half of the new LMPD officer position will be devoted to the enforcement component of the program model. The assigned officer will handle all tasks with the enforcement of codes and regulations, and investigations of criminal violations, stemming from marijuana-related businesses which would include underage buying operations. Specific law enforcement activities will include hot spotting policing, street level drug enforcement, and problem-oriented policing.

Further, code compliance activities will be enhanced through the hiring of a 50% Code Enforcement Officer to handle marijuana business inspections and enforcement of codes and regulations. Proposition 64 funds will also be used to upgrade the Police department Communications Center, where video monitoring takes place on the mandated closed-circuit video located at each of the businesses and streamed to LMPD.

A final program model component is the addition of a crime analyst at LMPD who will work on the project to monitor crime data around the cannabis businesses, including comparing La Mesa data with a comparable jurisdiction that has not legalized any legal distribution (i.e., the City of El Cajon), as well as DUI arrests and collision mapping in the City to address emerging trends.

## Program Goals and Objectives

This holistic approach is intended to increase awareness and knowledge of marijuana use and its effects and prevent any increase in crimes related to the new legal dispensaries. The specific goals and objectives for the Proposition 64 project are noted below.

**Project Goal 1:** Prevent the increase of the use of marijuana among high school age youth in the City of La Mesa.

**Objectives 1a:** Provide prevention and intervention services through MM for at least 300 high school aged children in the City of La Mesa per year.

**Objective 1b:** At least 75% of youth receiving MM services will successfully complete program goals within one school year.

**Goal 2:** Prevent the introduction of the use of marijuana among middle school age youth in the City of La Mesa.

**Objectives 2a:** Provide education on the dangers of initiating marijuana use to the La Mesa middle school population.

**Objective 2b:** Provide education to parents of La Mesa's middle school age children on the potential impact of the cannabis related businesses.

**Goal 3:** Ensure that cannabis related businesses are operating in compliance with criminal laws and local municipal codes.

**Objectives 3a:** Provide robust inspection and compliance monitoring for cannabis business license applicants from start through approval.

**Objective 3b:** Provide regular inspection of businesses in operation to ensure compliance.

**Goal 4:** Increase the ability of the LMPD to conduct remote monitoring of cannabis related businesses (as required per the cannabis business license).

**Objectives 4a:** Install a video wall in the La Mesa Police Department’s Communications Center.

**Objective 4b:** Train staff on the operation and monitoring of the video wall.

**Goal 5:** Ensure the presence of cannabis related businesses do not contribute to an overall increase in crime.

**Objectives 5a:** Monitor law enforcement data for crime and disorder trends.

**Objective 5b:** Develop response to identified trends utilizing analyses and best practices.

**Goal 6:** Educate parents and other community members regarding the risks of marijuana use, including juvenile use and driving under the influence.

**Objectives 6a:** Conduct a robust educational campaign aimed at increasing awareness in the community.

**Objective 6b:** Keep the public updated on the progress of the grant efforts.

## Logic Model

<b>Goal 1</b> Prevent the increase of the use of marijuana among high school age youth in the City of La Mesa.
<b>Goal 2</b> Prevent the introduction of the use of marijuana among middle school age youth in the City of La Mesa.
<b>Goal 3</b> Ensure that cannabis related businesses are operating in compliance with criminal laws and local municipal codes.
<b>Goal 4</b> Increase the ability of the LMPD to conduct remote monitoring of cannabis related businesses (as required per their business license).
<b>Goal 5</b> Ensure the presence of cannabis related businesses do not contribute to an overall increase in crime.
<b>Goal 6</b> Keep the public updated on the progress of the grant efforts.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes and Impacts
BSCC Prop 64 grant to support LMPD and MM services. - Enter into a contract with MM to provide prevention and intervention services - Hire 1FTE police	<b>Prevention Services:</b> <b>MM:</b> - Facilitate 3 ongoing peers support groups - Facilitate at least 1 monthly classroom presentation on mental health and substance	- 300 H.S. youth receive MM services - Increase referral coordination through the use of the electronic system - Conduct a minimum	- A minimum of 75% of youth will successfully complete program goals - Decrease in drug related calls for service and drug offenses

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes and Impacts
<p>officer and .5FTE community enforcement officer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Leverage existing analyst to support tracking outcomes of the grant</li> <li>- Enter into a contract with SANDAG to conduct a process and impact evaluation</li> </ul>	<p>use/misuse. Services to youth referred to MM by LMPD or Helix H.S.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide services to diversion youth referred from LMPD</li> <li>- Implement an electronic referral platform for at-risk youth</li> <li>- Conduct outreach for programs through youth friendly marketing and family engagement. Specifically, Youth will support Mending Matters to develop virtual mental health content (flyers) that focus on accessible resources, psychoeducation (w/ substance independence resources).</li> </ul> <p><b>Law Enforcement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct presentations on effects and dangers of marijuana use at local middle schools</li> </ul> <p><b>Intervention:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct at least 1 inspection of each licensed cannabis related businesses in operation per quarter.</li> <li>- Conduct pre-licensing inspections of cannabis related business license applicants, as per schedule set by code enforcement.</li> <li>- Conduct 6 undercover operations per year utilizing minor decoys to ensure cannabis</li> </ul>	<p>of 8 classroom presentations at La Mesa middle schools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Conduct at least 1 parent presentation a quarter to parents of middle school students.</li> </ul>	<p>-No illegal cannabis operations in the City of La Mesa</p>

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes and Impacts
	related businesses are not selling to minors.		

## Evaluation Methodology

### Research Design

SANDAG will conduct both a process and outcome evaluation. A mix-methods, quasi-experimental design will be employed to measure change among youth participants. In addition, changes in crime data will be compared to a jurisdiction with similar demographics but no dispensaries. SANDAG staff will be involved from the beginning of project development to ensure evaluation accurately and measure program goals and objectives, to develop needed data collection tools, and establish research timelines and protocols. SANDAG will be included in all team meetings and will create easy to read data dashboards documenting up-to-date information on client intakes, exits, and services received, which will be shared at meetings with partners to inform program implementation and the need for any midcourse adjustments.

As noted earlier, data results will be shared throughout the grant period with program stakeholders to inform program implementation and management. During the startup phase, it was discovered that MM does not have a fidelity monitoring tool for intervention, as each curriculum consist of one session. Results from post-surveys will be a measure of efficacy of the presentations (knowledge attainment), as well as capturing students' perceptions of the presentations. Fidelity to the overall model will me monitored thought the monthly meetings and sharing of outcomes. When deviations from original strategies occur, these will also be documented, including the reasons why.

### Process Measures

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

1. What were the number and characteristics of youth served through Mending Matters?
2. What were the topics and how many educational presentations were conducted by the LMPD officer and to how many classrooms?
3. What was the type and level of services received?
4. How many, to whom, and what topics of parental education presentations were conducted?
5. How many law enforcement cannabis related business inspections, decoy operations and code compliance checks were conducted?
6. What was the level of satisfaction with services received?
7. Was the program implemented as designed, and what lessons were learned?

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

**Table 1**  
**Process Outcomes and Measurements**

Process outcomes	Variables	Data Source
1. <b>What were the number and characteristics of youth served through Mending Matters?</b>	Demographics, grade, age	MM program tracking logs
2. <b>What were the topics and how many educational presentations were conducted by the LMPD officer and to how many classrooms?</b>	Presentation topics; number of classrooms and student attendance	LMPD Excel tracking form; attendance tracking logs
3. <b>What was the type and level of services received?</b>	Type of individual and group programs, dosage, and completion status	MM program tracking logs
4. <b>How many, to whom, and what topics of parental education presentations were conducted?</b>	Attendance, presentation topics	Attendance tracking log; meeting minutes
5. <b>How many law enforcement cannabis related business inspections, decoy operations and code compliance checks were conducted?</b>	Number, type, and outcome (e.g., arrests, citations) of law enforcement operations and compliance checks? Number of DUI and collisions hot spot areas targeted.	Excel tracking sheets; LMPD crime analyst data
6. <b>What was the level of satisfaction with services received?</b>	Did program meet client needs, staff helpfulness, areas of improvement, usefulness of parental education forums	Client post-survey;
7. <b>Was program implemented as designed, what lessons were learned?</b>	Remote technologies secured; staff trained on new system; satisfaction of project implementation; social media post	Stakeholder surveys; meeting minutes

## Outcome Measures

The outcome measures are both at the individual and population level. Individual level data will be gathered on change in attitudes and knowledge of potential harms and the mental and physical effects of marijuana and other substance use focus on how effective the project was and for whom. Success for the program is based on completion of a post-survey and obtaining a score of 75% or higher on knowledge questions. Population-based data will focus on changes in crimes in comparison to a similar jurisdiction. The outcome evaluation will address the following questions:

1. Did participants demonstrate knowledge of the risks of marijuana and other substance use?

2. After participating in MM services did participants’ attitudes towards marijuana use and resiliency to avoid use improve?
3. What impact did the project have on crime in the surrounding areas of the dispensaries?

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

**Table 2**  
**Impact Outcomes and Measurements**

Outcome measures	Variables	Data Source
1. <b>Did high school participants’ understanding the risk of marijuana use increase?</b>	Change in knowledge in understanding of risk of marijuana post-participation in educational sessions	Post-surveys
2. <b>Did participants’ resilience/risk of substance use improve?</b>	Did you increase their efficacy to reduce and/or avoid substance use?	Post-survey
3. <b>What impact did the project have on crime in the surrounding areas of the dispensaries compared to another similar jurisdiction (i.e., El Cajon)?</b>	Crime and calls for services within a tenth of a mile of marijuana-related business; DUI and collisions hot spotting	LMPD crime data; Automated Regional Justice Information System (ARJIS)

## Data Collection Sources and Process

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

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

**Mending Matters post-survey:** To measure changes in youth’s resiliency to prevent substance use a post survey will be conducted with all youth who complete MM groups. The survey will be self-report and measure resiliency as defined as positive connections with others, self-reflection, and increased awareness of the effects of substance use. The survey will also measure a participants’ knowledge of how marijuana use impacts an individual’s quality of life, the negative effects of vaping (as many youth vape marijuana), and signs of addiction/dependence. Data will be collected using hard copies or electronically using a URL link to the survey when available.

**Law enforcement operations tracking log:** To document all law enforcement operations including the type, location, and response (i.e., citations, arrests, education) data will be tracked using an Excel form created by SANDAG and completed by LMPD.

**Local crime data:** SANDAG will work closely with the LMPD’s crime analyst to monitor crime activity around marijuana business. These same crime data, during the same time periods will be gathered from the comparison jurisdiction using ARJIS. The LMPD will also conduct hot spotting to inform the operations and

law enforcement activities and implement law enforcement interventions if needed. Hot spot policing is an evidence-based policing model that focuses law enforcement resources in locations where crime is highly concentrated. Utilizing the Police Department’s crime data related to DUI arrests and collisions, the crime analyst will inform officers which areas of the city have higher concentrations of activity. Officers will be able to optimize extra patrols and enforcement efforts to best address these trends. In addition, DUI and collisions will also be gathered to inform patrols and will be summarized annually.

**Program tracking logs:** Classroom educational sessions and peer support group participation will be tracked at the group level by MM staff. Data on the date, size, and topics will be tracked. In addition, staff will utilize this same form to document goals and completion status (i.e., completed, incomplete, in progress, or declined). Each youth will be assigned an individual identification number to maintain confidentiality. SANDAG will download data from excel tracking logs on a quarterly basis for analysis.

**Stakeholder survey:** To solicit information about program implementation, what worked, and what could be improved, a survey of key program staff will be administered. The survey will be administered electronically using Survey Monkey or Qualtrics twice over the course of the project to inform mid-course program adjustments and program maturation.

## Data Analysis

A mixed-method quasi-experimental design will be employed to measure both individual and population level data. The project involves both individual and population level data and both qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered and analyzed. Descriptive data on law enforcement operations and activities will be documented and will provide the framework for any changes in criminal activity surrounding the targeted entities at baseline and three-months prior to end of grant operations. Statistical analysis will include use of frequency distributions and Chi-Square statistics for nominal measurement (e.g., demographics), and differences of means tests for ratio level data (i.e., age, correct and incorrect answers, change in number and type of crimes). In addition, informing the BSCC quarterly reports, the research partner will develop a data dashboard presenting current data and meet regularly with program staff to help inform the process and allow for any mid-course adjustments. In addition, a final Local Evaluation Report, including recommendations and lessons learned, will be completed at the end of the grant period.

## Timeline and Reporting

As noted earlier, the evaluation will start from the inception of the project and research staff will work closely with MM and LMPD throughout the grant period. In addition, SANDAG will provide quarterly data dashboards to ensure timely sharing of data to inform the implementation process, SANDAG staff will participate in project meetings to understand the successes, challenges, and gain a greater understanding of the overall project. In addition to this monitoring of project components, MM Development Manager will monitor program data and adjust program components if needed. Further, Clinical Supervisor/Program Manager will meet on a weekly basis with the site therapist to ensure fidelity to program and standard of care is met. The LMPD Investigations Lieutenant will oversee the entire project, response for coordination and ensuring timely reporting. Table 3 provides a timeline of evaluation milestones. It should be noted that because LMPD has the capacity to analyze their own data for hot spotting it is included in the table.

**Table 3**  
**Impact Outcomes and Measurement Reporting**

<b>Activities</b>	<b>Start Date</b>	<b>End date</b>
<b>Program partners begin meeting</b>	May 2021	On-going
<b>Finalize Local Evaluation Plan</b>	September 2021	9/17/2021
<b>Program services begin</b>	September 2021	On-going
<b>Create LMPD tracking log</b>	September 2021	9/1/2021
<b>Create data dashboard</b>	October 2021	10/31/2021
<b>Update data dashboards</b>	December 2021	Quarterly
<b>Quarterly reports</b>	August 2021	8/15/21 & 11/15/21; 2/15/22; 5/15/22; 8/15/22; 11/15/22; 2/15/23; 5/15/23; 8/15/23' 11/15/23; 2/15/24; 5/15/24 and 6/15/24
<b>Download program data from MM</b>	October 2021	Quarterly
<b>Create stakeholder survey</b>	April 2022	4/31/2021
<b>Conduct stakeholder surveys</b>	May 2022	6/30/2022
	February 2021	3/31/2024
<b>Report out on stakeholder survey</b>	August 2022	8/15/2022 5/15/2024
<b>Collect LMPD crime data, calls for service</b>	May 2021 (baseline)	7/30/2024
<b>Create hot spot maps</b>	October 2021	Quarterly
<b>Collect crime data from El Cajon</b>	May 2022	Annually
<b>Complete evaluation report</b>	July 2024	10/31/2024

## Summary

The City of La Mesa Proposition 64 Public Health & Safety Grant Program will be utilized to minimize the impact of the presence of cannabis related businesses on La Mesa’s youth and overall crime rates. With five dispensaries already operating, and 15 more cannabis related businesses expected to open by 2022, the City of La Mesa has dedicated resources to youth outreach, intervention, education, and to ensure that the businesses comply with operating regulations and codes of compliance. SANDAG will partner with the LMPD and MM to document and track implementations and outcomes following both prevention and law enforcement interventions.