



Memorandum

TO: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND
AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

FROM: Jon Cicirelli

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: April 24, 2023

Approved

Date

5/4/23

**SUBJECT: SAN JOSE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ALLIANCE (FORMERLY
MAYOR'S GANG PREVENTION TASK FORCE) - BRINGING
EVERYONE'S STRENGTHS TOGETHER, SAFE SUMMER INITIATIVE
GRANT, AND YOUTH INTERVENTION SERVICES PROGRAMS
ANNUAL REPORT**

RECOMMENDATION

Accept this annual report on the San José Youth Empowerment Alliance (formerly the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force) - Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST), Safe Summer Initiative Grant, and Youth Intervention Services programs for 2021-2022.

BACKGROUND

On January 31, 2023, the Council adopted the new *San José Youth Empowerment Alliance 2023-2026 Strategic Plan* and the new name replacing the former Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force. The Youth Empowerment Alliance (Alliance) is the collective impact model that advances the City of San Jose's youth violence reduction strategy.

The Community Services Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services is the home of the Youth Intervention Services team that delivers seven direct service programs to young people, ages 6 to 24, exhibiting higher-risk characteristics citywide. In addition, the City administers two grant programs that award funding to community-based organizations, including the Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST) and the Safe Summer Initiative Grant (SSIG) programs. These programs focus on keeping young people engaged in pro-social activities, delivering services to San José youth that help build on their strengths and reduce their risk for involvement in gangs and youth violence. All programs are outlined below in Figure 1.

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Figure 1: San José Youth Empowerment Alliance Programs

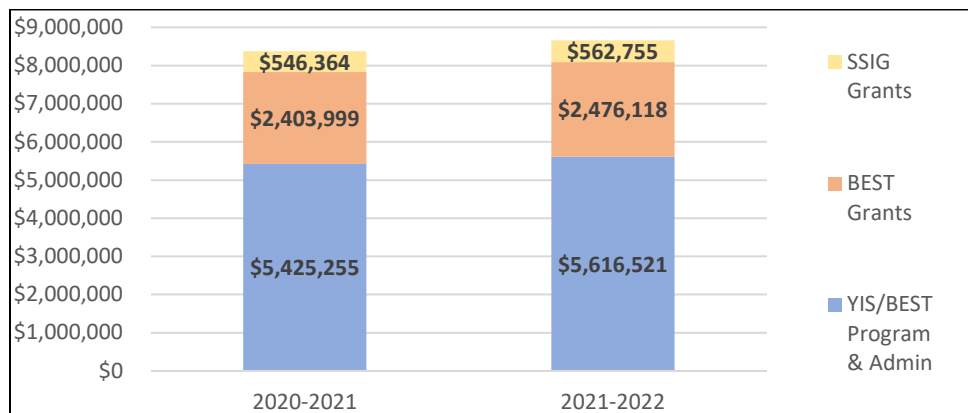


ANALYSIS

Funding Distribution

As outlined in Figure 2 below, the 2021-2022 funding allocation for the Alliance comprised a total of \$8,663,762, with YIS/BEST Programs & Administration budgeted for \$5,616,521, BEST Grants budgeted for \$2,476,118, and \$562,755¹ for SSIG Grants. This section outlines the outcomes achieved, services implemented, and new projects initiated as a result of this collaborative funding model. The San Jose Youth Empowerment Alliance budget includes appropriations for BEST and PRNS General Fund.

Figure 2: San Jose Youth Empowerment Alliance Funding Distribution by Year



¹ An additional \$37,920 was rebudgeted from 2020-2021 and was provided to agencies for the SSIG 2021-2022 program.

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San José Youth Empowerment Alliance Service Implementation Results

Measuring program implementation is a function of how well the evaluated programs and services align with the theories of change and scopes of service identified for each program in the context of the Alliance’s broader strategic plan, including services to populations exhibiting various risk characteristics and the locations that are identified as most in-need.

Broadly speaking, 2021-2022 conformed to the implementation standards defined by the strategic workplan with a return to normal operations for many Youth Empowerment Alliance programs with in-person, school-based programming resuming following the drastic programming disruptions that began in March 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most significantly for Youth Intervention Services, the return of campus-based schooling in middle and high schools meant a resumption to in-person services offered by our two school-based programs:

- 1) Safe School Campus Initiative, which responds to incidents or threats of school violence at campuses and provides individual case management intervention services to eligible youth, and
- 2) Female Intervention Team, which provides cognitive groups to eligible young women at middle and high schools.

Across all City-funded San Jose Youth Empowerment Alliance programs (staff-led and grant-funded), 4,973 participants were served in 2020-21 and increased to 8,782 participants in 2021-2022.

Table 1: San Jose Youth Empowerment Alliance Participant Characteristics by Year

	2020-2021				2021-2022			
	BEST	SSIG	YIS	TOTAL	BEST	SSIG	YIS	TOTAL
Participants	2,448	1,955	570	4,973	3,036	2,872	1,701	7,609
Female	62%		25%		51%		22%	
Male	37%		75%		48%		78%	
Non-Binary	0.4%		-		0.8%		-	
Target Population Distribution by Risk Category								
At-Risk	30%	52%	-		40%	59%	-	
High-Risk	45%	22%	-		40%	20%	-	
Gang-Impacted	20%	14%	100%		13%	11%	100%	
Gang-Intentional	4%	12%			7%	10%		

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The BEST Grant Program funded 15 agencies in 2021-2022 to provide services in one or more eligible service areas (Appendix A). To gauge productivity and the level of service provided by BEST grantees, Units of Services (UOS) are measured by multiplying the number of participants served by the number of sessions provided by the hours spent delivering the proposed services. As displayed in Table 2 below, BEST grantees cumulatively provided more than 100% of the projected number of UOS in 2021-2022 (121,813 of the 99,479 projected), surpassing projections in 4 of the 5 BEST Eligible Service Areas, including Personal Transformation, Street Outreach Intervention, Parent Awareness/Training, and Case Management. The substantial increase in actual UOS compared to projections for this year reflects the return to in person services and the shift from one-on-one services back to group sessions. It is important to note that BEST grantees who provide Street Outreach services do not track specific individuals or use UOS. Instead, the number of individual contacts is measured in place of UOS. In doing so, they reported an estimated 2,640 contacts² with youth similar to the 2,646 contacts made in 2020-2021 in the 25 Emerging & Hot Spot Areas³.

Table 2: BEST Units of Service (UOS) by Eligible Service Area and Year

Eligible Service Area	2020-2021		2021-2022	
	Projected UOS	Actual UOS	Projected UOS	Actual UOS
Personal Transformation	39,519	37,865	47,553	56,509
Street Outreach / Intervention*	16,311	22,595	15,453	24,164
Vocational/Job Training	2,374	2,407	1,972	1,558
Parent Awareness / Training	4,318	3,590	4,408	4,775
Case Management	32,825	36,156	30,093	34,747
Emergency Services	9,177	10,200	-	-
Total Units of Service (UOS)	104,524	112,813	99,479	121,753

*Street Outreach / Intervention uses contacts in place of UOS for measuring services provided.

² To calculate the total number of contacts, SPR staff added the number of estimated contacts that grantees reported for each street outreach location to arrive at the total estimated number of contacts in the program year. These numbers include duplicate youth within and across hot spot areas.

³ The 18 Hot Spot Areas and 7 Emerging Hot Spots can be found on the following [Map](#).

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Key Outcome Study & Other Results

BEST Grant Program

Social Policy Research (SPR) evaluated performance in three key areas of participant outcomes⁴ including: 1) changes in psychosocial outcomes; 2) participant satisfaction; and 3) participant perceptions of safety in the program.

Psychosocial Outcomes: The average scores of established youth participants were higher than those of baseline participants⁵. These results, displayed in Table B1 of Appendix B, suggest that participants who have been in the program for at least one month tend to have better psychosocial outcomes (e.g., feeling confident to handle what comes their way, can express opinions when in a group, handle problems and challenges when they arise) than those who are new to the program.

Participant Satisfaction: The results from the youth survey, displayed in Table B2 of Appendix B, below, suggest that overall satisfaction with the program decreased in all areas, likely due to the pandemic impeding BEST grantee staff’s ability to build prior levels of trust with youth following 18 months of online engagement and limited one-on-one in-person interaction. Challenges such as staff turnover in grantee programs, learning loss and mental health issues for youth were additional contributors to this decrease in 2021-2022.

Participant Perception of Safety: Although participants’ perception of safety in BEST-funded programs decreased in 2021-2022, it is above the targeted 80% for the BEST Grant Program (see Table B3 of Appendix B). In 2020-2021, the Emergency Services service area permitted grantees to respond to specific COVID-19 needs, allowing grantees to adapt their service delivery models to address broader psycho-social and economic security issues through remote and hybrid services and other supportive means and resources. However, in returning to the original scope of the program, 2021-2022 saw a 5% decrease in participants who reported feeling safe in the program. At least four grantees expressed that participating families’ loss of available childcare, mental health supports, and access to transportation, resulted in greater barriers for youth participating in BEST programing. With grantees no longer facilitating this access due to the elimination of the Emergency Services funding, participants’ sense of safety decreased.

Participant Perception of Listening Adult: In 2021-2022, participants expressed a 7% decrease from the previous year in their perception of a listening adult, as noted in B3 of Appendix B. While the 90% is above the targeted 80%, grantees attribute this to staffing challenges. With difficulty

⁴ For more details on the outcome study, refer to page 45 of the SPR 2021-2022 Annual Report <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showdocument?id=97165&t=638186413528149396>.

⁵ “Established” survey respondents are those that have said they had been in the program for a month or longer; and “Baseline” survey respondents are those who said they had been in the program for less than a month.

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hiring, high turnover, and participants not remembering the staff, it added to the challenge engaging with youth.

Safe Summer Initiative Grant Program (SSIG)

As a bridge program between school years, the SSIG Program provides Youth Empowerment Alliance intended populations with the opportunity to engage in safe, fun, and pro-social activities and the continuation of positive adult engagement throughout the summer. The effectiveness of these efforts are measured at the end of the program by the four survey questions listed in Table 7 below.

In the summer of 2022, SSIG grantees collectively met three of the four key program performance targets, including participants’ feelings of safety, satisfaction with SSIG programming, and feeling connected to supportive resources. However, as experienced in the BEST Grant Program, SSIG grantees’ staff noted in their mid-year and final reports that they experienced difficulty in building relationships with youth. With that, Table 3 shows a year-over-year reduction in positive responses for 3 of the 4 performance measurement categories. Grantees attribute the 6% drop in youth reporting that they connected with a caring adult is related to the fact that many youth did not have or recall the continuity of the prior year’s experiences and/or relationships. Grantees reported that some returning students did not remember staff, which required the agencies to spend greater amounts of time reintroducing themselves. In addition, grantees pointed out that having to address scheduling issues due to spikes in COVID-19 cases and their need to pivot to remote services at times, was an impediment to establishing more solid, trusting relationships during the 2022 summer programming period.

Table 3: 2022 SSIG Participant Survey Results

	2021	2022	Target	Change compared to 2021
Felt SSIG was a safe program	93%	89%	80%	▼ 4%
Felt satisfied with program	92%	89%	80%	▼ 3%
Connected to a caring adult through SSIG	87%	73%	80%	▼ 6%
Learned about the other resources through SSIG	89%	89%	80%	0%

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Looking Forward

Strategic Work Plan 2023-2026

The San José Youth Empowerment Alliance Strategic Plan, 2023-2026 was approved by Council in January 2023. The theme of the plan, “A New Path” reflects the joining of youth violence prevention and intervention programs to the City’s commitment to advancing racial equity by developing and upholding policies and practices that ensure all young people have fair and just opportunities to reach their full potential. In this spirit, the new strategic plan was accompanied by a new name for this initiative, the Youth Empowerment Alliance, which removes the previous task force’s punitive labeling of gangs and embarks on a new journey.

BEST Request for Qualifications (RFQ), Program Enhancements, Challenges & Limitations

The BEST RFQ for 2023-2026 closed March 23, 2023 with award notices anticipated to be announced June 2023. The Alliance’s new 2023-2026 Strategic Plan was incorporated into the RFQ with changes made to the scopes of eligible service areas (now renamed to Service Strategy Areas) to incorporate strategies that are reflective of the community’s broader health and safety priorities. This broadened focus was included, allowing for past approaches that emphasized implementing methodologies that narrowly focus on mitigating gang exposure and involvement and new approaches that emphasized whole family and culturally responsible/relevant practices. These approaches will be implemented in the upcoming triennial period.

In addition, the Department formed a Partner Engagement Group comprised of currently funded BEST Grantees to gather input and feedback on the BEST Grant Program’s participant intake and risk assessment process; our performance measurement framework; and the request for qualifications assessment process. The feedback from this group will be used to improve performance measurement tools and strengthen oversight and accountability systems. BEST will hold two engagement sessions in 2023-2024 to target improvement oversight and accountability systems in terms of monitoring, which will be addressed by Resource Development Association (RDA), our evaluator for future annual evaluation reports.

The Department continues to explore ways to acquire individual-level data as a means of measuring the positive impacts that the BEST Grant Program has on our community’s educational performance, criminal justice involvement, etc. Yet, there continue to be challenges in obtaining and using this kind of data, given reluctance by participants, parents, and grantees to provide personal data, which many stakeholders feel may be used against them in the criminal justice system or in the context of immigration enforcement. To address this concern, the Department will continue working with the Partner Engagement Group to explore how best to secure informed consent in ways that participants and partners perceive to be trustworthy and safe. The Partner Engagement Group’s feedback will inform the Department’s process for collecting and sharing outcome data to assess individual level outcomes during the 2023-2026 BEST triennial period. With that, the Department will be pursuing a new evaluation design with Resource Development

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Group to explore other approaches that will incorporate the ideas obtained from the Partner Engagement Group.

The Alliance is in the process of creating a Request for Proposal (RFP) to acquire a unified data management system which will replace or enhance the software in use by YIS and also be available to all BEST grant partners. The goal is to be able to better service the youth with a collaborative platform that will capture all intake forms, assessments, case notes, outputs, and any other program activities across the Alliance's 24+ separate programs and agencies in one cloud-based database. A system is anticipated to be selected and implemented as soon as FY 2024-2025.

YIS Evaluation

This coming year, the evaluation system for the seven Youth Intervention Services programs continues with the development of specific instruments to measure program outcomes. From that, the seven programs will use standardized instruments to collect and report meaningful data to conduct an initial evaluation for each program. This next phase is expected to cost about \$220,000 and will be completed once a new list of qualified evaluation consultants is established in 2023-2024. BEST funds are included in the 2022-2023 budget; however, the funds will be considered to be carried over to 2023-2024 to complete the evaluation.

COORDINATION

This memo was coordinated with the City Manager's Budget Office and City Attorney Office.

/s/
JON CICIRELLI
Director, Parks, Recreation, and
Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact andrea.floresshelton@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 535-3571 and david.delong@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 535-3570.

APPENDIX A: BEST Eligible Service Areas by Grantee

Grantee	Personal Transformation	Street Outreach	Vocational /Job Training	Parent Awareness /Training	Case Management	Total # of Service Areas
Alum Rock Counseling Center	✓				✓	2
Bay Area Tutoring Association	✓					1
Bill Wilson Center	✓		✓		✓	3
Caminar	✓			✓	✓	3
Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County	✓	✓			✓	3
ConXión to Community	✓		✓		✓	3
Fresh Lifelines for Youth	✓				✓	2
Girl Scouts of Northern California	✓					1
New Hope for Youth	✓	✓			✓	3
San José Jazz	✓					1
Teen Success, Inc.	✓				✓	2
The Art of Yoga Project	✓					1
The Tenacious Group	✓					1
Ujima Adult and Family Services, Inc.	✓				✓	2
Uplift Family Services	✓					1
Total Number of Grantees	15	2	2	1	9	

APPENDIX B: 2021-2022 BEST Survey Results:
Youth Participants, Ages 14-24⁶

Table B1: 2021-2022 Psychosocial Outcomes⁷

	Baseline Participant	Established Participant
I feel connected to my school or job	3.6	3.7
I feel confident that I can handle whatever comes my way	3.8	4.1**
I think things through carefully before making decisions	3.7	3.9
I can express my opinions when I am in a group	3.9	4
I can listen to others	4.3	4.3
I stay out of situations that make me feel uncomfortable	4	4
I feel comfortable solving conflicts	3.7	3.9*
I can handle problems and challenges when they arise	3.8	4

*Statistically significant at 90%; **Statistically significant at 95%; ***Statistically Significant at 99%

Table B2: Satisfaction with the BEST Program

	2020-2021		2021-2022		Target	Change in Always/Often Response compared to 2020-2021
	Sometimes /Never /Rarely	Always /Often	Sometimes /Never /Rarely	Always /Often		
I am interested in what we do at this program	11%	89%	19%	81%	80%	▼ 8%
I have learned a lot of new things	14%	86%	22%	78%	80%	▼ 8%
This program helps me to get along with other people my age	20%	80%	16%	74%	80%	▼ 6%
There is an adult at this program who cares about me	4%	96%	13%	87%	80%	▼ 9%
The people who work at this program understand my family's culture	8%	92%	14%	86%	80%	▼ 6%
Program staff can communicate with me in the language of my choice	7%	93%	13%	87%	80%	▼ 6%
The program helps me to think about the future	8%	92%	18%	82%	80%	▼ 10%
Youth at this program respect each other	8%	92%	15%	85%	80%	▼ 7%

⁶ The data reflects results from the Youth Survey which was administered to youth ages 14-24. The Child Survey, administered to participants ages 7-13, did not incorporate these questions.

⁷ Note: Results are weighted to adjust for variations between the demographic characteristics of survey respondents versus the demographic makeup of BEST participants overall.

Table B3: Perception of Safety with BEST Program

	2020-2021		2021-2022		Target	Change in Always/Often Response compared to 2020-2021
	Sometimes/ Never/ Rarely	Always/ Often	Sometimes/ Never/ Rarely	Always / Often		
I feel safe in this program	4%	96%	9%	91%	80%	▼ 5%
In this program, adults listen to what I have to say	3%	97%	10%	90%	80%	▼ 7%