



# Memorandum

**TO:** NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES AND  
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

**FROM:** Jon Cicirelli

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** February 26, 2024

Approved

Date

3/7/24

**COUNCIL DISTRICT:** Citywide

**SUBJECT: SAN JOSE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT ALLIANCE - 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 - Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST), Safe Summer Initiative Grant, and Youth Intervention Services programs for 2022-2023.

## **SUMMARY AND OUTCOME**

The youth population in San José who are ages 0-17 account for 22% of the city's one million residents, and an additional 9% of the population are between 18-24 years of age<sup>1</sup>. The San José Youth Empowerment Alliance (YEA), the City's violence reduction strategy, invests in both community-based programming and City-based intervention services for youth ages 6-24. In 2022-23, the Youth Intervention Services Unit and grant-funded providers through the Bringing Everyone's Strength Together (BEST) and Safe Summer Initiative Grants (SSIG) together served 8,385 young people in 2022-23.

### *Key 2022-23 Program Outcomes:*

- 30 percent increase in better social-emotional outcomes and skill development for youth served through the BEST Grant Program.
- 94 percent of participants reported being connected to a caring adult through SSIG. Up by 21 percent from prior year.

<sup>1</sup> United States Census Bureau – Quick facts. Retrieved 3/24/22 from [United States Census Quick Facts](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/)

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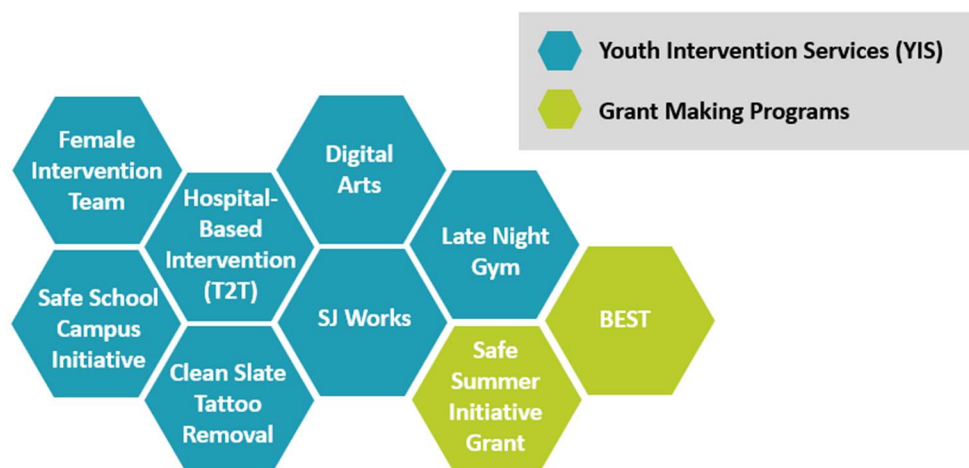
- 93 percent of the 60 schools responding rated Safe School Campus Initiative efforts as excellent or good.
- 92 percent of the 62 responding schools said the Safe School Campus Initiative exceeded or met their needs.

Youth violence prevention cannot be done by one entity alone. The strong culture of relationship building and interagency collaboration through the Technical Team and Policy Team of the Youth Empowerment Alliance has helped to break down silos and leverage existing resources in support of shared goals.

## **BACKGROUND**

The Youth Empowerment Alliance is the collective impact model that advances the City of San José’s youth violence reduction and gang intervention strategy with stakeholders across several sectors. The City’s direct efforts consists of two programs. First, the Youth Intervention Services team, within the Community Services Division of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (Department), offers seven direct service programs to young people ages 6 to 24, who exhibit higher-risk characteristics for youth violence. The Department also administers two City-funded grant programs that support community-based organizations, the Bringing Everyone’s Strengths Together (BEST) and the Safe Summer Initiative Grant (SSIG) programs. The grant programs are designed to keep young people engaged in pro-social activities and help them build on their strengths and reduce risk for involvement in youth violence. The seven City-provided programs and the two grant programs have significant coordination with each other, as illustrated by Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: San José Youth Empowerment Alliance Programs**



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## ANALYSIS

This section outlines the funding allocation, services implemented, outcomes achieved, and new projects initiated because of this collaborative model. 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. This is done in the context of the Youth Empowerment Alliance broader strategic plan, including services to populations exhibiting various risk characteristics and the locations that are identified as most in-need.

### **Funding Distribution**

As outlined in Figure 2 below, the 2022-2023 funding allocation for the Alliance comprised a total of \$8,826,547, with YIS/BEST/SSIG Programs and Administration budgeted for \$5,696,507, BEST Grants budgeted for \$2,550,402, and \$579,638 for SSIG Grants. The San Jose Youth Empowerment Alliance budget includes General Fund appropriations, including the BEST appropriation and the PRNS Personal and Non-Personal appropriations.

**Figure 2: City Funding Allocation for Youth Empowerment Alliance**



### **Effort of Implementation & Program Outcomes**

In 2022-23, the Youth Empowerment Alliance provided services through the City staff led Youth Intervention Services (YIS) Unit, as well as through grant funded providers under the Bringing Everyone’s Strength Together (BEST) and Safe Summer Initiative Grant (SSIG) grant programs. Altogether, YIS, BEST, and SSIG served 8,385 young people in 2022-2023 for a combined 227,508 hours of services. This includes 65,641 hours provided by Youth Intervention Services and 161,867 hours provided by BEST grantees which is a 33 percent increase in BEST hours above 2021-2022. The BEST grantees delivered youth development groups at 28 San José

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schools, parenting supportive services at eight supportive housing complexes, and case management services to vulnerable youth and families. Priority Neighborhoods received 40,780 hours of service delivery. These areas currently face the most persistent challenges, including interpersonal conflict, gang-related activity and crimes, and systemic issues of marginalization. Because of these factors, Priority Neighborhoods are intentionally prioritized to receive services, resources, and support through the BEST grant program.

**Table 1: Youth Empowerment Alliance  
Participant Characteristics by Year**

	2021-2022				2022-2023			
	BEST	SSIG	YIS	TOTAL	BEST	SSIG	YIS	TOTAL
Participants	3,036	2,872	1,701	<b>7,609</b>	3,366	2,144	2,875	<b>8,385</b>
Female	51.5%		22%		50.5%		36%	
Male	47.9%		78%		48.9%		64%	
Non-Binary	0.80%		-		0.60%		-	
<b>Target Population Distribution by Risk Category</b>								
At Risk	40%	59%	-		30%	64%	-	
High Risk	40%	20%	-		50%	17%	-	
Gang Impacted	13%	11%	100%		11%	11%	100%	
Gang Intentional	7%	10%	-		9%	8%	-	

*Bringing Everyone’s Strengths Together (B.E.S.T.)*

The BEST Grant Program funded 14 agencies to provide services from 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 2022-2023 (161,867 of the 105,473 projected), surpassing projections in all five BEST Eligible Service Areas. The substantial increase in UOS compared to previous years reflects the continued return to in person and group services, and the demand for these services from schools and partners.

It is important to note that BEST grantees who provide Street Outreach intervention services do not collect demographic information for participants and therefore are not reflected in Table 1 above. Instead, the number of individuals is measured by the number of “cold street contacts” made while conducting outreach in Priority Neighborhoods (formerly known as Gang Hot Spot

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Areas)<sup>2</sup>. They reported an estimated 6,054 contacts<sup>3</sup> with youth, a substantial 250% increase from the 2,640 contacts made in 2021-2022 in the 25 Emerging and Priority Neighborhoods.

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

	2021-2022		2022-2023		
Eligible Service Area	Projected UOS	Actual UOS	Projected UOS	Actual UOS	Change compared to 21-22
<b>Personal Transformation</b>	47,553	56,509	51,029	67,079	▲ 19%
<b>Street Outreach/ Intervention</b>	15,453	24,164	16,922	40,780	▲ 69%
<b>Vocational/Job Training</b>	1,972	1,558	1,852	2,678	▲ 72%
<b>Family Support</b>	4,408	4,775	4,408	6,351	▲ 33%
<b>Case Management</b>	30,093	34,747	31,262	44,979	▲ 29%
<b>Total</b>	<b>99,479</b>	<b>121,753</b>	<b>105,473</b>	<b>161,867</b>	<b>▲ 33%</b>

RDA Consulting, an independent evaluation firm, evaluated the BEST Grant Program performance<sup>4</sup> in three key areas including: 1) participant satisfaction; 2) participant outcomes; and 3) participant photovoice.

Participant Satisfaction: The results from the youth survey, displayed in Appendix B, Table B2 suggest an overall high level of satisfaction with BEST-funded programs. Eighty six percent of participants reported always or often wanting to keep coming to the program and over 90 percent of youth developed relationships with a caring adult in the program.

Participant Outcomes: Participants consistently displayed improved youth outcomes after participating in BEST-funded programs. These results, displayed in Appendix B, Table B1 suggest that participants tend to feel more confident to handle what comes their way, report increased engagement in school and/or their job, and obtain greater confidence in their decision-making ability after participating in their program.

Participant Photovoice: Participants were invited to take photographs in response to a series of prompts using a personal camera known as Photovoice. The goal of the photovoice project was to allow participants to illustrate, highlight, and capture their experience and program impact through their own unique lens and voice. Youth reported feeling they “have some kind of support that wouldn’t leave me behind”, “an opportunity to get the resources I needed to be healthy and

<sup>2</sup> The 18 Priority Neighborhoods (formerly known as Gang Hot Spots) and 7 Emerging Priority Neighborhoods can be found on the following [Map](#).

<sup>3</sup> To calculate the total number of contacts, RDA Consulting 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 priority neighborhood areas.

<sup>4</sup> Please refer to [BEST 2022-2023 Evaluation Report](#) to access full report.

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build a foundation for myself”, and “hav[ing] the power to make so much change, starting with ourselves and looking internally.” One respondent said that BEST staff gave “me a safe space and someone to talk to” and “show[ed] a different view of the world and that there is more to it than just the streets.”

*Safe Summer Initiative Grant Program (SSIG)*

In the summer of 2023, SSIG Grantees met and exceeded the four key performance targets around feeling safe and satisfied with programming, as well as feeling connected to resources and caring adults. Youth reported a significant increase of 21 percent over the prior summer in feeling connected to a caring adult. This is attributable to several factors including an increase in engagement between grantee staff and youth and the quality of programs offered in 2022-23.

**Table 3: SSIG 2023 Survey Results by Year**

	2022	2023	Change compared to 2022
<b>Felt SSIG was a safe program</b>	89%	95%	▲ 6%
<b>Felt satisfied with program</b>	89%	90%	▲ 1%
<b>Connected to a caring adult through SSIG</b>	73%	94%	▲ 21%
<b>Learned about the other resources through SSIG</b>	89%	92%	▲ 3%

*Youth Intervention Services*

In 2022-2023, Youth Intervention Services continued a full return to in-person operations. In Table 4, the seven programs collectively provided 65,641 units of services to youth and young adults with units of service corresponding to hours of service provided.

**Table 4: Youth Intervention Services Units of Services (UOS) by Program 2022-2023**

<b>Program</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Units of Service</b>
Safe School Campus Initiative	Responds to incidents/threats at 82 campuses; provides case management.	21,056
Female Intervention Team	Provides culturally based classes for young women; case management.	5,297
Clean Slate Tattoo Removal	Provides removal of visible gang tattoos and support for self-sufficiency	2,311
San Jose Works	Provides summer jobs in City departments, non-profits.	17,640
Digital Arts	Provides training in audio/visual production.	2,760

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Trauma to Triumph	Case management for victims of youth violence identified at hospital trauma centers.	6,038
Late Night Gym	Recreation program once a week at three sites.	10,539
	<b>Total</b>	<b>65,641</b>

*Safe School Campus Initiative*

Safe School Campus Initiative (SSCI) responds to incidents of youth violence, or threats of youth violence, on 82 designated high school and middle school campuses. Performance is measured by annual surveys completed by school leadership teams regarding the program’s efforts. Over 90 percent of school leaders value the response and coordination by the Youth Intervention team at keeping their school campuses safe. The success of the program is attributed to the coordination of Department staff, San Jose Police Department School Liaison Officers, and school leadership teams (principals, teachers, school-employed mental health professionals) who activate a crisis response protocol aimed at preventing and de-escalating violent incidents on school campuses.

**Table 5: SSCI Survey Results**

<b>Question</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
Efforts at keeping schools safe as good or excellent.	93.3%	93.3%
Met or exceeded their needs	92.0%	91.9%

**Youth Empowerment Alliance Strategic Plan**

On January 31, 2023, the City Council adopted the *Alliance’s 2023-2026 Strategic Plan*<sup>5</sup>, which established the objectives and priorities of the Alliance over the three-year period. The use of a new accountability system of developing annual Objectives and Key Results (or OKRs) was instituted. The plan identified four strategic objectives to address youth violence:

1. Prevention - Increase knowledge and protective factors among young people
2. Intervention - Decrease youth risk factors in priority neighborhoods and schools
3. Diversion/Reentry - Divert from incarceration and reduce recidivism among youth ages 12-24
4. Healing - Advance trauma-informed, healing approaches

For Year 1 of the strategic plan, the Policy Team adopted an aggressive plan to complete 12 OKRs by December 31, 2023. By the end of the calendar year, four OKRs were completed, six were in process, and two were unable to get started. At the February 22, 2024 Policy Team

<sup>5</sup> Full Alliance Strategic Plan can be found here [San Jose Youth Empowerment Strategic Plan 2023-2025](#)

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meeting, the OKRs for Year 2 (2024) were reviewed and nine OKRs are the focus during the year and outlined in Appendix C. Indicative of the collective power of the Youth Empowerment Alliance, drivers of the key results include County department partners from Public Health, District Attorney, and Probation as well as the City Manager's Office and PRNS staff for the Youth Empowerment Alliance.

The YEA Data Workgroup (Workgroup) led by PRNS-Youth Empowerment Alliance staff was formed to track key community-wide impacts related to youth violence and how the City's youth are doing overall in achieving educational and safety benchmarks. It includes representatives from the County of Santa Clara Public Health Department, Probation Department, San Jose Police Department, Santa Clara County Office of Children and Family Policy, Kids in Common, and Office of the City Manager.

The indicators outlined below will be used to inform the Council, YEA Policy Team and key stakeholders on an annual basis. Data is already being collected from partners, with 2022-2023 identified as the baseline year. Disaggregating the data by race/ethnicity is a goal of the Workgroup, as this will allow us to assess our ability to serve our diverse communities.

Community-Wide Indicators

- Decreased youth (10-24) violence incidents, injury, and homicide.
- Decreased youth (10-24) arrests and recidivism.
- Improved perceptions of neighborhood safety.
- Decreased chronic absenteeism.
- Increased on time high school graduation.

**Looking Forward**

In 2024, staff plans to roll out a modernized data management system that will allow the grantees and staff to collect, validate, organize, and access data through an online secure platform. This new solution will help to enhance effective service implementation, track outcomes, and inform decision-making. Also, staff continues its ongoing partnership with Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits to improve contract processing and share best practices through the Community of Learning.

In addition to BEST, and per the 2019 Audit, Youth Intervention will expand outcome evaluation from Safe School Campus Initiative to the other six programs through an annual evaluation process starting in 2024-25. A Request for Proposals will be issued early in March 2024, with a new list of consultants expected to be available in May.



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## **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 Flores Shelton, Deputy Director, at  
Andrea.FloresShelton@sanjoseca.gov or (408) 834-0603.

Appendix A: BEST Service Strategy Areas by Grantee

Appendix B: 2022-2023 BEST Survey Results: Youth Participants, Ages 11-24

Appendix C: Youth Empowerment Alliance - Objectives and Key Results, Year 1-2 Update

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**APPENDIX A:**  
**BEST Service Strategy Areas by Grantee**

<b>Grantee by Service Area</b>	<b>Personal Transfor- mation</b>	<b>Street Outreach</b>	<b>Vocational/ Job Training</b>	<b>Family Support</b>	<b>Case Manage- ment</b>	<b>Total</b>
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	✓		✓			2
Fresh Lifelines for Youth	✓				✓	2
New Hope for Youth	✓	✓			✓	3
Pacific Clinics	✓					1
San José Jazz	✓					1
Shine Together	✓				✓	2
The Art of Yoga Project	✓					1
The Tenacious Group	✓					1
Ujima Adult and Family Services, Inc.	✓				✓	2
<b>Total Number of Grantees</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>27</b>

**APPENDIX B:**  
**BEST Survey Results 2022-2023**

**Table B1: BEST Program Outcomes - Youth Participants, Ages 11-24\***

<b>Participant Outcome Results</b>	<b>New Participant</b>	<b>Established Participant</b>
I feel connected to my school and/or job	2.3	3.0
There is an adult I can go to who cares about me	2.8	3.5
I think things through carefully before making decisions	2.6	3.2
I can handle problems or challenges when they come my way	2.7	3.3
I stay away from friends who pressure me to make bad decisions	2.7	3.4
There is someone I can talk to about my feelings	2.5	3.3
I know about other resources or opportunities that could be helpful to me	2.4	3.3
I have goals and plans for the future	2.8	3.5

\*Survey scale of 1-4.

**Table B2: BEST Program Participant Satisfaction - Youth Participants, Ages 11-24**

<b>Participant Satisfaction Results</b>	<b>Sometimes/ Never/Rarely</b>	<b>Often/ Always</b>	<b>Target</b>
I want to keep coming to this program	14%	86%	80%
I have learned a lot of new things here	17%	83%	
This program helps me get along with other people my age	24%	76%	
I have felt respected by program staff	8%	92%	
There is an adult at this program who cares about me	10%	90%	
In this program, adults listen to what I have to say	10%	90%	
The people who work at this program understand my identity, such as my cultural, racial, ethnic, or gender identity	9%	91%	
Program staff can communicate with me in the language of my choice	10%	90%	
I feel safe in this program	9%	91%	
I've learned new skills that are helpful to me	15%	85%	

\*Note that this table reflects results from the Youth Survey which was administered to youth ages 11-24. The Child Survey, administered to participants ages 7-10, did not incorporate the above set of questions.

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### APPENDIX C:

## Youth Empowerment Alliance - Objectives and Key Results, Year 1-2 Update

#### APPENDIX C

#### San Jose Youth Empowerment Alliance Policy Team Objectives Key Results Update February 22, 2024

Objective	#	Key Results 2023 - Year 1	Status	Driver	#	Key Results 2024 - Year 2	Driver	Metrics
Prevention		Develop a youth violence prevention training plan for bullying prevention, 1.1 substance use, mental health and healthy relationships	Complete	SCC Office of Education		Disseminate targeted violence prevention education and awareness serving most impacted communities by City and County violence prevention programs and partners. (i.e. We All Play a Role campaign)	SCC Public Health	Pending
		Disseminate information in all City and County facilities on existing gun violence 1.2 prevention and safety practices, ordinances	In Progress	SCC Public Health				
		Implement a multilingual campaign to raise awareness of publicly funded youth 1.3 violence reduction programs	In Progress	SCC Public Health				
					1.2	Expand fentanyl awareness campaign	BHSD/PRNS	Reach from City contract pending; Number of Opioid-related OD/Death for youth ages 6-24
Intervention		Deliver expanded BEST Eligible services including youth-driven, whole family, 2.4 place-based strategies.	Complete	PRNS				
		Identify blocks with high rates of youth violence to pilot enhancements and 2.5 focus on built environment	Not Started	PRNS				
		Conduct at least 3 additional youth-led, school safety initiatives such as Sandy 2.6 Hook Promise	Not Started	PRNS/SJPD				
					2.3	Complete a strategy to enhance recreation/intervention/BEST services for youth ages 6-12 who are vulnerable for recruitment and victimization	PRNS	Pending; Proposal through Council directed Manager's Budget Addendum (MBA) process
Diversion + Reentry		3.7 House at least 6 young people (18-25) released from DJJ or County Probation	Complete	SCC Probation		Enhance a community-level response (PIVOT) for youth who have committed gun-related offenses	Probation	Pending
		Complete design of a community-level response for youth who have committee 3.8 gun offenses	In Progress	SCC District Attorney		Implement a diversion program for middle school students in east San Jose who call in gun threat	PRNS/DA	Pending; Gun Safety Work Group developing proposal
		3.9 Convene employment sector experts to place at least 15 high risk youth	Complete	W2F		Secure subsidized employment for 375 high school youth to promote skill building and career awareness of high wage, high growth jobs	Work2 Future	Pending
		Report annually to Policy Team and Community on program and community 4.10 outcomes with a racial equity lens	In Progress	PRNS		Report annually to Policy Team and Community on program and community outcomes with a racial equity lens	PRNS	Pending
Healing		Increase the number of community voices, sectors and those with lived 4.11 experiences on the Policy Team	In Progress	Mayor		Increase the number of community voices, sectors and those with lived experiences on the Policy Team	Mayor/Policy Team	Roster scheduled for May 23, 2024 Policy Team meeting
		Implement a joint pilot with County and City for integrated service delivery in a 4.12 Project Hope neighborhood	In Progress	CMO		Design a seamless integrated services delivery model in Mayfair/Poco Way and Santee/Seven Trees neighborhoods	City Manager's Office	Pending