

City of Santa Rosa CHOICE Cycle XI

Final Report

June 2025



About the Researcher

Applied Survey Research (ASR) is a social research firm that helps people build better communities. We do this by creating meaningful evaluation and assessment data, facilitating information-based planning, and developing custom strategies. ASR has the advantage of bringing more than 40 years of experience working with public and private agencies, health and human service organizations, city and county offices, school districts, institutions of higher learning, and charitable foundations. Through our community assessments, program evaluations, and related studies, ASR provides data-based insights that communities need for effective strategic planning and community interventions.

Research Team: Jennifer Anderson-Ochoa and Julie Burr

Locations of Staffing Hubs:

Central Coast

55 Penny Lane, Suite 101
Watsonville, California 95076
Phone (831) 728-1356

Bay Area

Phone (408) 247-8319

Sacramento

915 Highland Pointe, Suite 250
Rocklin, California 95678
Phone (408) 483-8471

www.appliedsurveyresearch.org



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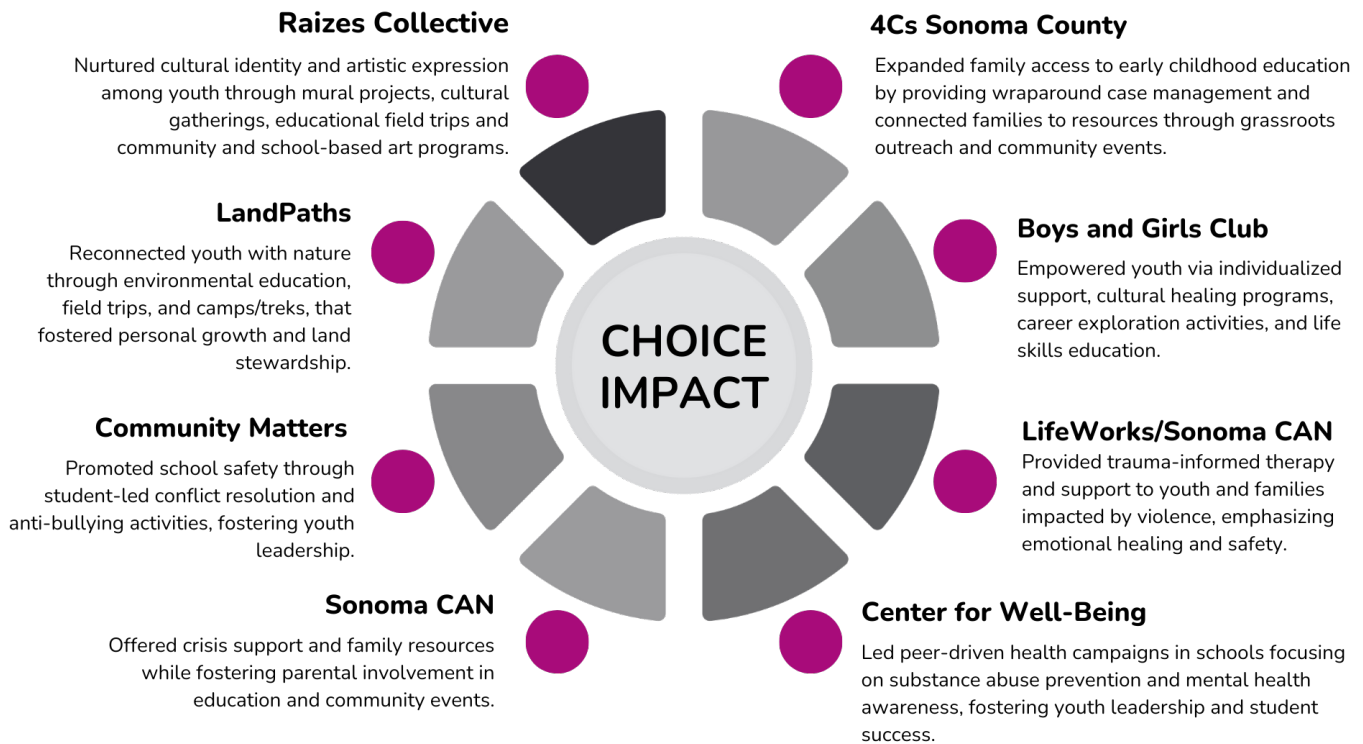
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INTRODUCTION

From July 2022 to December 2024, the Cycle XI CHOICE Grant Program provided funding to eight agencies to implement programs that strengthen youth and families, build safe communities, and reduce youth and gang violence. Programs included efforts to develop resilience in youth, supporting them as individuals, their families, and as members of the broader community. This final evaluation report summarizes the key outcomes, successes, and challenges from Cycle XI, reflecting the individual and collective efforts of the CHOICE-funded grantees.



BACKGROUND

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Santa Rosa experienced an increasing amount of violent criminal street gang activity, leading the Santa Rosa Police Department to acknowledge in 2002 that the City could not “arrest our way out of a gang problem”. Although effective law enforcement efforts are critical, enforcement alone could not adequately address the root causes of youth and gang-related criminal activity. There was a growing acknowledgement that a comprehensive approach was necessary, so in July 2003, then Santa Rosa Mayor, Sharon Wright, established the Mayor’s Gang Prevention Task Force with the unanimous support of the Santa Rosa City Council. Modeled after the City of San Jose’s Mayor’s Gang Prevention Task Force, the Task Force was established as a community-based collaborative effort designed to engage multiple stakeholders in reducing youth and gang violence.

In 2015, the Task Force was rebranded as the City of Santa Rosa's Violence Prevention Partnership. Now simply referred to as "The Partnership," the program is a model of shared responsibility to strengthen youth and families and create safe neighborhoods through mobilizing and engaging parents, schools, community-based organizations, faith community, businesses, government, and local law enforcement. The current collaborative involves over 50 organizations from across multiple sectors of the community. Coinciding with rebranding, The Partnership broadened its approach of achieving the mission of reduction youth and gang activity by adopting a public health perspective that views violence as a public health issue.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND PREVENTION (PSAP) TAX

CHOICE (Community Helping Our Indispensable Children Excel) is a grant program funded by Measure O (2004). Measure O was passed by citizens of the City of Santa Rosa in 2004 as a quarter-cent sales tax with an estimated annual revenue of \$7 million allocated to Fire (40%), Police (40%) and Violence Prevention (20%). In 2022, voters in the City of Santa Rosa renewed this funding through ballot Measure H, now known as the Public Safety and Prevention (PSAP) Tax. A portion of Violence Prevention funds (at least 35%) are distributed via CHOICE to community partners using upstream strategies.

CHOICE CYCLE XI NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To develop the Cycle XI CHOICE grant program, The Partnership conducted a community needs assessment in late 2021 to ensure the program continued to meet the needs of the community and fulfill the objectives of the 2017-2022 strategic plan. The CHOICE Cycle XI needs assessment included input from The Partnership's Operational Team, Crisis Response Team, youth focus group discussions, parent and community surveys, data analysis from the Community Safety Scorecard, and research on effective evidence-based practices to prevent, intervene and reduce various roots of violence among youth. Based on this assessment, The Partnership identified four priority funding areas:

- Priority Area #1: School Readiness
- Priority Area #2: Street Outreach & Mediation
- Priority Area #3: Student Engagement & Truancy Prevention
- Priority Area #4: Workforce Development*

**no programs funded under this priority area for Cycle XI CHOICE Grant Program.*

It is important to note that while the development of the Cycle XI CHOICE Grant Program was based on feedback received during the 2021 Community Needs Assessment, the climate around violence in Santa Rosa, the community needs, and The Partnership's priority areas have all changed. From January through May 2023, The Partnership undertook an extensive strategic planning process to revisit its mission, vision, values and strategies to identify areas for improvement and change for the period of 2023-2028. While violence can happen to any person of any age in the community, the available data shows that youth between the ages of 12 and 24 are disproportionately likely to engage in and become victims of acts of violence. Moreover, while violence is such a broad issue, with many different types of violence impacting people of all ages and diverse backgrounds, The Partnership has limited funding and resources to address violence in the community. Using available data and recognizing the current climate around violence in the community, The Partnership has chosen to focus on reducing gang violence and addressing its root

causes. As such, Cycle XI focused on gang prevention and intervention for youth ages 12 to 24. Looking forward, Cycle XII aligns the CHOICE grant program to the 2023-2028 strategic plan.

METHODOLOGY

For grant Cycle XI, the City of Santa Rosa contracted with Applied Survey Research to continue the evaluation of the impact of the funding provided under the PSAP Tax. The evaluation approach was grounded in the Results-Based Accountability (RBA) framework, which emphasizes both accountability for program efforts (process measures) and accountability for impact (outcome measures). This framework guided the structure of quarterly reporting by funded agencies, helping to assess how much was done, how well it was done, and whether anyone was better off as a result.

Funded agencies provided data based on the following list of process and outcome measures in their quarterly reports for the City. In year two, a few additional measures were added to the evaluation plan so that more information about the community served could be reported across all funded agencies (*as noted below).

Process Measures (how much, how well):

- # of intakes
- # of continuing participants
- # of exits
- % of target population in each risk category (low, moderate, high)*
- % of programming in each “high need area” (e.g., Downtown, Corby/Hearn, Roseland, South Park, W.9th, W. Steele Lane)*
- % of participants from historically excluded populations (race/ethnicity)*

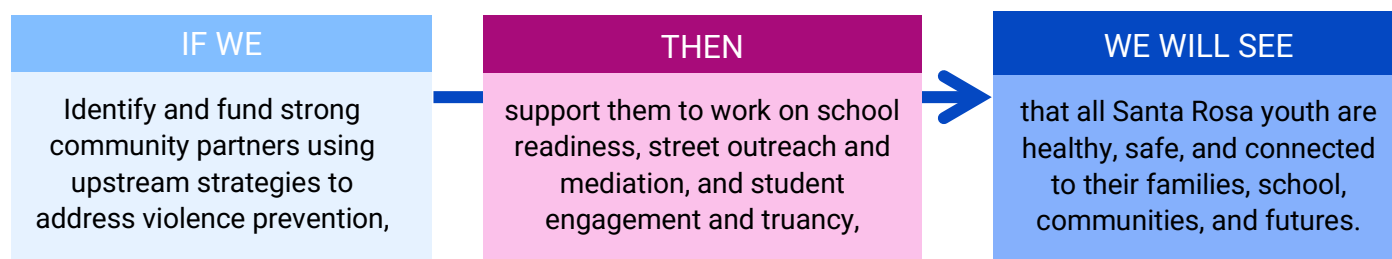
**Added by ASR for Year Two of this funding cycle.*

Outcome Measures (is anyone better off)

- # of participants exiting successfully
- % of participants exiting successfully

Prior to ASR beginning work on Cycle XI, the City of Santa Rosa met with previous and new grantees to select the program-specific measures that would align with the above framework. Once on board, ASR was in communication with each grantee to answer questions and provide technical assistance. In year two, ASR met with grantees to discuss the collection of some select process measures that would provide a better picture of who was being served across the City of Santa Rosa. Additionally, the collection of service hours was also added. New measures began being reported in year two, quarter two.

CHOICE CYCLE XI THEORY OF CHANGE



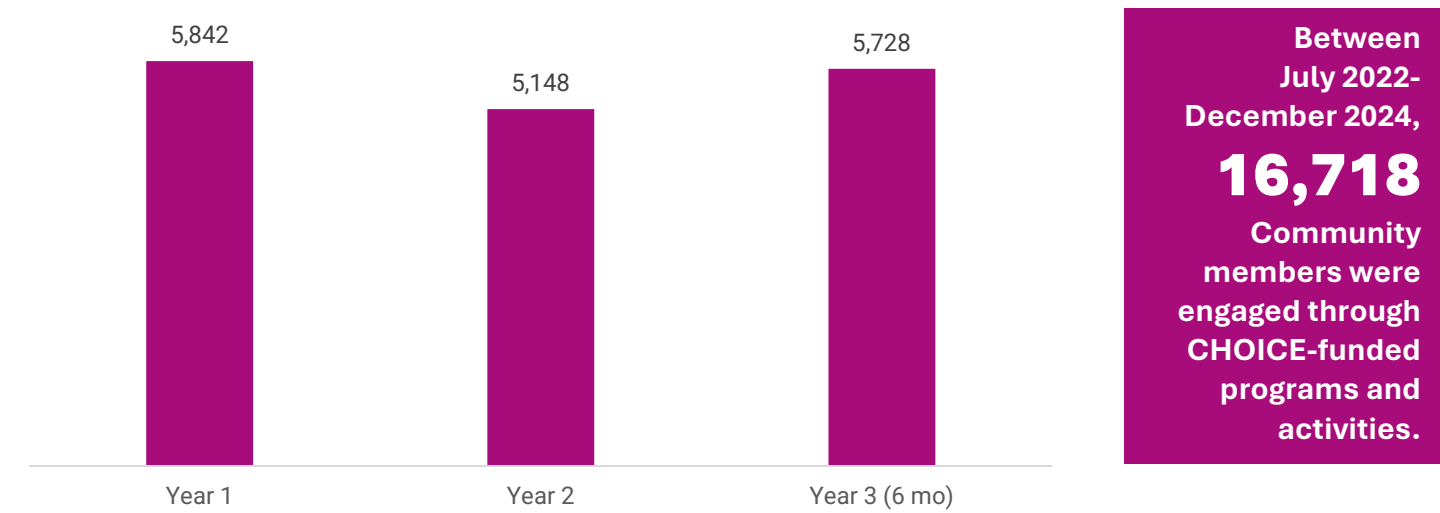
CYCLE XI DATA REVIEW

Overall Population

Result: All Santa Rosa youth are healthy, safe, and connected to their families, school, communities, and futures.

HOW MUCH DID THEY DO?

Number of Engaged Participants Across All CHOICE Grantee Programs in Cycle XI, by Year

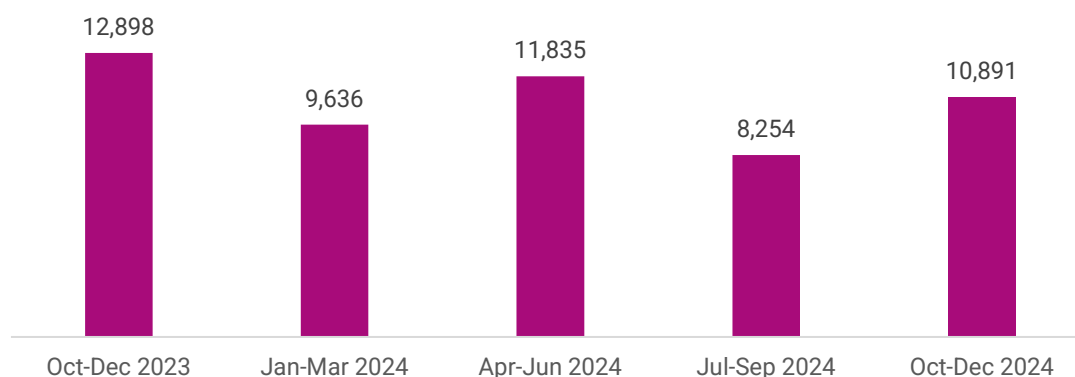


Note: Numbers include duplication.
Notes: Some Year 1 and 2 data were revised. Year 3 only spans two quarters.

CHOICE FUNDED GRANTEES DEFINED “PARTICIPANTS” IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:

- Youth and parents **receiving one-one one case management** services
- Youth **enrolled in programs and participating in program activities (camps/treks, art projects, etc.)**
- Youth and family members **engaged in therapeutic services**
- Students **trained to be peer leaders**
- **School staff participating** in school-based programming
- Adults and youth **participating in community-based programs, events and activities**

Number of Service Hours Across All CHOICE Grantee Programs for Cycle XI, by Quarter and Overall

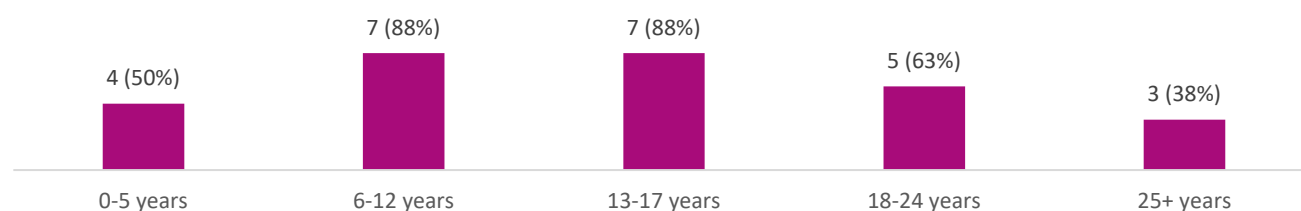


Between
October 2023-
December 2024,
CHOICE
Grantees
provided a
total of
53,514
service hours.

*Service hours data collection began in Year 2 Quarter 2.

HOW WELL DID THEY DO?

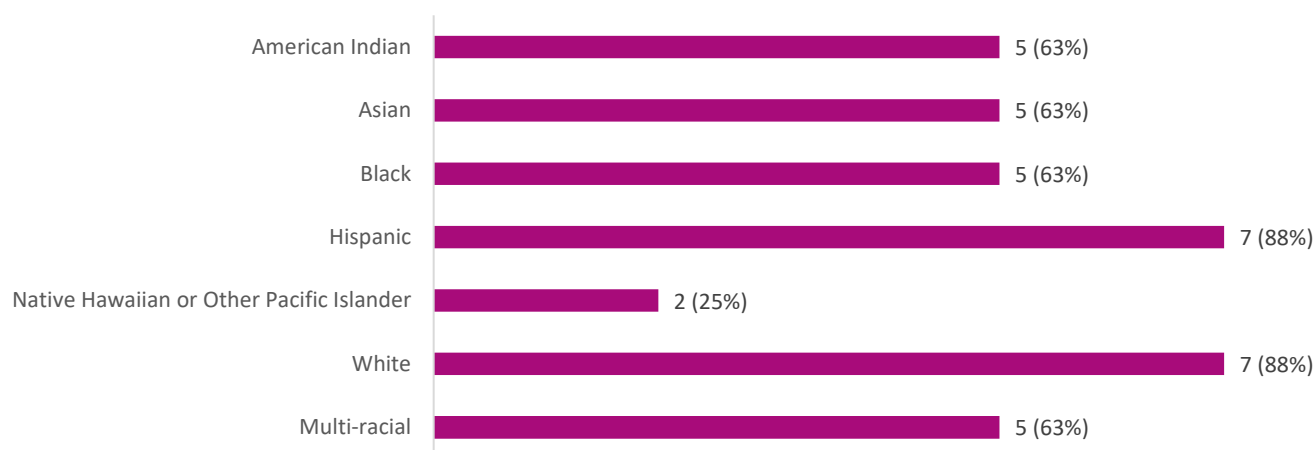
Age Groups Served by CHOICE Grantees, October 2023-December 2024 (Number and Percent of grantees)



n=8 CHOICE Grantees

Note: Grantees were not asked to track individual demographic data. They were only asked to identify which age groups they worked with on CHOICE-funded activities.

Racial/Ethnic Groups Served by CHOICE Grantees, October 2023-December 2024 (Number and Percent)



n=8 CHOICE Grantees

Note: Grantees were not asked to track individual demographic data. They were only asked to identify which racial/ethnic groups they worked with on CHOICE-funded activities. One grantee reported "Other/Unknown" because they did not collect this level of data from their participants.

Risk Level Served by CHOICE Grantees, October 2023-December 2024 (Number and Percent)

In an effort to understand the risk levels served by CHOICE-funded programming, grantees were asked to identify the different risk levels of the participants they serve under the CHOICE-funded activities. General descriptions were provided for each level, as outlined below, and grantees provided additional context for defining the risk levels where applicable. For the most part grantees served a mix of risk levels in their programming. One grantee only reported serving *low risk* individuals, while another only reported serving *moderate or high risk* individuals. The option of reporting *unknown* was also available for grantees in cases where this information could not be reported.

| | # of Grantees | % of Grantees |
|--|---------------|---------------|
| Low Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates early signs of academic and school attendance issues Resides in high-need/gang-impacted neighborhood Exposure to childhood trauma Comes from low-income family | 6 | 75% |
| Moderate Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-identifies with a gang (i.e. tattoos, clothing, peers) Has been arrested or had contact with law enforcement Regular alcohol/drug use Low level of “protective” factors and support Exposure to the child-welfare system | 6 | 75% |
| High Risk <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has been involved in gang activity Uses violence as a method to resolve conflict Comes from multi-generational gang family Has been incarcerated in juvenile hall, jail or prison one or more times | 6 | 75% |

n=8 CHOICE Grantees

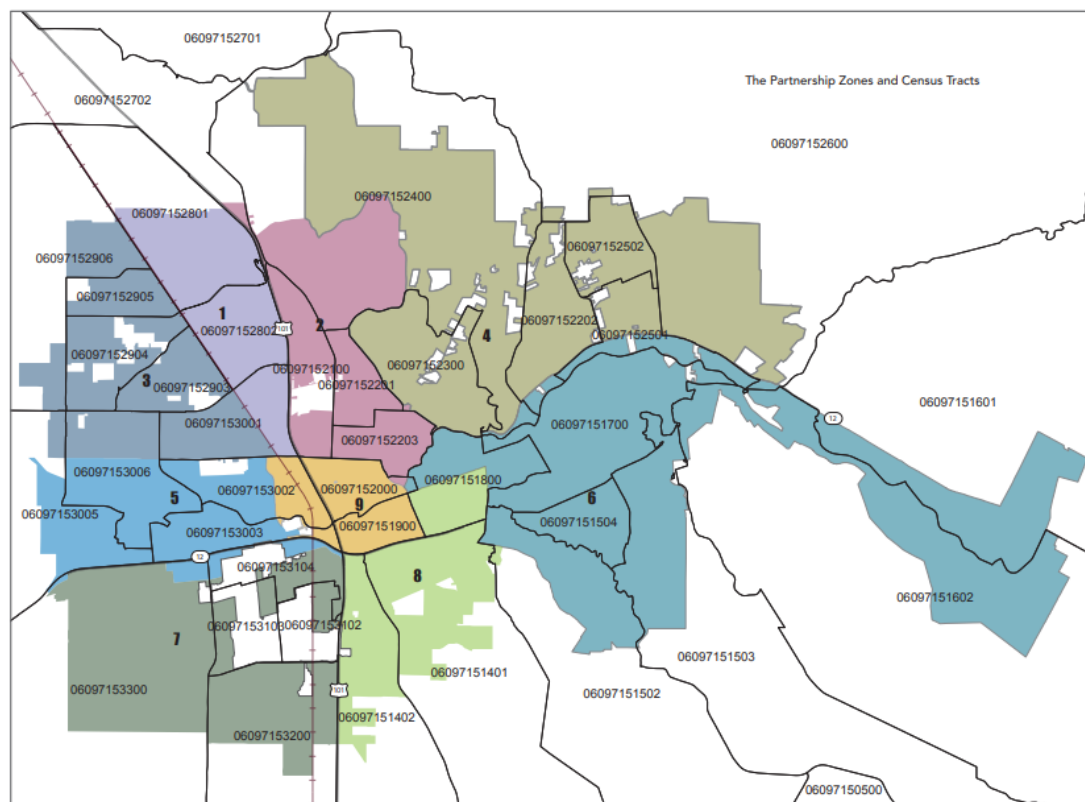
Note: One agency only reported “unknown” risk status for their participants as they did not collect this level of information from any of their participants.

Locations Served

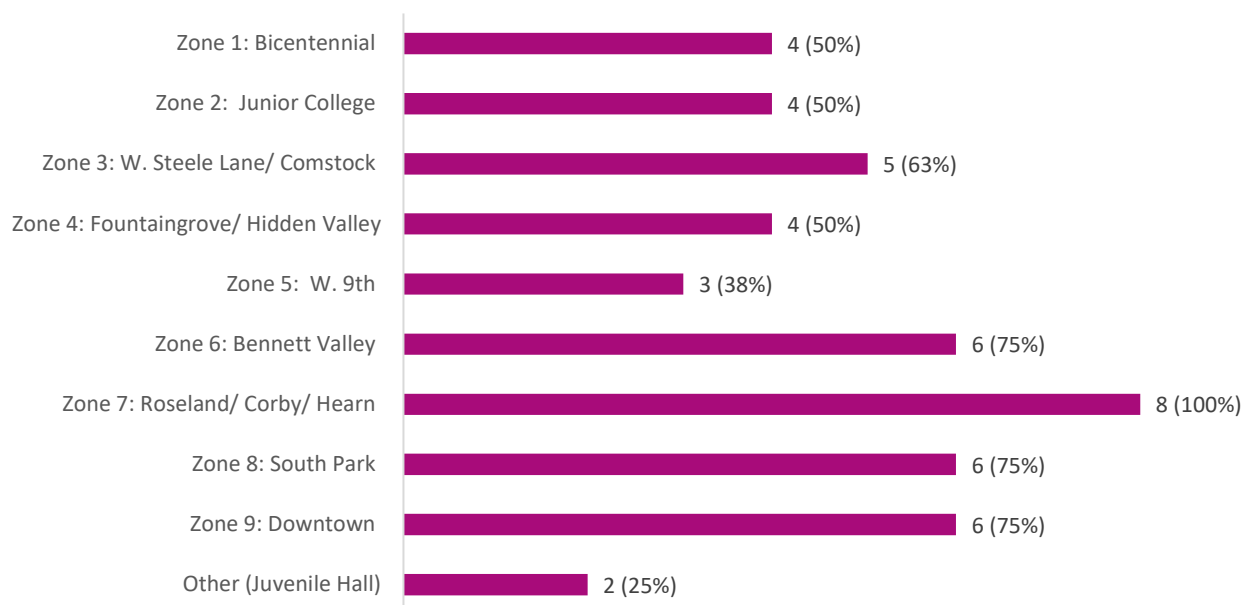
The geographic areas covered by the CHOICE program were divided into nine sub-sections, referred to as Partnership Zones that were consistent with the Santa Rosa Police Department patrol beats. Measuring demographics in nine Santa Rosa zones revealed diverse communities within the city, with significant differences between the west and east sides of Santa Rosa. An analysis of the density of crime incidents found pockets of crime in smaller neighborhoods and around specific locations of high public interest, such as the Downtown Transit Mall, shopping centers, and parks. This analysis identified nine “high need” zones across the city. Six of the high-need areas were identified based on the density of youth-involved violent crime, which included: the areas of West Steele Lane, South Park, West 9th Street, Roseland, Corby/Hearn, and Downtown.

For the purposes of this report, grantees were asked to identify the areas where their CHOICE-funded activities took place in years two and three. CHOICE-funded programming reached all of the nine zones in year two, with all eight grantees reporting that they worked within the Roseland/Corby/Hearn zone.

PARTNERSHIP ZONE MAP



Number and Percent of CHOICE Services Provided by Location, October 2023-December 2024

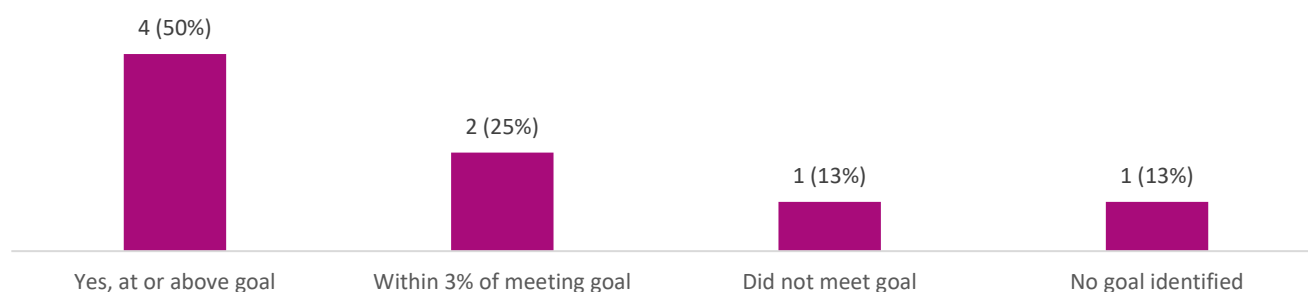


n=8 CHOICE Grantees

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

The CHOICE-funded activities varied greatly among the eight grantees, and as a result each grantee's definition of a "successful exit" varied. To assess overall impacts, grantees were asked to select a target goal for "successful exits" as they individually define them. Target goals ranged between 70-85% and overall, four grantees met or exceeded their set target goals. Two additional grantees were within 3% of their target goals. While one grantee did not meet their target goal, their data still demonstrated positive impacts for the majority of the participants they engaged. Target goals were not able to be established with one grantee. Much more detail about the impacts made by each grantee can be found in the following sections of the report.

CHOICE Grantees' Achievements in Relation to Target Goals for Successful Exits (as Defined by Individual Grantees) , October 2023-December 2024



n=7 CHOICE Grantees

Note: Target goals were not identified with one grantee.

Measures of "Successful Exit" include:

- % of children whose parents requested childcare or preschool enrolled in childcare or preschool services
- % youth that did not incur new criminal charges during reporting period
- % of participants with one or more of three positive outcomes at exit: (1) improved family problem-solving and relationships, (2) reduction of trauma symptoms and recovery, (3) reduction in risk-taking behavior including gang involvement, violence, running away and substance abuse
- % of peer leaders reporting an increase of knowledge about alcohol, tobacco and other drugs (ATOD) at exit
- % of exiting participants reporting a youth's increased attendance based on pre- and post-survey
- % of students that feel ready to be peer leaders
- % of students reporting feeling more connected to their community

Priority Area #1: School Readiness

Result: All Children in Santa Rosa are connected to their families, communities and neighborhoods, and enter kindergarten ready-to-go.

Grantee for this Result Area:

Community Child Care Council of Sonoma County (4Cs)



COMMUNITY CHILD CARE COUNCIL OF SONOMA COUNTY (4CS)

4Cs Early Education Outreach Intervention Program (EEOIP) works one-on-one to provide intensive wraparound case management services to at-risk families in prioritized communities and connects families to early education/childcare and family supports. This approach offers crucial support to both families and children, addressing barriers such as the cost of childcare or preschool and other factors that can impact children's Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). 4Cs also offers early care scholarships to support the most vulnerable families, ensuring immediate access to childcare or preschool and eliminating potential risk factors that could make the family or children susceptible to abuse, neglect, or violence.

SUCCESSIONS

Throughout the grant cycle, 4Cs successfully engaged and served the community in the following ways:

- Provided case management services and facilitated connections to early education and childcare.
- Conducted a door-to-door campaign distributing enrollment information to over 3,000 apartments.
- Hosted successful Drive-Thru Fairs providing enrollment packets and community resources.
- Actively participated in numerous community events, including back-to-school initiatives, wellness fairs, and Partnership activities.
- Collaborated with other community partners to extend their reach and impact.

CHALLENGES

4Cs also faced ongoing challenges related to limited childcare availability and financial barriers. Specific examples included:

- Limited openings and long waitlists for childcare services caused delays in enrollment.
- Childcare provider rates exceeded state subsidies, creating financial hardship for low-income families.

1,848

**CHOICE-funded service
hours in Cycle XI**

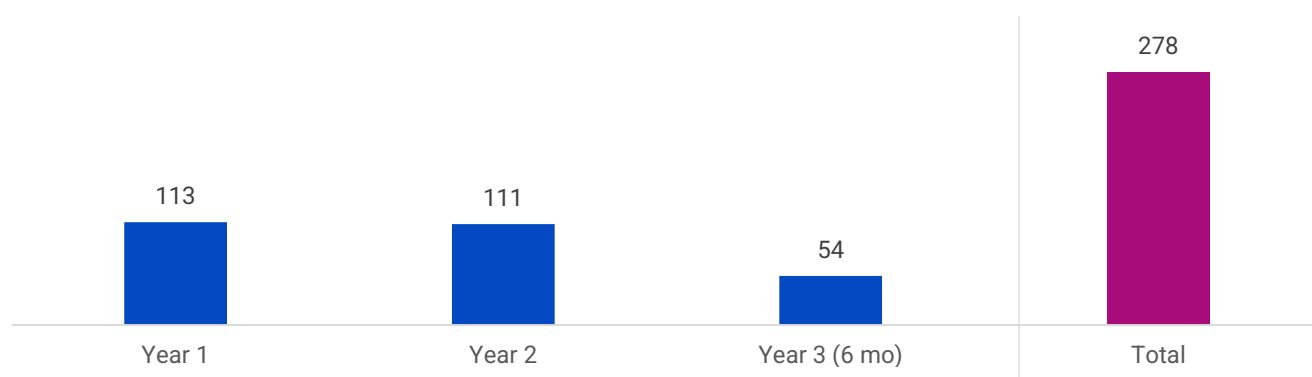
In Cycle XI,

88%

**Percent of children
whose parents requested
childcare or preschool
who were enrolled
(322 children enrolled)**

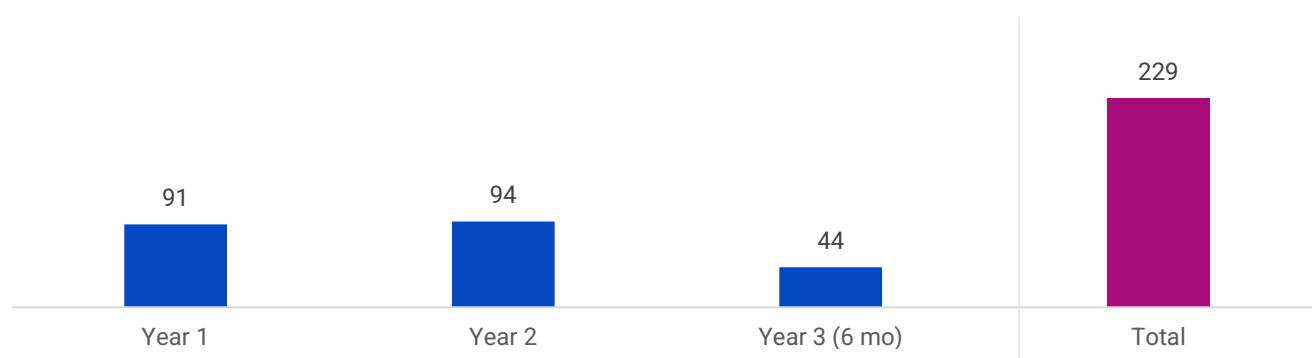
HOW MUCH DID THEY DO?

Number of New Participants Receiving One-On-One Case Management in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

Number of Participants Referred to Additional Services Outside of 4Cs in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



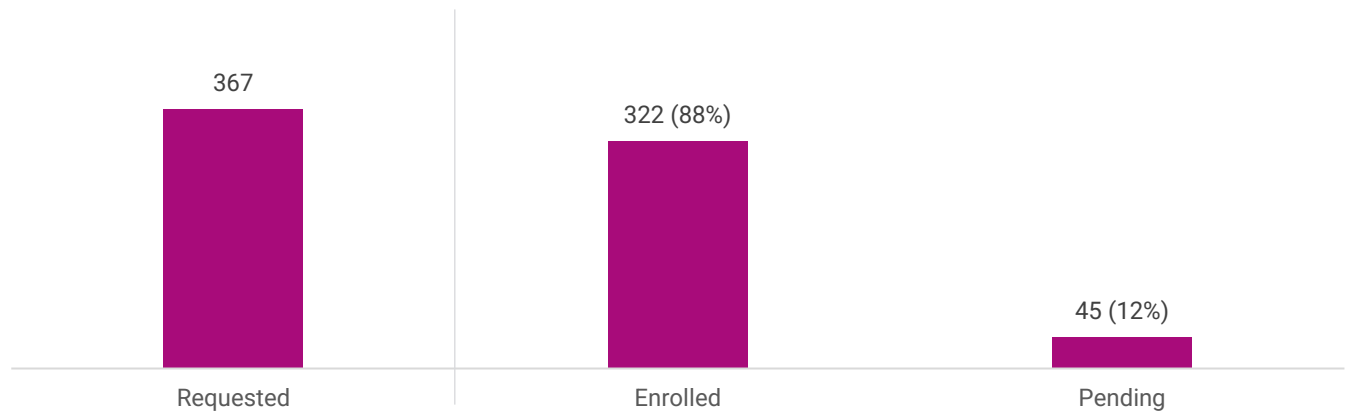
Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

Outreach Activities and Reach in Year Three

| OUTREACH STRATEGY | QUANTITY COMPLETED | # REACHED |
|--|--------------------|-----------|
| Booths at Community Events | 25 | 1,018 |
| Attended Community Network Meetings | 21 | 289 |
| Social Media Posts | 36 | 24,481 |
| Community Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation to staff at La Maquina Musical Radio 5 Community Presentations | 6 | unknown |

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

Number and Percent of Children Whose Parents *Requested* Childcare or Preschool Who Are *Enrolled in or Waiting for Enrollment* to Childcare or Preschool Services (“Successful Exit”) in Cycle XI



Note: Parents ‘waiting for enrollment’ are those that are in the process of finding a provider that meets their needs.



Priority Area #2: Street Outreach and Mediation

Result: All Santa Rosa youth have access to educational and work opportunities and feel safe in their neighborhoods.

Grantees for this Result Area:

Boys and Girls Clubs of Sonoma-Marin

Sonoma Community Action Network (CAN) – El Puente



BOYS AND GIRLS CLUBS OF SONOMA-MARIN

Boys and Girls Clubs Diversion & Intervention (REACH) and The Club @ Juvenile Hall programs aim to mitigate dangerous behavior of vulnerable youth through outreach, mediation, and intervention, along with life skills education and cognitive development programs to change the lives of youth.

SUCCESSSES

REACH successfully empowered youth through one-on-one support and providing a wide array of activities, fostering community engagement and personal growth. Highlights included:

- Provided volunteer opportunities at the Redwood Empire Food Bank and Restore Habitat for Humanity.
- Promoted cultural learning and healing by bringing La Cultura Cura classes into Juvenile Hall.
- Helped participants secure housing, employment, and achieve educational milestones, including high school and college graduation.
- Exposed youth to career pathways through Job Corps connections.
- Supported personal development by providing driver's permit assistance, financial literacy workshops, and bringing in guest speakers including Mayor Natalie Rogers.
- Offered enriching activities such as soccer skill coaching and STEM workshops.

CHALLENGES

The REACH program also encountered some logistical challenges. Key challenges faced by the REACH program included:

- Maintaining consistent youth engagement required significant mentor effort.

4,737

**CHOICE-funded service
hours in Cycle XI**

In Cycle XI,

94%

**of youth in the program
did not violate their
probation terms, and**

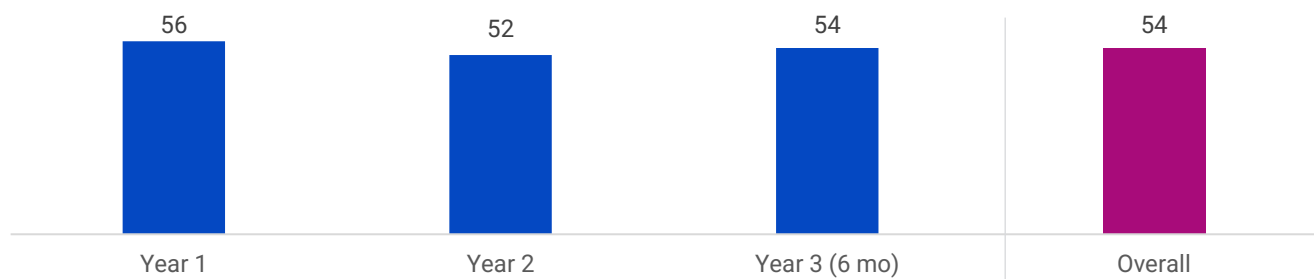
98%

**did not incur new
criminal charges**

- Staffing changes occasionally disrupted service hours.
- Limited access to essential services for the youth, including gang tattoo removal, emergency victim funding, transitional housing, culturally appropriate mental health support, and reliable transportation.
- Need for expanded support services, including workforce preparation and opportunities for civic engagement (e.g., community internships).

HOW MUCH DID THEY DO?

Average Number of Youth Served in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



Note: Data represents the total number of duplicated youth served each quarter.

Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

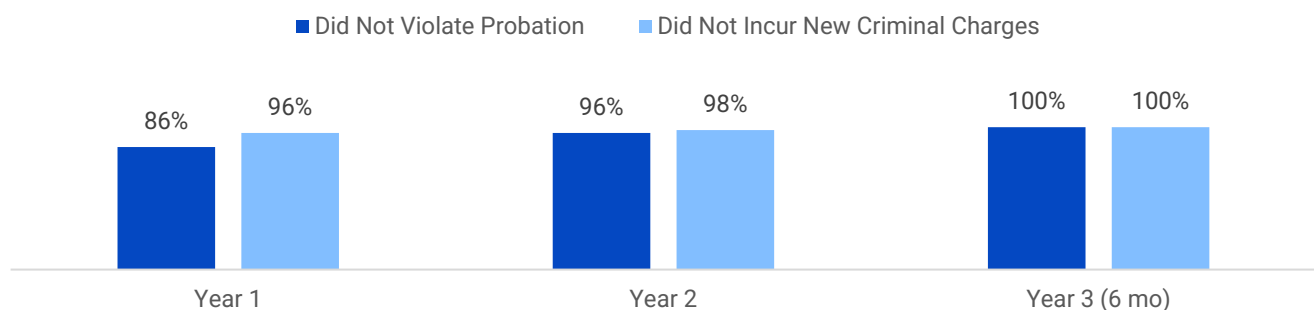
Unduplicated Number of Youth Enrolled and Graduated, for Cycle XI



Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

Percent of Youth Who Did Not Violate Probation (“Successful Exit”), by Year



Year 1 n=191, Year 2 n=198, Year 3 n=107

Note: Data represents the total number of duplicated youth served each year.

Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.



SONOMA COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK (CAN), FORMERLY LIFEWORKS OF SONOMA COUNTY

During Cycle XI, Lifeworks of Sonoma County merged with the Community Action Network (CAN). Now a part of Sonoma CAN, the El Puente program continues to provide in-home therapy to youth and their families using a culturally responsive, strength-based approach focused on healing trauma, building communication,

connection and enhancing resiliency. The program is delivered by two bilingual counselors trained in evidence-based therapeutic modalities who join families in creating their own goals, breaking disruptive cycles, homing in on existing strengths and building effective skills.

SUCCESSES

Throughout the grant cycle, El Puente positively impacted youth and families, especially those affected by violence. Key successes included:

- Provided crucial therapeutic support to youth and families, by creating safe spaces for vulnerability, facilitating trauma processing and improving communication.
- Fostered healthy coping mechanisms in those they served.
- Youth and their parents reported improved family relationships and reductions in risky behaviors.
- Active community engagement through participation in mental health fairs and gang prevention presentations.
- Leveraged the CHOICE grantee network to link families to additional resources.

CHALLENGES

El Puente also encountered several obstacles that impacted service delivery and engagement. Key challenges included:

- Difficulty in achieving consistent participation from both youth and parents with many instances of "no-shows" for scheduled appointments.
- A lack of response to referrals for services despite staff outreach.
- Elevated levels of local community violence complicated engagement efforts and, at times, shifted the program focus towards more immediate crisis intervention.
- Ongoing difficulty in recruiting and retaining Spanish-proficient clinicians and staff.
- Internal agency transitions and changes required dedicated efforts to support staff.

2,859

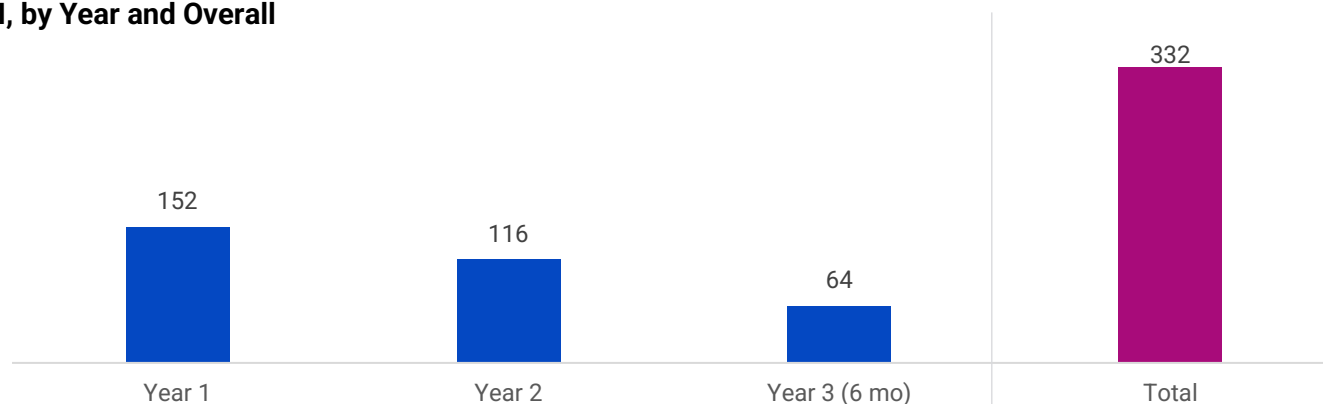
CHOICE-funded service hours in Cycle XI

83%

Participants in Cycle XI achieved positive outcomes by exit, including improved family problem-solving and relationships, reduction of trauma symptoms, and reduction in risk-taking behavior.

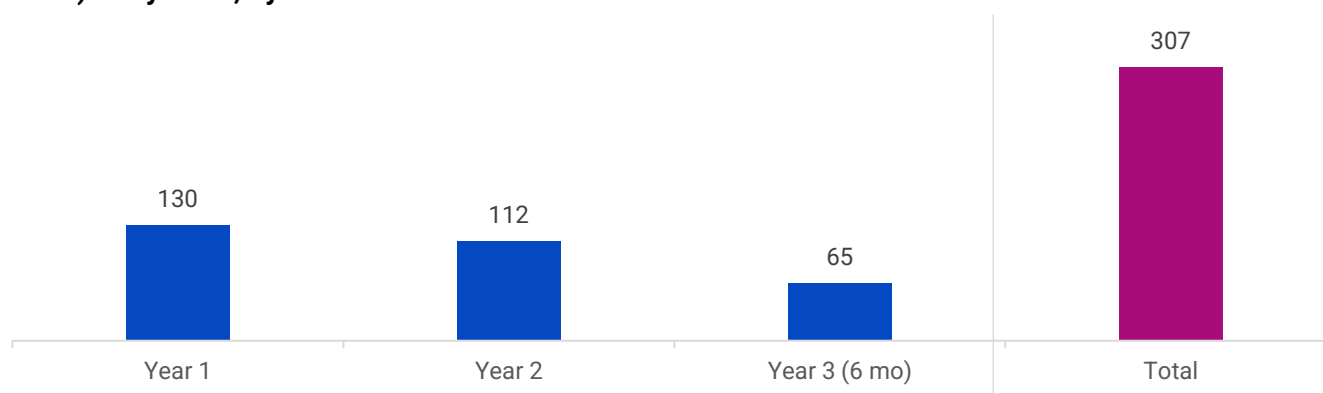
HOW MUCH DID THEY DO?

Number of Youth Participants and Family Members Enrolling in Therapeutic Services (“Intakes”) in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

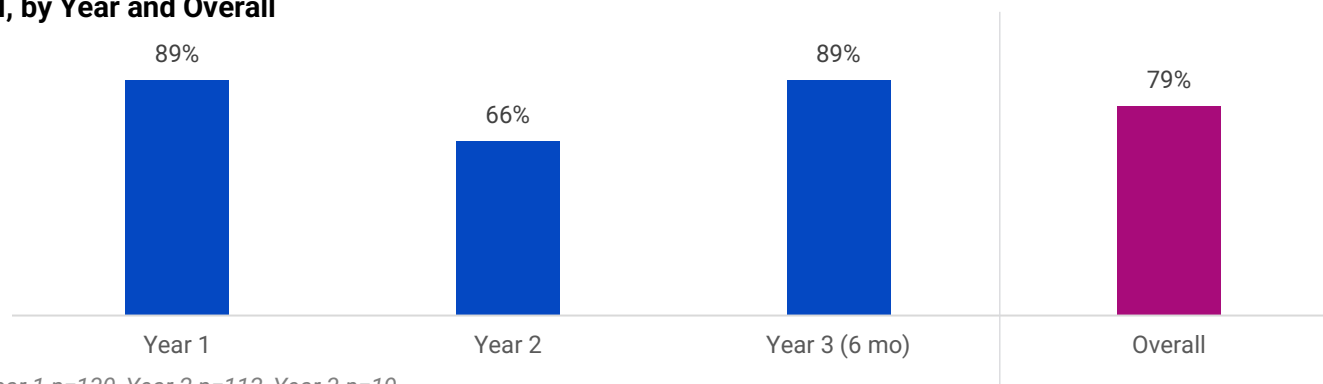
Number of Youth Participants and Family Members Exiting (for any reason) Therapeutic Services (“Exits”) in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

Percent of Participants with One or More of Three Positive Outcomes at Exit (“Successful Exit”) in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



Year 1 n=130, Year 2 n=112, Year 3 n=19

Note: The El Puente program measures successful exits based one of more of the following outcomes upon exit: 1) improved family problem-solving and relationships, 2) reduction of trauma symptoms and recovery, and/or 3) reduction in risk-taking behavior including gang involvement, violence, running away and substance abuse.

Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

Priority Area #3: Student Engagement & Truancy Prevention

Result: All Santa Rosa students are engaged in school and on track to graduate.

Grantees for this Result Area:

Center for Well-Being – Project TRUE

Sonoma Community Action Network (CAN) – Fuerza & Roseland Strong

Community Matters – Safe School Ambassadors Program

LandPaths – Rooting Youth in Nature & Healing the Whole Family

Raizes Collective – Programa Cosecha



CENTER FOR WELL-BEING

Project TRUE is a school-based leadership program empowering Santa Rosa youth in underserved and high-need areas to succeed in school and post-graduation. The program employs a strength-based and upstream harm reduction model that is effective in increasing school engagement and fostering student success.

SUCCESSSES

Project TRUE effectively empowered youth to become leaders in health and prevention within their schools and community. Key successes of Project TRUE included:

- Youth at multiple schools were trained and empowered to be impactful peer leaders on health and prevention initiatives.
- Peer leaders effectively educated hundreds of students about tobacco risks and bullying through creative campaigns, presentations, and activities like Red Ribbon Week.
- The program expanded to a fourth school to increase overall youth engagement and broaden the dissemination of their messages.
- Peer leaders actively engaged in various community events to promote health and prevention, extending their reach beyond their school sites.
- Influenced peers to commit to remaining drug-free within the Roseland community.

1,058

**CHOICE-funded service
hours in Cycle XI**

98%

**of surveyed peer
leaders reported
knowing more about
alcohol, tobacco &
other drugs**

CHALLENGES

Project TRUE also encountered several logistical hurdles inherent to it being school-based, which required ongoing collaboration to maintain program effectiveness. Key challenges included:

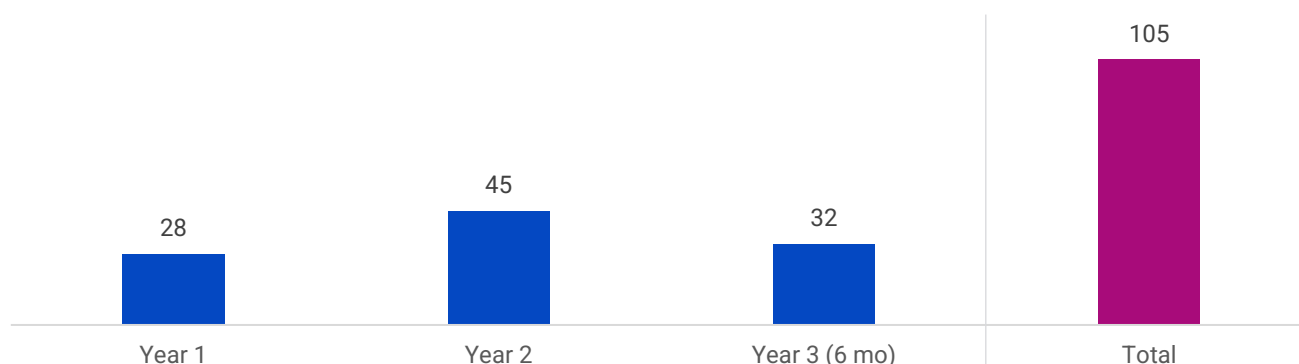
- School-related activities at the end of the academic year often reduced the availability and engagement of student peer leaders.
- Coordinating presentation times with teachers' schedules presented logistical challenges.
- Leadership changes within the schools necessitated proactive efforts to build relationships with new administrators to secure ongoing program support.

HOW MUCH DID THEY DO?

Schools where Project TRUE Leaders were Engaged during Cycle XI:

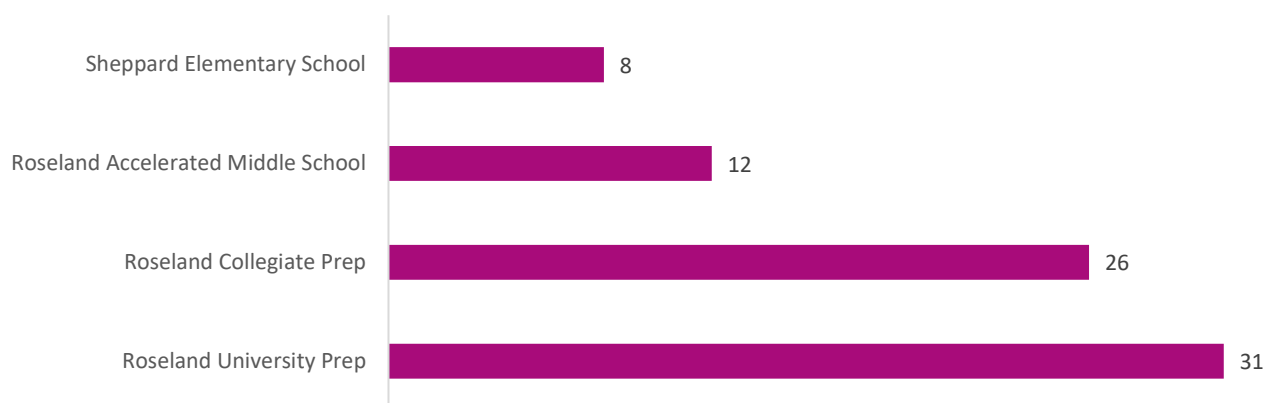
1. Roseland Accelerated Middle School
2. Roseland Collegiate Prep
3. Roseland University Prep
4. Sheppard Elementary School

Number of Project TRUE Peer Leaders Engaged in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

Number of Project TRUE Peer Leaders Engaged in Cycle XI, by School



Year 2 n=45, Year 3 n=32

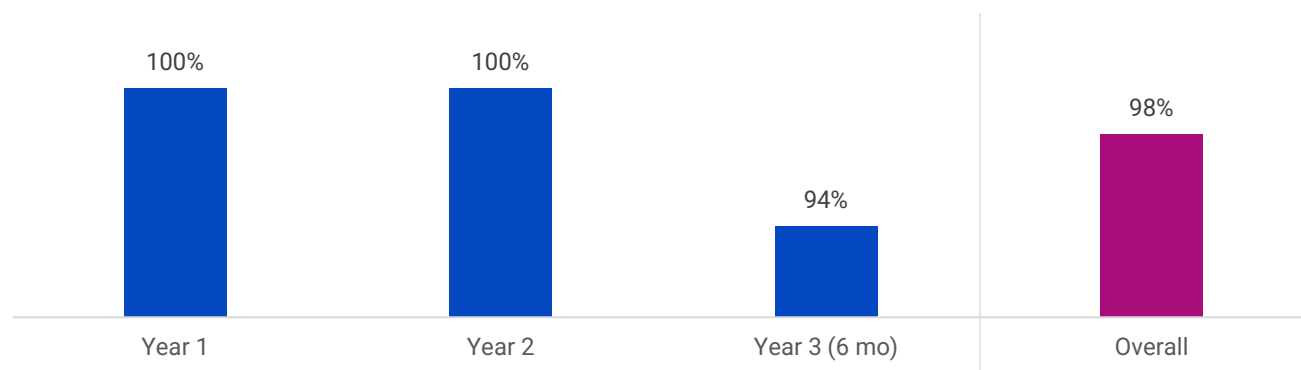
Note: Data by school was collected starting in Year 2. Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

HIGHLIGHTED ACTIVITIES IN YEAR THREE

- **Red Ribbon Week Event** - Students shared information on the effects of tobacco and e-cigarette use to 7th and 8th graders. They gave out pins to students that signed a pledge to stay drug-free.
- **Celebration of Dreams Event** – Two peer leaders delivered speeches in front of 180 attendees. They shared their experience gaining knowledge and skills since joining Project TRUE. They also shared how the program has prepared them for their future education and career goals.
- **Santa Rosa City Council** – Two Peer Leaders attended and spoke at the Santa Rosa City Council meeting, talking about the youth vaping epidemic, how companies target youth, and how it has affected their peers in school. One student explained that *“This was an effort to keep not only our youth healthy, but our community as well. Many teens struggle with substance abuse and this education and awareness is important to help stop it before it even starts.”* The other shared that *“It was empowering to speak out and advocate for our community, and I was thrilled when they listened to us. Moments like this remind me of the impact we can make when we raise our voices together.”*

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

Percent of Project TRUE Peer Leaders Reporting an Increase of Knowledge About ATOD at Exit (“Successful Exits”) in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



Year 1 n=6, Year 2 n=20, Year 3 n=32

Note: Students at Roseland Accelerated Middle School and Sheppard Elementary are not surveyed because they have a different curriculum than the high school students.

Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

“I’m thankful for the experiences Project TRUE has given me. I feel more ready for the challenges ahead, not just in school, but in life.”

Roseland University Prep, 11th grader

“Joining Project TRUE has been a transformative experience for me... This experience not only boosted my confidence and presentation skills but also allowed me to contribute positively to the community..”

Roseland University Prep, 10th grader



COMMUNITY ACTION NETWORK (CAN)

Community Action Network (CAN), formerly Community Action Partnership, provides a continuum of integrated, place-based programs offering services in southwest Santa Rosa focusing on youth and family success, including building strong relationships with residents and connecting them to partners and the larger community.

In CHOICE Priority Area 3, Sonoma CAN implements the FUERZA and Roseland Strong programs.

SUCSESSES

Sonoma CAN effectively supported youth and families through a comprehensive range of services and community engagement initiatives, demonstrating adaptability and strong partnerships. Key achievements included:

- Provided immediate one-on-one support to parents facing crises.
- Distributed crucial resources including financial aid, clothing, food, and school supplies to families in need.
- Implemented strategies to increase parent involvement in their children's schooling.
- Employed a combination of in-person and virtual services to ensure accessibility and responsiveness to diverse family needs.
- Relaunched in-person Padres Unidos classes with the provision of childcare and art activities through a partnership with Raizes Collective.
- Actively participated in community wellness events to connect with families in accessible locations.
- Cultivated strong relationships with community organizations, schools, and the Partnership.

CHALLENGES

Sonoma CAN encountered several hurdles as they worked to reach and support the community. Specific challenges included:

- Many working families did not qualify for essential assistance programs, restricting their access to needed resources.
- Logistical barriers, low enrollment, and inconsistent participation required staff to increase and modify outreach methods, incorporating home visits and tailored communication.
- The Padres Unidos program was temporarily paused in the first quarter of year three.

542

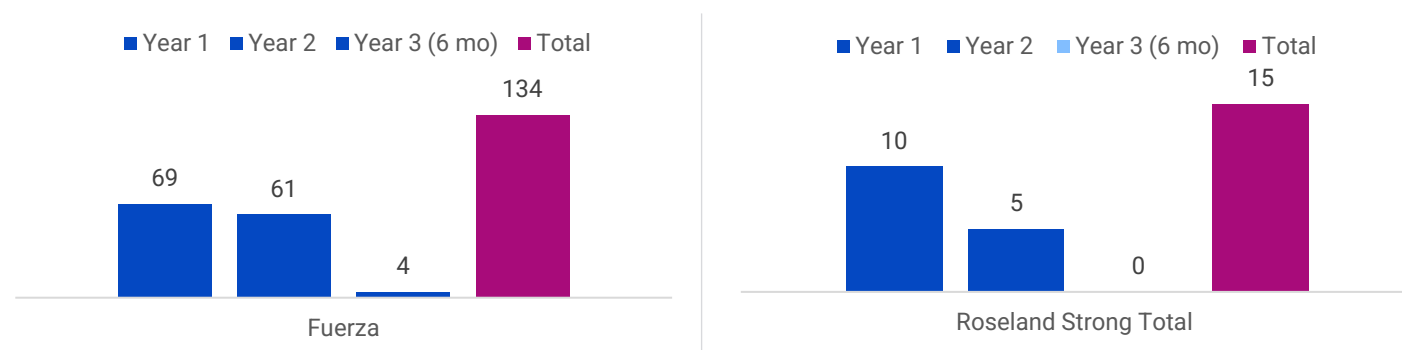
Number of Roseland School District students provided with violence prevention/intervention resources in Cycle XI

69%

The average percentage of Fuerza participants in Cycle XI who expressed increased school attendance after exiting the program

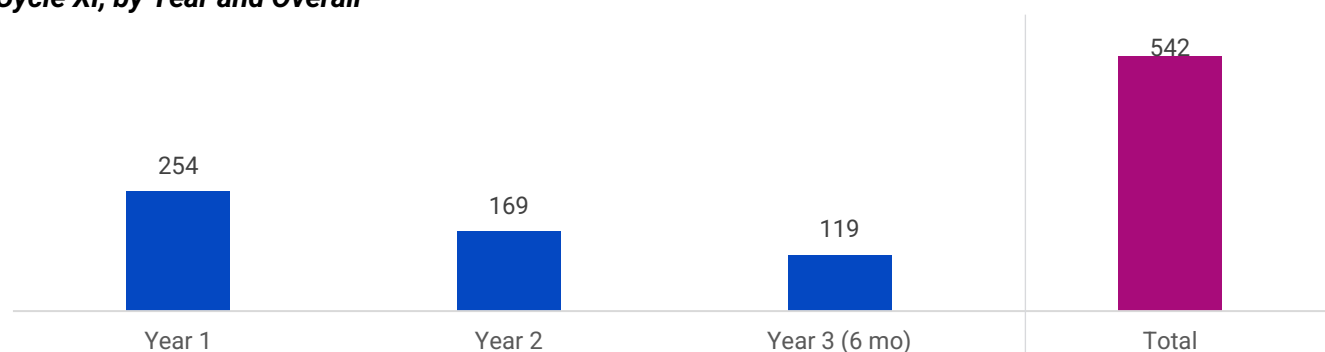
HOW MUCH DID THEY DO?

Number of Participants Enrolled in the Fuerza and Roseland Strong Programs in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data. During this time, some programming was temporarily paused, resulting in lower participation numbers.

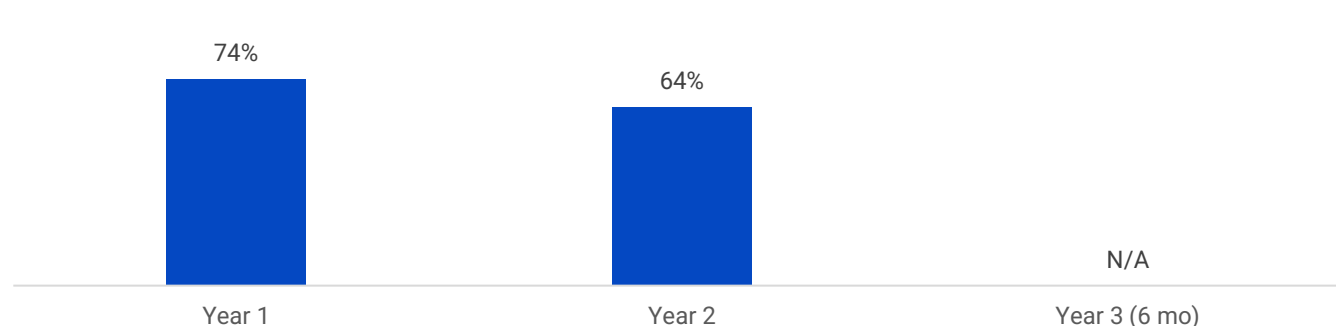
Number Of Roseland School District Students Provided with Violence Prevention/Intervention Resources in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

Percent of Fuerza Participants Who Exited and Reported Youth's Increased Attendance ("Successful Exit") in Cycle XI, by Year



Year 1 n=62, Year 2 n=47, Year 3 n=4

Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data. In Year 3, no survey data was reported.



Safe School
Ambassadors®

COMMUNITY MATTERS

This evidence-based Safe School Ambassadors (SSA) Program empowers and equips carefully selected students with intervention skills that reduce bullying and mistreatment. The SSA Program creates school climates in which all students feel safe, connected, and cared for, positively impacting their academic achievement levels, behavior and attendance as well as their overall health and well-being.

SUCSESSES

Community Matters achieved success in promoting safe and positive school environments in the following ways:

- Successfully implemented programming at 10 Santa Rosa schools, equipping students with skills in conflict resolution and anti-bullying.
- The program fostered positive peer role models, contributing to a more supportive school environment.
- Student participants reported greater confidence in intervening in tense situations and an enhanced feeling of safety at school.
- A virtual workshop on cyberbullying and digital wellness successfully engaged parents.
- Community Matters actively participated in various meetings and community events, such as Tacos with a Cop and parent education nights.

3,050

**CHOICE-funded service
hours in Cycle XI**

94%

**of youth who felt more
connected to their
school as a result of the
program in Cycle XI**

CHALLENGES

Community Matters also encountered several operational challenges during Cycle XI. Specific challenges included:

- Providing consistent staff support for trained Student Ambassadors was a challenge at times.
- Staffing changes at school sites required changes to program scheduling, as well as ongoing flexibility and adaptation.
- Schools were not able to always meet their target participation numbers for student recruitment.

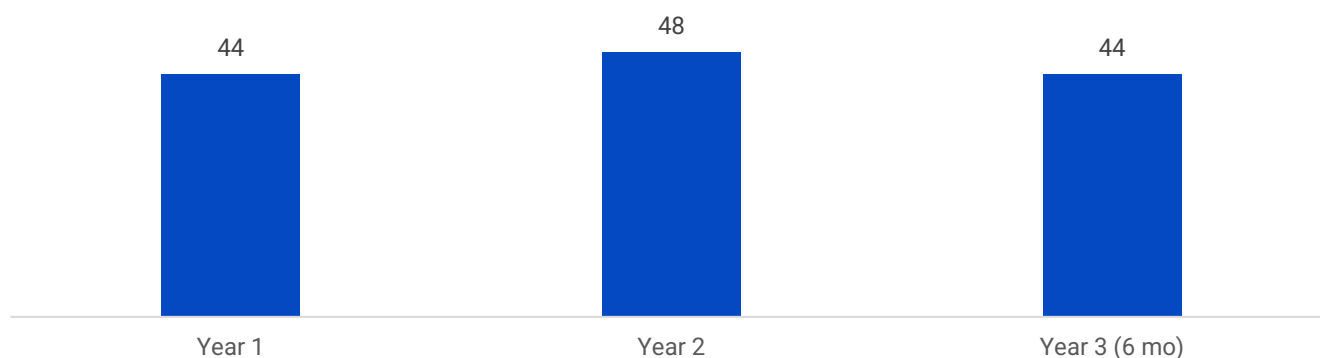
HOW MUCH DID THEY DO?

Schools Engaged in Cycle XI:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Bellevue Elementary School | 6. Meadow View Elementary School |
| 2. Brook Hill Elementary School | 7. Proctor Terrace Elementary School |
| 3. Helen Lehman Elementary School | 8. Santa Rosa French Charter School |
| 4. Herbert Slater Middle School | 9. Santa Rosa Middle School |
| 5. Hidden Valley Elementary School | 10. Taylor Mountain Elementary School |

Note: Montgomery High School is in the process of scheduling their SSA program kick off, but it was delayed due to staffing changes.

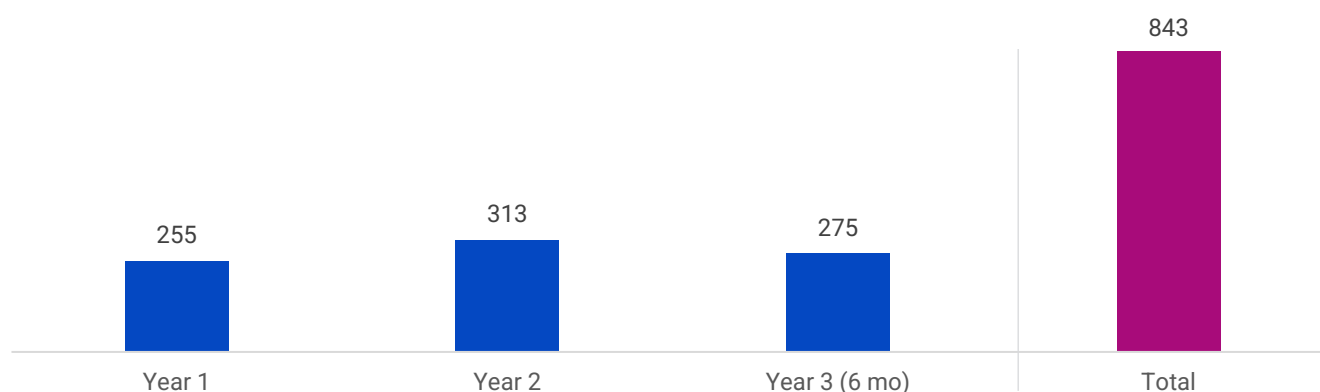
Number of School Staff Enrolled in Cycle XI, by Year



Note: School staff are usually enrolled in the first two quarters. No activity in quarter 4.

Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

Number of Students Trained as Ambassadors in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



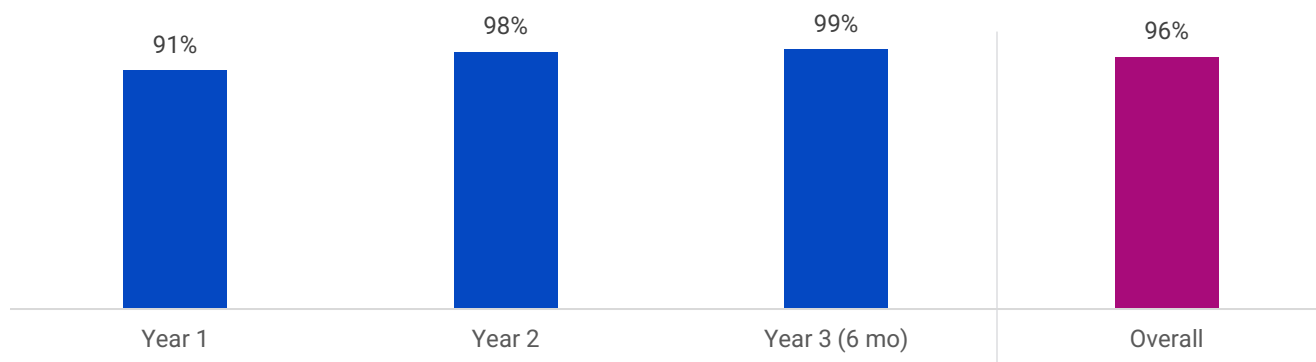
Year 1 n=255, Year 2 n=313

Note: Student Ambassadors are typically trained in the first two quarters. No activity in quarter 4.

Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

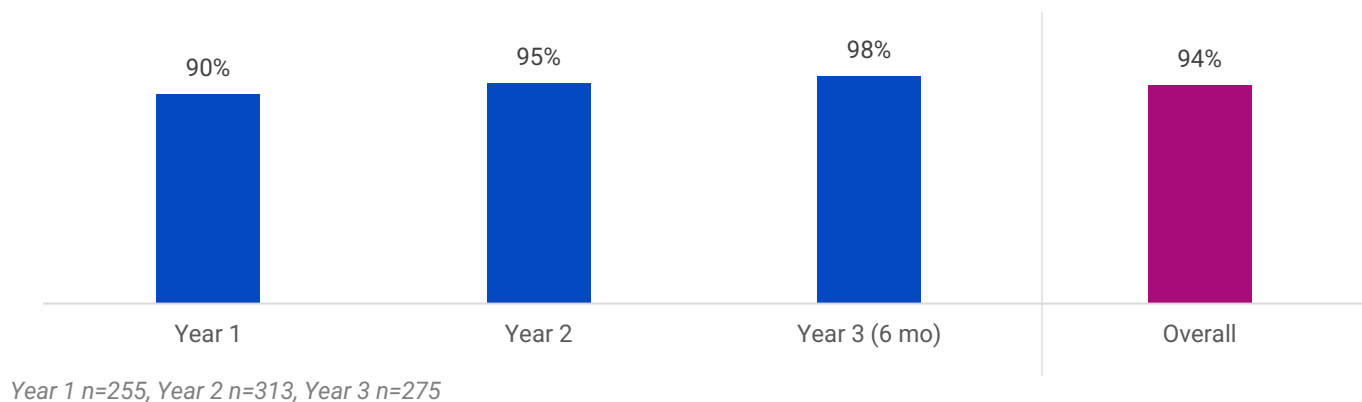
IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

Percent of Students Who Report That They Feel Ready to be Ambassadors After the Training ("Successful Exit") in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



Year 1 n=255, Year 2 n=313, Year 3 n=275

Percent of Students Who Report That They Feel More Connected to Their School After the Training (“Successful Exit”) in Cycle XI, by Year



Student Descriptions of their Training Experience:



What Students Reporting Learning in the Training:

- “How to get someone out of uncomfortable situations.”
- “How to help others.”
- “How to problem solve.”
- “How to deal with different situations.”
- “How to help spot mistreatment.”



LANDPATHS

LandPaths implements two programs: Rooting Youth in Nature (Inspired Forward programming with schools, camps/treks during school breaks) and Healing the Whole Family (community-based programming primarily at Bayer Farm). These programs provide teens ages 13-18 with culturally relevant, healthy outdoor recreation and trust/relationship building activities, while addressing stressors through nature, and assisting adults to support youth, all alongside peers and positive adult role models.

SUCCESSES:

LandPaths effectively engaged youth with the local environment through a variety of impactful programs during the grant cycle. Key highlights included:

- Actively connected youth to nature through hands-on stewardship and educational field trips. The field trips, camps, and treks promoted land restoration and ecological learning, reaching hundreds of students. Participant feedback indicated a deep connection to nature and a desire for continued involvement among students.
- Provided training and summer employment as Young Stewards for local teens, fostering valuable skills and personal growth.
- Bayer Farm served as a central location for the Healing the Whole Family programming, hosting educational sessions, celebrations, and providing a safe space for building community connections.

CHALLENGES:

LandPaths also encountered several ongoing challenges that affected the implementation of their activities. Specific challenges included:

- Storms significantly impacted the scheduling and execution of outdoor activities during the winter months.
- High summer temperatures in the summer months necessitated the planning and installation of permanent shade structures for outdoor programs.
- An understaffed local bus company caused trip cancellations and reduced the duration of field trips, limiting student engagement.
- Bayer Farm experienced vandalism and gang-related tagging, requiring additional resources and effort for remediation.

Between
October 2023-
December 2025,
CHOICE Grantees
provided a total of

15,785

service Hours for *Inspired
Forward Activities*

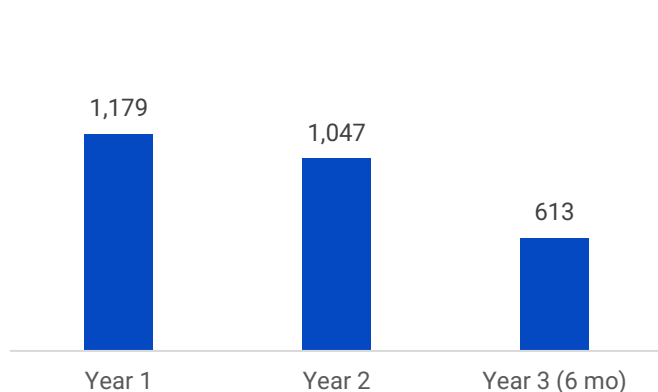
Between
October 2023-
December 2025,
CHOICE Grantees
provided a total of

10,101

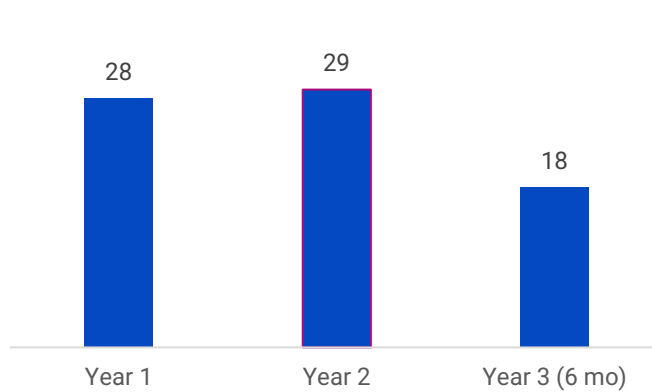
service Hours for *Healing the
Whole Family Activities*

HOW MUCH DID THEY DO?

Number of Participants in Rooting Youth in Nature: Inspired Forward (“Intakes”) in Cycle XI, by Year

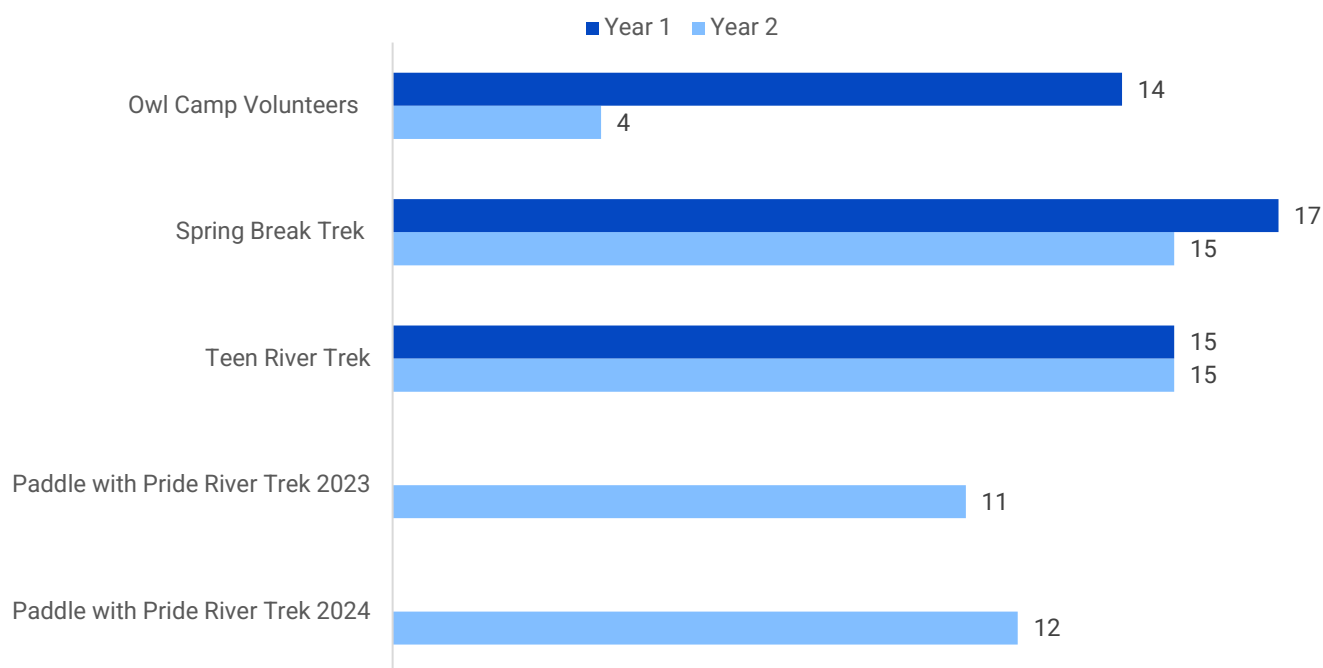


Number of Teachers with Classes Participating in Rooting Youth in Nature: Inspired Forward in Cycle XI, by Year



Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

Number of Youth Participating in Rooting Youth in Nature: Camp & Treks in Years one and Two (“Intakes”) in Cycle XI, by Activity



Note: No Camps or Treks were completed in Year 3.

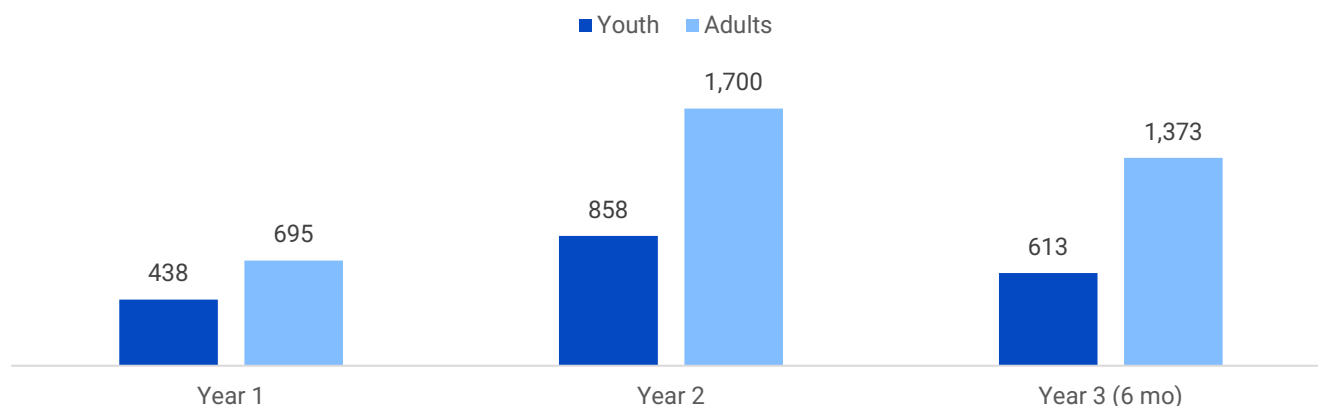
Owl Camp Youth Leaders – Youth ages 14-19 are trained to work as leaders for youth the summer Owl Camps.

Spring Break Trek – Inspired Forward students, ages 12-18, are invited to do a 4-day, 3 nights camp/trek from Bohemia Ecological Reserve to Shell Beach. Through this experience, youth learn foundational outdoor survival skills while camping at the preserve.

Teen River Trek – Youth ages 13-17 spend 4 days and 2 overnights to paddle from Wohler Bridge to the ocean.

Paddle with Pride River Trek – In July 2023, LandPaths hosted their first ever ‘Paddle with Pride’ Teen River Trek for LGBTQIA+ youth and allies ages 14-18, some receiving scholarships to attend. The event was hosted again in 2024.

Number of Youth and Adult Participants in *Healing the Whole Family Program* for All Outings (“Intakes”) in Cycle XI, by Quarter and Year



Note: Numbers may include duplication as individual participants could not be verified for all activities.

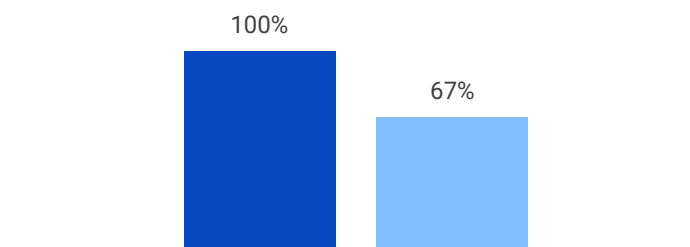
Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

In Year 1, Inspired Forward outcome data was sourced from surveys of teacher’s perceptions of changes in student engagement and attitudes about time outdoors. In Year 2, Inspired Forward staff began implementing a student survey: Outcome data on students that was previously reported from the teacher’s perspective is now self-reported by the students themselves. Since year three ended in December 2024, when programming for the 2023-24 academic school year was not completed, there is no additional student outcome data to report.

Percent of Teachers Reporting Positive Results in Students After *Rooting Youth in Nature*: Inspired Forward Program Participation in Year One (Program Definition of “Successful Exit”), by Positive Outcome

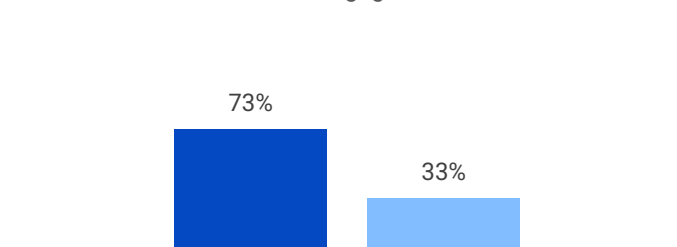
- Students express positive attitudes about time outdoors.
- Students have increased engagement at school.



n=7

Percent of Students Reporting Positive Results *Rooting Youth in Nature*: Inspired Forward Program Participation (“Successful Exit”) in Year Two, by Positive Outcome

- Students express positive attitudes about time outdoors.
- Students have increased engagement at school.



Positive attitudes about time outdoors n=446, Increased engagement at school n=444



RAIZES COLLECTIVE

Programa Cosecha, as student-led, community-facilitated program, allows students to identify current social emotional needs, increasing Raizes' capacity to serve as critical partners in delivering culturally relevant and informed workshops that meet student-identified needs.

SUCCESSES

Raizes Collective demonstrated significant growth and community engagement throughout the grant cycle. Specific highlights included:

- Successfully resumed youth camps that highlighted diverse artists.
- Mural projects were implemented that fostered artistic skill development among participants.
- Meaningful field trips were organized that provided historic and cultural education, as well as exposure to new experiences.
- Raizes Collective significantly increased programming throughout the grant period, reaching multiple school sites with numerous workshops.
- Culturally relevant food was incorporated into programming to enhance participant engagement.
- Scholarships were provided for youth to participate in the National Compadres Network training to become certified Circle Keepers.
- Raizes Collective actively participated in various community events, wellness fairs, and the Partnership, and hosted their own VPAS event, demonstrating a strong commitment to community connection and well-being.

The VPAS event in year three, [Posada Con Raizes](#), was captured in a great video. Check it out:



11,198
CHOICE-funded
service hours in
Cycle XI

20
student-led
projects were
implemented in
Cycle XI

CHALLENGES

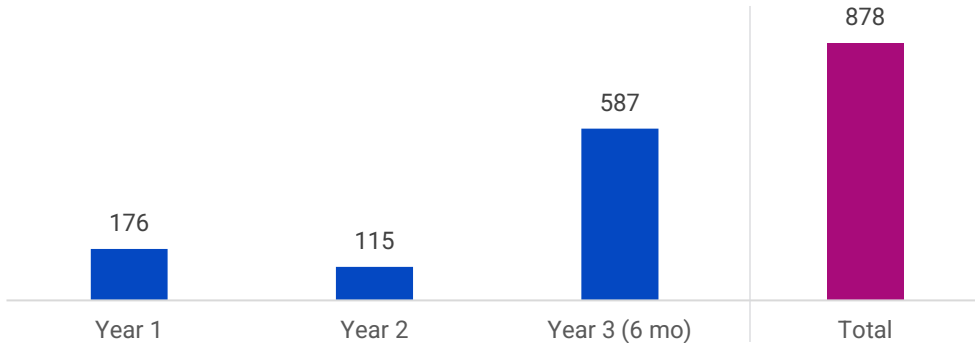
While Raizes Collective made a significant community impact, they also encountered several challenges during the grant cycle. Below are the specific challenges:

- The absence of a dedicated facility required reliance on partner spaces or outdoor venues, making programming susceptible to weather disruptions.
- Meeting the high demand for programming with a limited number of teaching artists necessitated the development of partnerships to increase capacity.
- Variable attendance at afterschool programs required the implementation of enhanced promotional strategies.
- Efficiently collecting and managing program data presented a persistent challenge.

HOW MUCH DID THEY DO?

Over the course of Cycle XI, the methodology for tracking the number of participants Raizes Collective served was refined, adding the use of activities tracking spreadsheets in year two. Additionally, in year three, Raizes Collective was very active in community engagement activities that greatly expanded their reach.

Number of Youth Served in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall

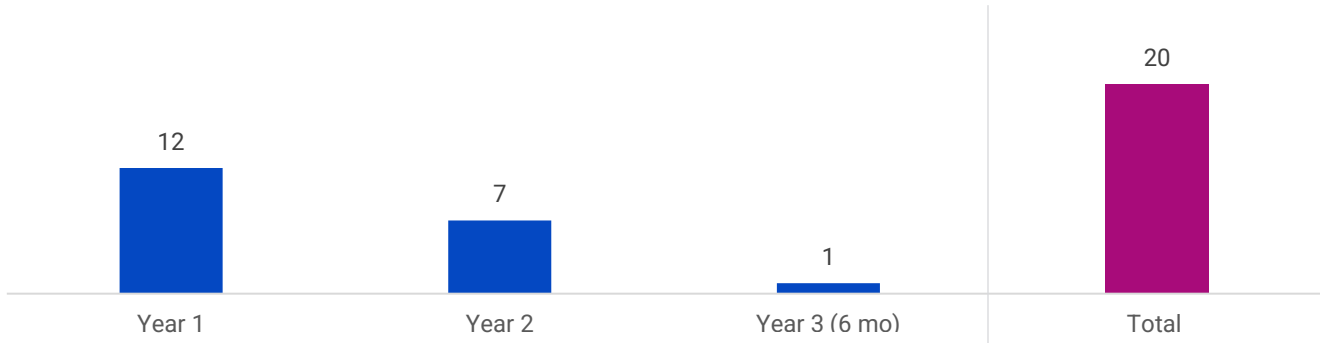


Note: Numbers may be duplicated. In Year 3,

Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

In Year 3, Raizes engaged with 1,459 participants through various community engagement activities
(not included in the chart on the left)

Number of Student-Led Projects Implemented in Cycle XI, by Year and Overall



Note: "Student-led" projects are activities that Raizes implements as a result of student's identifying what they want to learn about. This strategy is in line with the principles of youth participatory action research (YPAR) model.

Note: Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

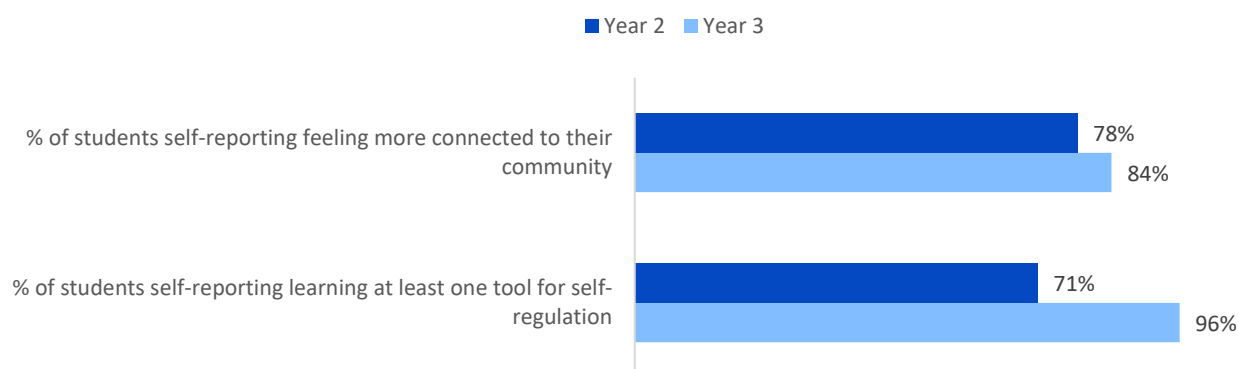
Highlighted Activities in Year Three

| ACTIVITY | QUANTITY | DESCRIPTION |
|--|---------------------------------|--|
| Community Events | 60+ | Raizes participated in many community events in year three, including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources Fairs Back to School events Overdose Awareness Day Art pop-ups |
| National Compadres Network Training | 6 Youth | Raizes was able to provide scholarships to six youth to participate in the training. As a result of their participation, all are now certified Circle keepers. |
| Restorative Activities at Schools | 22 Sessions 336 Participants | Raizes provided a diverse array of restorative activities at school sites. Some include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Artists led Altar making, Christmas stocking making, and sensory bottle making Wellness Talking Circles with student check-ins |
| Student Mural | Not tracked | In the last quarter of Cycle XI, Raizes supported with a student-led mural at Montgomery High School. |
| Posada Con Raizes | 10 Students | Raizes hosted a Violence Prevention Awareness Series (VPAS) event at Piner High School in December 2024. The event engaged approximately 70 people and was supported by student volunteers. |

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

In Year 2, Raizes Collective began implementing a survey to capture 'better off' data. Surveys were collected in quarters two through four in year two. In Year 2, 217 students from eight schools completed surveys. In year three, 50 surveys were collected.

Percent of Students Reporting Positive Outcomes in Cycle XI, by Type



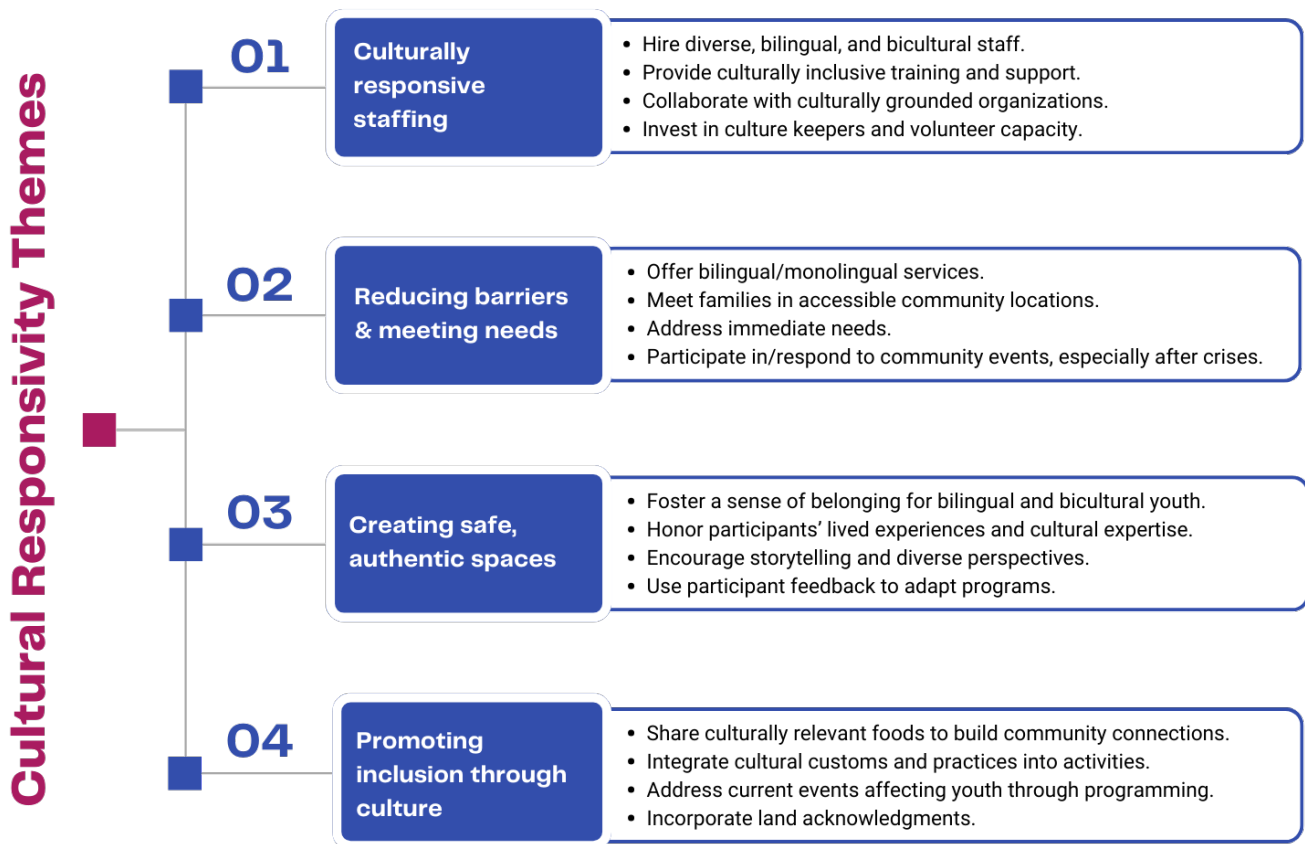
Year 2 n=217, Year 3 n=50

Schools included: Cesar Chavez Learning Academy, Comstock Middle School, Montgomery High School, Piner High School, Roseland Accelerated Middle School, Roseland University Prep, Santa Rosa Middle School, and Slater Middle School.

Note: No surveys were collected in Year 1. Year 3 was from July-December 2024, with only 2 quarters of reported data.

CULTURAL RESPONSIVITY OF SERVICES

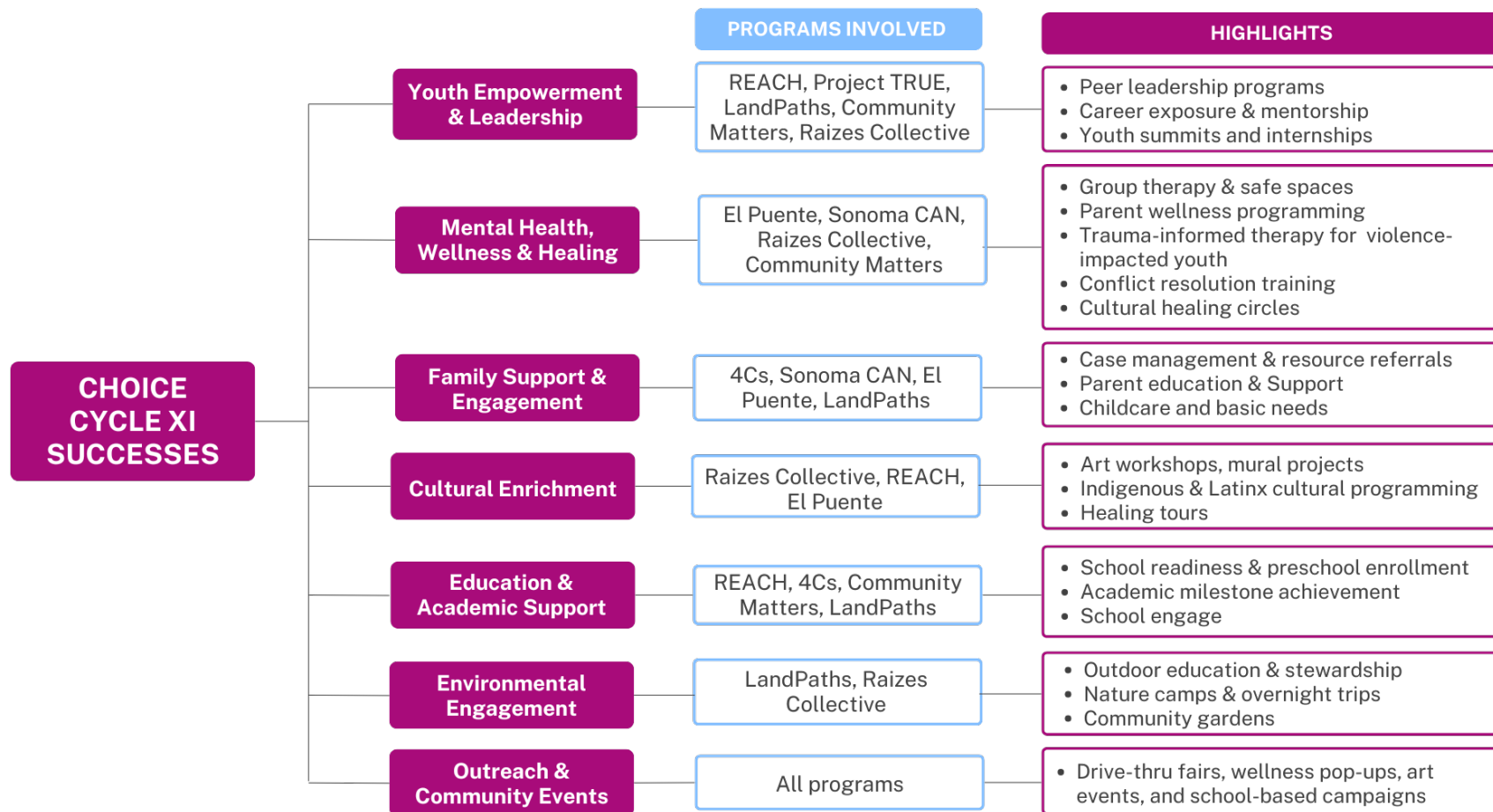
One important factor for measuring **'how well did we do?'** is to look at cultural responsiveness. Throughout this cycle, CHOICE grantees demonstrated a strong commitment to culturally responsive, community-centered approaches in their work with youth and families. Central to this effort was ensuring that staff and volunteers reflected the communities they serve—through diverse, bilingual teams, inclusive training, and partnerships with culturally grounded organizations. Grantees prioritized accessibility by meeting families in familiar community spaces, addressing immediate needs, and removing participation barriers. They also created safe, welcoming environments where participants felt empowered to be themselves, share their experiences, and help shape programming. By honoring culture through food, traditions, and inclusive practices, CHOICE grantees fostered trust, belonging, and deeper community connection. When asked how their programs were culturally responsive, the following themes emerged from grantee responses.



COMMON SUCCESSES AND CHALLENGES

COMMON THEMES: SUCCESSES ACROSS PROGRAMS IN CYCLE XI

The graphic below highlights the key successes of the Cycle XI grantees, showing the diverse impact these programs had on youth, families, and, likely, the broader community. From violence prevention and youth empowerment to educational support and environmental engagement, each branch reflects the core areas where the programs made significant strides.



COMMON THEMES: CHALLENGES ACROSS PROGRAMS IN CYCLE XI

The table below outlines common challenges faced by grantees during Cycle XI. These challenges span access to services, staffing issues, participant engagement, environmental constraints, resource limitations, and coordination difficulties. Despite these challenges, programs continued to adapt to meet community needs.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| Access Barriers to Services <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited availability of core services like childcare slots, transitional housing, or culturally appropriate mental health support.• Many families were ineligible for assistance or unable to follow through with service participation. | Staffing Issues <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff turnover, hiring shortages (especially bilingual or specialized staff), and program disruptions due to personnel changes were a consistent issue.• Difficulty maintaining consistent adult or school-based support affected service delivery. | Scheduling & Engagement Difficulties <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programs struggled with low or inconsistent participation, especially during school breaks or due to external events like violence or school end-of-year activities.• Recruiting and retaining youth participants or families was often a challenge. |
| Environmental & Logistical Constraints <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weather-related disruptions impacted outdoor programs.• Transportation issues and lack of permanent space created obstacles for delivering consistent services. | Resource & Funding Limitations <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Several programs struggled with limited funding, staff, or space, which restricted their ability to meet growing community demand.• Cost-related challenges, such as childcare rates exceeding subsidies, increased hardship for families. | Coordination & Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some programs noted communication barriers—whether between staff, with partner organizations, or with schools—affecting smooth service delivery. |

CONCLUSION

During Cycle XI, the eight CHOICE grantees collectively demonstrated notable successes in violence prevention and community healing by empowering youth, supporting families, and strengthening community connections. Their violence prevention efforts were deeply rooted in community collaboration, cultural relevance, and youth empowerment, making a lasting impact on safety and well-being at both the individual and community levels. Grantees provided vital services ranging from early childhood education access and mental health support to environmental education and cultural enrichment. Many programs fostered youth leadership through mentorship, skill-building workshops, and peer-led initiatives, while others engaged families through culturally relevant programming, resource distribution, and trauma-informed care. Despite facing challenges, these organizations expanded their reach through creative outreach strategies, strong partnerships, and consistent community presence. Their efforts not only addressed immediate needs but also promoted long-term resilience, personal growth, and civic engagement across diverse populations.