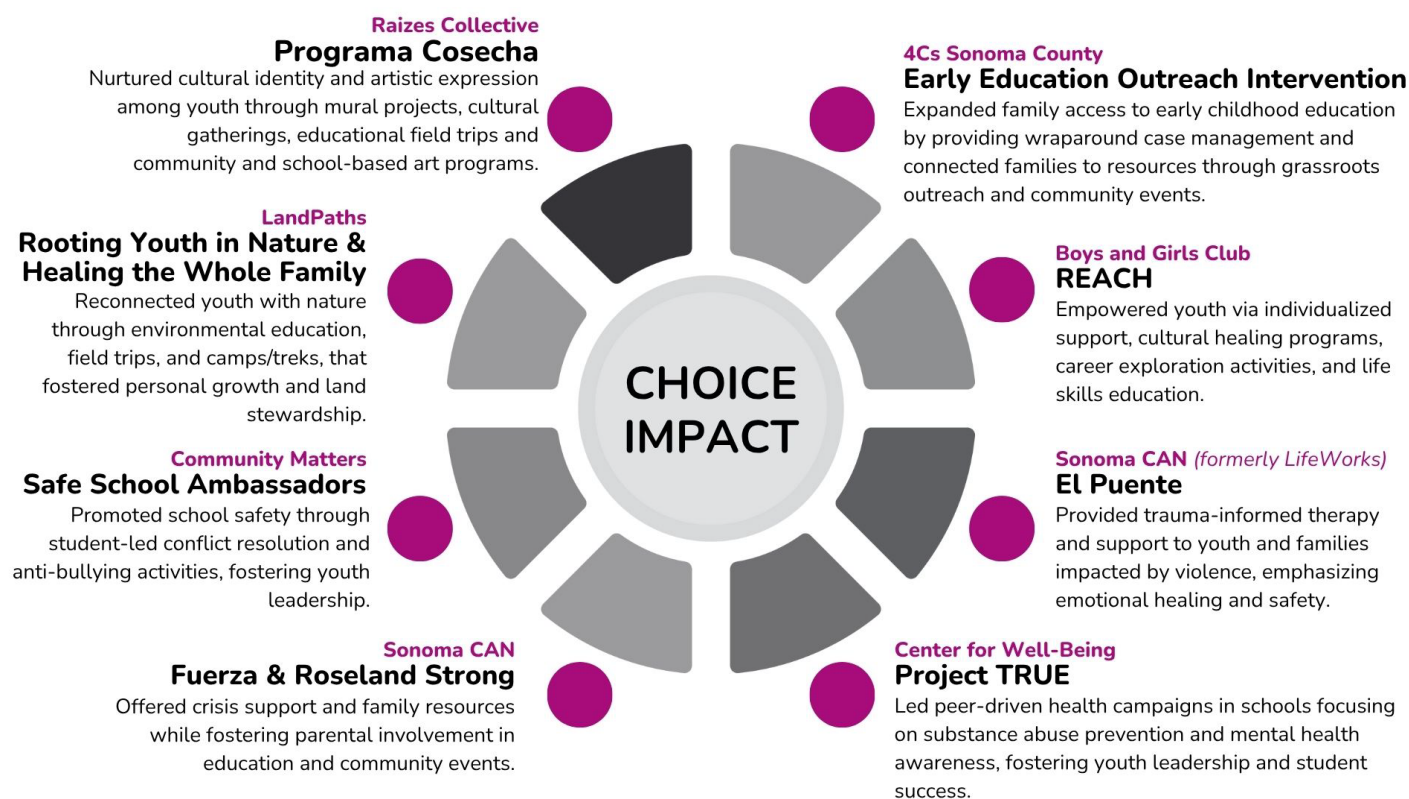


Summary: Santa Rosa CHOICE Cycle XI Final Evaluation Report (2022–2024)

From July 2022 to December 2024, the City of Santa Rosa’s CHOICE Grant Program funded eight community-based organizations to implement violence prevention and youth development programs. Grounded in a public health approach and supported by the Public Safety and Prevention (PSAP) tax, CHOICE Cycle XI prioritized youth ages 12–24 and focused on gang prevention, school engagement, and early childhood readiness. Applied Survey Research (ASR) conducted the evaluation using a Results-Based Accountability framework to track implementation and outcomes.



KEY THEMES

1. Youth Empowerment and Leadership

- Many programs successfully fostered youth leadership through peer-led activities, school engagement campaigns, and culturally relevant art, nature, and wellness programming.
- Programs like Project TRUE, Safe School Ambassadors, and Programa Cosecha elevated youth voices and built confidence, civic engagement, and leadership skills.

2. Family Engagement and Wraparound Support

- Multiple programs, including Early Education Outreach Intervention and El Puente, supported families with case management, crisis support, and resource distribution.
- Programs addressed social determinants of health, connecting families to childcare, education, mental health, food, and housing services.

3. Culturally Responsive Programming

- All grantees prioritized cultural relevance by hiring bilingual/bicultural staff, delivering community-rooted services, and honoring participants' traditions and values.
- Services were provided in familiar locations, with food, art, and language accessibility that reflected participants' backgrounds.

4. Trauma-Informed, Healing-Centered Approaches

- Programs like El Puente provided therapeutic services that supported trauma recovery, family healing, and reduction in high-risk behaviors.
- Nature-based and arts-based healing were emphasized by Rooting Youth in Nature, Health the Whole Family and Programa Cosecha.

5. Community Reach and Impact

- CHOICE-funded programs reached over 16,700 community members and provided more than 53,000 service hours.
- Services spanned high-need neighborhoods, with broad engagement across race/ethnicity and risk levels.

6. Program Successes and Outcomes

- Most grantees met or came close to meeting their success targets, which included reductions in criminal justice contact, improved school attendance, increased knowledge of health topics, and enhanced family well-being. Examples include:

Early Education Outreach Intervention	88% of clients who requested childcare were enrolled
REACH	98% of youth did not incur new criminal charges
El Puente	83% of participants reduced trauma and risk behaviors
Project TRUE	98% of youth leaders increased knowledge about alcohol, tobacco, and drugs
Fuerza	69% of participants reported increased school attendance
Safe School Ambassadors	94% felt more connected to their school
Rooting Youth in Nature	73% of students reported a positive attitude about time outdoors
Programa Cosecha	76% of students learned at least one tool for self-regulation

7. Navigating Challenges

- Common barriers included staffing shortages, transportation and access issues, inconsistent youth participation, lack of childcare slots, and limited culturally relevant behavioral health services.

- Programs adapted by expanding outreach, partnering with schools, strengthening partnerships with each other to better support participants, and adjusting programming to meet changing needs.

Cycle XI CHOICE grantees demonstrated a shared commitment to empowering youth, strengthening families, and fostering safe communities. Through collaborative, culturally grounded, and trauma-informed approaches, they delivered vital services and promoted healing and resilience. Despite systemic challenges, their efforts reached high-need areas and diverse populations, generating measurable benefits in safety, connectedness, and individual well-being. The findings from Cycle XI show that community-based solutions are essential to preventing violence and nurturing thriving youth.

NEXT STEPS: LOOKING AHEAD TO CYCLE XII

Building on the lessons and successes of Cycle XI, the CHOICE Grant Program and Violence Prevention Partnership have aligned Cycle XII (2025–2028) with a new five-year strategic plan that expands impact and sharpens focus:

- **Updated Strategic Focus Areas:** Cycle XII programs are aligned to five citywide priorities: Intervention, Prevention, Communications and Outreach, Investment, and Collaboration. These areas reflect a renewed public health approach to addressing the root causes of violence.
- **New and Continuing Grantees:** Cycle XII is funding both new and continuing agencies across four core service categories:
 - **Workforce Development** (e.g., job readiness, vocational training)
 - **Reentry and Diversion** (e.g., cognitive skills, restorative justice)
 - **Whole Family Support** (e.g., therapy, system navigation)
 - **Pro-Social Activities** (e.g., nature-based healing, youth engagement)
- **Focus on Equity and High-Risk Youth:** The program is continuing to prioritize youth ages 0-24, particularly those who are at-risk, high-risk, gang-impacted, or gang-intentional, or those living in Equity Priority Areas.
- **Enhanced Performance Tracking:** The evaluation framework will continue to use Results-Based Accountability (RBA), with refined outcome measures including job attainment, reduced recidivism, improved family functioning, and increased sense of belonging.
- **Long-Term Vision:** The CHOICE initiative continues to evolve as a model of shared responsibility—one that uplifts youth, strengthens families, and creates safer, more connected communities.

As the City of Santa Rosa moves through this next cycle of investment and learning, the foundation built during Cycle XI and prior cycles ensures that future work is grounded in data, shaped by community voice, and driven by a vision of equity, belonging, and opportunity for all.