



Memorandum

TO: ALL CHILDREN ACHIEVE
COMMITTEE

FROM: Sara L. Hensley

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: 05-25-04

Approved

Date

**SUBJECT: SAN JOSE B.E.S.T. CYCLE XIII MID-YEAR EVALUATION REPORT
AND CYCLE XIV REPORT**

RECOMMENDATION

1. Accept the report on the San José B.E.S.T. (Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together) Cycle XIII Mid-Year Evaluation.
2. Accept proposed strategy for allocation of Cycle XIV B.E.S.T. funding.

BACKGROUND

The San José B.E.S.T. Program provides funding to implement the strategies identified by the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF) 2003-2005 Strategic Work Plan and the Allocation Plan. Eligible service providers are determined by way of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), which allows applicants to demonstrate their capacity to serve the target population directed in the Strategic Work Plan. The B.E.S.T. program has historically used a triennial process for the RFQ and the Needs Assessment. Due to the uncertainty of San José B.E.S.T. funding last year, the RFQ process was suspended for one year and the existing list of eligible service providers was used for the FY 2003-2004. Service agreements were negotiated in the fall of 2003 and were developed based on the following: the strategies identified by the MGPTF Strategic Work Plan; the San José B.E.S.T. Needs Assessment; the B.E.S.T. program evaluation; and previous contract compliance.

A needs assessment was conducted throughout San José between January and March 2003 and results were used to help formulate the FY 2003-2004 Cycle XIII Allocation Plan. Community input was gathered via focus groups and surveys.

- 8,301 surveys were completed;
- Eight youth focus groups and eight community focus groups were held;

- 78% of respondents were less than 25 years of age;
- 47% of respondents said gangs are a problem in San José; and
- The following top six service needs were identified:
 - Assisting target youth succeed/get back in to school
 - Help target youth stop using drugs
 - Assist youth to avoid the dangers of gangs and conflicts
 - Assist target parents to work with their children to solve problems
 - Provide target youth with more positive adults in their lives
 - Provide target youth with support groups and activities

ANALYSIS

Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force and B.E.S.T.

The MGPTF has been in existence since 1991 and has been the catalyst to engage community, schools, law enforcement, and other governmental agencies in efforts to reduce gang violence throughout San José. During this time the effectiveness of this partnership has been reflected in a 50% drop in juvenile crime since 1994 and the development of award winning projects like the Safe School Campus Initiative and the Code Red Trainings.

The San José B.E.S.T. annual allocation of \$3 million supports the efforts covering the Continuum of Safety (Prevention, Intervention, and Suppression). In combination with successful law enforcement efforts, San José B.E.S.T. funds projects such as tutoring, mentoring, after school activities, outreach, substance abuse and gang counseling.

Over the past few years there have been a number of developments that have initiated a re-examination of the function of the MGPTF and the allocation of B.E.S.T. funding. The most significant ones have been the recent increase of gang activity, the increase of other prevention-focused resources, the loss of expertise and capacity of representatives within the MGPTF, the restructuring of PRNS, and the economic recession.

As San José B.E.S.T. funding increased and the level of gang violence decreased, the MGPTF expanded its strategies to offer more after school programs and mentoring services. With the increase of B.E.S.T. funding towards prevention services, staff found that the services were duplicative of other department efforts. The growth in resources for after school programs has resulted in more safe places and quality services for children citywide. Shifting B.E.S.T. resources into prevention also resulted in a shift in capacity to work with gang involved youth. Currently, a limited number of agencies have the ability to work with youth exhibiting high-risk behaviors.

PRNS is currently implementing a staffing restructuring aimed at providing San José youth with a coordinated service delivery system that incorporates prevention, intervention and after care services. In anticipation of City staff reductions in the area of Intervention Services, PRNS has developed a City-Wide Safety Strategy that would convene and link all San José B.E.S.T. funded agencies, school based safety efforts and PRNS intervention services together.

The current recession has also had a marked impact on the MGPTF due to the upsurge of gang violence. In the months of December and January, San José experienced four gang related homicides – unusual during the winter season. With the limited amount of resources available, the MGPTF membership has expressed its desire to re-focus its available resources on intervention and suppression efforts. Specifically, the MGPTF membership endorsed a commitment of 70% of B.E.S.T. funding specifically toward intervention services. The agencies and partners have been well prepared and have agreed upon this effort. In a time of limited resources and limited expertise, the shift in focus of the MGPTF confirms the strategic workplan direction that was approved last year and is a catalyst to ensure San José neighborhoods are safe and free of gang violence.

It is anticipated that the San José B.E.S.T. RFQ will be released in early July and will have eligible service providers identified in August. The types of services that will be funded are the following:

1. Case Management and Youth Support Groups
2. Gang Mediation/Intervention/Crisis Response
3. Outpatient Substance Abuse Services
4. Services for Adjudicated Youth
5. Domestic Violence Services
6. Truancy Case Management Services
7. Day Education Programs
8. Parent/Family Support Services

Mid-Year Evaluation

San José B.E.S.T. contracted with Community Crime Prevention Associates (CCPA) to conduct a Mid-Year and Final Evaluation of B.E.S.T. funded agencies for FY 2003-2004. Mid-year results show that 47% of B.E.S.T. funding was contracted for prevention and early intervention programs, and 53% for intervention services. During the previous FY (2002-2003), B.E.S.T. funded 61% for prevention and early intervention services and 39% for intervention services. The increase in intervention services was deliberate and in alignment with the direction of the MGPTF. Other highlights for the period of September 2003-February 2004 include:

- 10,837 customers were served (48% male; 52% female)
- Actual cost per hour of B.E.S.T. funds, \$2.71
- 82% of youth customers were satisfied with the services
- 87% of parents of youth customers were satisfied with the services
- For asset development, youth said they improved on 57% of possible changes

A summary of the evaluation is attached (Attachment A).

PUBLIC OUTREACH

As noted previously, community input was gathered via focus groups and surveys distributed and collected throughout San José between January and March 2003.

COST IMPLICATIONS

B.E.S.T. funding for Cycle XIV is included in the proposed 2004-2005 Redevelopment Agency Operating Budget currently being considered by the City Council.

COORDINATION

This report was coordinated with the City Attorney's office.

SARA L. HENSLEY
Director of Parks, Recreation
and Neighborhood Services

Attachment A: B.E.S.T. Performance Logic Model Evaluation System