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Monterey County Health Department
STRYVE Youth Violence Prevention Program

Proposal to reduce crime in Salinas and Greenfield to pre-pandemic levels by expanding “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” (CPTED)

The goal of this proposal is to reduce violence that has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, through the expanded use of a community violence intervention program. The Health Department’s Youth Violence Prevention Program proposes to respond to an increase in violence in Salinas and Greenfield that has occurred during the pandemic. In Monterey County, Salinas and Greenfield have been disproportionately affected by both higher rates of violence and COVID-19.

A higher rate of violent crime has challenged the City of Salinas for two decades, compared to the State of California and Monterey County as a whole. The City of Greenfield has the second highest violent crime rate in Monterey County. Our focus for this project is on preventing violence among high school youth, in Salinas and Greenfield. In Salinas, police data reveals a 12.7% increase in assaults and a 23.4% increase in domestic violence reported from the pre-pandemic year of 2019, when compared to the first year of the pandemic, 2020. While crime data for youth in Greenfield is not available, MCHD will work with their police department to provide comparable data for evaluation.

Changes in violent crimes from 2019 (pre-pandemic) to 2020 (pandemic) among youth ages 10-24, in Salinas CA		
Year	Assaults	Domestic Violence
2019	300	128
2020	338	158
% Increase	12.7%	23.4%

Source: Salinas Police Department Reports, 2021

Both Salinas and Greenfield experienced disproportionately higher rates of COVID-19. As of October 10, 2021, 46% of the total County cases were in Salinas, yet Salinas represents only 36% of the County population. Similarly, 6% of the total County COVID-19 cases were in Greenfield, yet Greenfield represents only 4% of the County population.

Project Goal and Strategy

The goal of the proposed project is to contribute to a reduction in assaults and intimate partner violence, by decreasing the 2020 rates to pre-pandemic levels by December of 2024. The focus will be on assaults of youth and intimate partner violence in Salinas, among youth ages 10 to 24 years.

To help achieve this goal the Health Department will expand and enhance their implementation of an evidence-based strategy called “Crime Prevention through Environmental Design” or “CPTED.” Improved lighting and the elimination of hiding places by trimming overgrown vegetation are just two examples of CPTED strategies to reduce crime. CPTED has been shown to prevent both assaults and intimate partner violence and is among the community violence interventions recognized by the White House. The request for ARPA funds will allow the Health Department to extend CPTED beyond the two Salinas high schools currently covered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) grant. The ARPA proposal will enroll two additional schools in the Salinas Union High School District (SUHSD), plus one

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location serving students in Greenfield. The surrounding neighborhoods of the participating schools, especially those with routes frequented by students, will also be assessed using CPTED principles.

The CDC funds for this most recent award were significantly less than in past years and thus we can serve only two Salinas high schools with the federal dollars. The reach and geography of the proposed expansion will have a broad impact on Salinas and Greenfield, with the capacity to contribute to a reduction in violent crime.

The CDC grant work began with a focus on Salinas because of its historically high levels of youth violent crime and importance as the administrative center and seat of Monterey County government. The problem of youth violence in Salinas was recognized in 2010 by the White House and Department of Justice. Salinas was among the first six cities in the United States to be added to the National Forum on Youth Violence Prevention. As the County seat, crime in Salinas has an economic impact on businesses and their ability to recruit talented employees, who may have concerns for their safety.

The CPTED strategy was selected for expansion to Greenfield because it meets the criteria of a community violence intervention program, as described by the federal ARPA guidance. Greenfield was selected as an area in greater need of violence prevention because of its higher violent crime rate over the past three years. In fact, Greenfield's violent crime rate is rapidly approaching that of Salinas.

ARPA request for funds to expand and enhance CPTED

The table below indicates the nature and amount of the request.

Improving Student Safety through Crime Prevention (CPTED) (3/1/2022 to 12/31/2024)	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24	FY 25	Total Amount
I. Elimination of unsafe conditions on school grounds	\$50,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$250,000
II. Training, oversight, and evaluation of CPTED by MCHD	\$110,154	\$200,449	\$200,449	\$75,024	586,076
III. Implementation of CPTED by students, with support from teachers and administration	\$4,735	\$17,745	\$17,745	\$2,949	43,174
Total Request	\$164,889	\$318,194	\$318,194	\$77,973	\$879,250

Elimination of unsafe conditions on school grounds

ARPA funding will be used to provide seed money each year to encourage the SUHSD and one entity in Greenfield such as Greenfield High School to correct unsafe conditions, identified and prioritized by students, using CPTED. CPTED assessments are designed to identify conditions that make crime more likely to occur and some of those conditions may be expensive to correct. This could include the need for better outdoor lighting and better visibility in stairwells. While the cost of these improvements far exceeds the \$50,000 per year proposed for the SUHSD and Greenfield, the funds are intended to serve as seed money for projects that were not previously budgeted or deemed a lower priority. Training maintenance and facilities staff in CPTED principles can add student safety as a criterion for prioritizing

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capital projects. An investment in the safety of the school grounds can benefit the safety of the surrounding neighborhood as well. Unsafe conditions on campus will be reported to the respective school district and/or school principal or their designee and those identified in surrounding neighborhoods will be reported to the City of Salinas using the “SalinasConnect” app and the relevant department in the City of Greenfield.

An on-going evaluation of the impact of CPTED on violent crime has produced positive results. These results involved an investment by the City of Salinas to make CPTED-related improvements. Health Department epidemiologists have been evaluating CPTED’s impact on crime over the last ten years in Salinas. The evaluation examined the impact of 51 CPTED improvements made by the City and youth between 2017 and 2019. Improvements included graffiti removal, cleared dump sites and the trimming of overgrown vegetation. In 2018 the number of violent assaults of youth peaked at a range of 124 to 151 assaults per square mile in zip code 93905 hotspots, while in 2019 the number of violent assaults of youth declined to a range of 91 to 104 assaults per square mile in the 93905 hotspot areas. CPTED likely contributed to this decline along with the work of others, including law enforcement and community-based organizations. The decreased number of assaults in these hotspots include gunshot wounds and cuts/stabbings, which are estimated to cost \$154,000 per gunshot survivor and \$12,000 per cut/stab survivor in medical, public services, and work-loss costs.¹

Training, oversight, and evaluation of CPTED by Health Department staff and paid interns

Health Department staff funded by the CDC over the last ten years have received training and gained a great deal of experience in the implementation of CPTED. MCHD staff will train interns to implement CPTED and to facilitate student groups. A Health Program Coordinator will oversee the work of four, half-time interns. These paid interns will lead school- based CPTED groups (community groups if school-based is not possible), assist students in synthesizing data collected from student maps showing unsafe sites, guide assessments completed by students, and ensure that unsafe conditions identified during assessments are entered into a log for follow-up.

Health Department epidemiologists will evaluate the impact of CPTED on school grounds and the surrounding neighborhoods. They will analyze data from the CPTED logs, map unsafe conditions corrected by each city and maintain crime hotspot maps including frequently traveled routes to school in surrounding neighborhoods and measure changes in violent crimes.

Implementation of CPTED by students

Implementation will begin with a CPTED training video shown to students in social studies and other classes, emphasizing opportunities for civic engagement. Students will be asked to mark places on an area map of their campus and surrounding neighborhoods that are frightening to them or where violence has occurred. A student CPTED group at each school will be formed to analyze these maps to identify the most frequently cited unsafe places. This student group will receive training from a nationally known expert on CPTED, who developed the concept of [Second Generation CPTED](#). This enhancement to the original CPTED recognizes the importance of social cohesion and community culture in the prevention of crime. This youth-driven approach will be particularly effective on campuses where fights, bullying and sexual assaults are intentionally hidden from supervising adults. Those locations will be assessed and prioritized by the student groups and then reported to the schools or the cities, if they are off campus. Students will present their findings to their City Council and School Board to elevate the need for capital expenditures, such as the addition of a streetlight. Members of the

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CPTED student groups will receive stipends for their participation at the end of each school year. Lead teachers at each school will also receive a stipend to connect youth to school administration, through scheduled meetings and presentations of CPTED findings.

Conclusion

The proposed expansion of CPTED to two additional Salinas schools and one entity in Greenfield is only possible with the addition of ARPA funds. Because an investment in the safety of the school grounds often benefits the safety of the surrounding neighborhood, the reach and geography of this prevention effort is likely to have a broad impact on violent crime in Salinas and Greenfield.

ⁱ Costs of gunshot and cut/stab wounds in the United States, with some Canadian comparisons. T R Miller , M A Cohen. Accident Analysis and Prevention 1997 May;29(3):329-41. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/9183471/>