



Toppenish Police Department, Yakima County Executive Summary of the Community-Level Progress Evaluation Reports

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Health Services*

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Executive Summary

Toppenish Police Department in Yakima County is one of eighteen recipients of the Washington State Incentive Grant (SIG). SIG funds are allocated to communities to prevent the use, misuse and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs by Washington State youth. Community grantees are expected to make their local prevention system more effective by establishing prevention partnerships, using a risk and protective factor framework for data driven needs assessments, and by implementing and monitoring science-based prevention programs.

Project Site

Toppenish is a small town with a population of 7,940 in eastern Yakima County. It experienced a rapid cultural shift from a majority white population in the 1980s to a majority Hispanic population during the 1990s. The town is located on the Yakima Indian Nation Reservation. Part of the only federally designated Northwest High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) in eastern Washington, Toppenish experiences easy availability of drugs and drug arrest rates are more than four times the state average for ages 10-17.

Prevention History

Prior to SIG, prevention services were primarily provided through the Toppenish School District in conjunction with Merit Resource Services, an outpatient treatment and prevention service, and the Toppenish Police Department. Substance abuse prevention has been addressed by Intervention and Prevention Specialists and Student Resource Officers (SRO's), and is included in the work of Toppenish High School's Peer Health Experts and Peer Counselors. Parenting classes that include substance abuse prevention education have been taught by the Yakima Valley Farm Workers Clinic in Toppenish and by the Central Washington Comprehensive Mental Health Program in Yakima. Although each segment of Toppenish's prevention services has been well planned, what was lacking before SIG was the coordinated, city wide planning, provision, and program effectiveness monitoring of substance abuse prevention services.

The most visible evidence of Toppenish's progress is the Safe Haven building, acquired and remodeled using city funds. SIG provides maintenance and operating funds for the building, which has room for several social service offices.

Social services located within Safe Haven have gained improved access to each other for purposes of service coordination and referrals. The office space provided by Safe Haven attracted several new service agencies to town. In addition to formal social services, Safe Haven provides a safe and drug-free place for children after school and space for computer and recreation classes.

Safe Haven helped the city qualify for designation as a United States Department of Justice Weed and Seed site. This designation made the city eligible to apply for funding from several other sources. Thus, Toppenish used the State Incentive Grant to leverage funds, that is, to create eligibility and apply for additional funding based on previous awards and achievements.

Progress toward SIG Community Level Objectives

Objective 1: To establish partnerships...to collaborate at the local level to prevent alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse by youth.

An unusual feature of the Toppenish SIG site, among the 18 community grantees, is its Safe Haven building where prevention programs are provided, along with recreation opportunities, computer lab, the SHOP school, and offices for several social service agencies. Renovating the old building required partnerships among the city administration, the police department, Fort Simcoe vocational training program, and the jail, as inmates who had been jailed due to the inability to pay fines were paid to assist in the renovation.

Objective 2: To use a risk and protective factor framework to develop a community prevention action plan...

and...

Objective 3: To participate in joint community risk and protective factor and resource assessment...

SIG helped increase awareness of the risk and protective factor framework among Toppenish prevention providers, the schools, and city administrators. Further training is needed for schools and providers, as understanding and use of the framework is not universal. Examples of data sets that were used in planning are local demographic reports, county profiles, juvenile justice reports, law enforcement data, and the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior.

Objective 4: To select and implement effective prevention actions...

The SIG process encouraged the choice of programs shown through published research to be effective in different locales and with multiple populations. These are known as research-based programs. The programs that Toppenish selected to address their prioritized risk and protective factors include the following:

- Tutoring
- Home Visiting
- Mentoring
- Parent Training: Los Ninos Bien Educados
- Parent Training: Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities
- Safe Haven Community Center Recreation Activities

Objective 5: To use common reporting tools...

One of the requirements for participating in the SIG project was to participate in the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior. Survey data provide cross-sectional substance abuse prevalence rates and measures of risk and protective factors among 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grade students. This objective was fulfilled in two ways:

- Pre- and post-tests from the Everest database were used with program participants in SIG-funded prevention programs, with an emphasis on science-based programs.
- The Toppenish School District participated for the first time in the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior, an important measure of substance abuse prevalence and risk and protective factors.

Conclusion

A key achievement under the SIG project was to create linkages between various social services by housing them in one location, Safe Haven. Toppenish leveraged SIG funds by using SIG to qualify for a US Department of Justice grant known as Weed and Seed, thus adding an environmental approach to prevention with a science-based program approach. The Toppenish SIG project has made progress toward achieving the community level objectives as established by the Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee. During the last year of SIG community funding, Toppenish intends to develop methods to maintain some of the changes they have achieved in the system of prevention planning, funding, implementation, and monitoring they developed under SIG.



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