Reducing Gang-Related Crime in San José

An Impact and Implementation Study of San José's Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST) Program

Authors:

Christian Geckeler
Jennifer Henderson-Frakes
Lea Folsom
Annelies Goger
Madeleine Levin
Marian Negoita
Sara Miller

Submitted to:

Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS)
City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara Street, 9th floor
San José, CA 95113-1905

Social Policy Research Associates

March 11, 2019

SPR SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

This page intentionally left blank.

Abstract

The Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST) program is a youth violence prevention and crime reduction initiative operated by the City of San José's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) Department and is part of the larger Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF). Through BEST, PRNS awards individual grants to qualified community organizations to provide a wide variety of youth services. Since 2010, PRNS has awarded between $1.6 and $2.5 million annually to support programming for youth ages six to 24 (and their families) who fit one of four target population profiles—at-risk, high-risk, gang impacted, or gang intentional. Grantees provide services in one or more of the four divisions of the San José Police Department (SJPD)—Central, Foothill, Southern, or Western—or citywide, and which are located in and around "hot spot" crime areas. Grantees offer a wide array of prevention and intervention services, including case management, cognitive behavioral therapies, street outreach services, employment services, and other supports.

Starting in 2017, PRNS contracted with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to evaluate the BEST program. SPR designed an evaluation covering an eight-year period from program year (PY) 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018 that includes an implementation study, an impact study, and a design for prospective evaluations of both BEST and the MGPTF. The study team collected data, including BEST grant management documents; San José Police Department data; and interview and focus group data from grantee staff, program participants, and key stakeholders.

The impact study, which examined the effect of BEST services on crime within SJPD beats, found an association between the delivery of BEST and a reduction of both gang incidents and youth arrests (i.e., arrests of people ages 24 and under). Key findings include:

- BEST services delivered within a given police beat were associated with modest decreases of gang incidents and youth arrests in the same beat, although impacts were statistically significant only according to some statistical models.
- BEST services delivered in a given police beat were associated with modest, statistically significant reductions of gang incidents and youth arrests in adjacent beats.

Through the implementation study, the evaluation provides an account of program service delivery and grantee operations, describing trends over the eight-year evaluation period that suggest ways for PRNS to improve BEST services and grant management. Finally, these findings from the impact and implementation studies, along with the analysis of other data, led to recommendations about future evaluations of BEST and the MGPTF that PRNS may wish to pursue. Such recommendations include additional qualitative analysis, especially of the overall scope and influence of MGPTF activities and individual-level outcomes, and impact analyses, which will bolster and ideally corroborate this evaluation's findings.

This page intentionally left blank.

Acknowledgments

The authors of this report would like to thank: 1) former and current staff members of San José's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department (PRNS)—including Angel Rios, Jr., Ron Soto, Mario Maciel, CJ Ryan, Petra Riguero, and Amy Chamberlin—for providing leadership, input, and guidance, as well as copious amounts of data; 2) BEST coordinators and staff members of program year 2017-2018 grantees who participated in interviews and focus groups; 3) youth focus group participants who shared their stories; 4) members of the San José Police Department for the provision of crime data; and 5) members of the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force technical team for hosting the study team on multiple occasions. Each of these individuals and organizations helped make this evaluation possible.

The authors are also grateful to other individuals for their help and guidance in the evaluation and in work that led to the completion of this report: Andrew Wiegand and Hannah Betesh, for their thoughtful reviews of the report; Ron D'Amico for his review of and contributions to early evaluation design planning; Sukey Leshnick for advising on the project; and Robert Corning, Ann Kingsbury, and Adam Abate for their contract management and administrative support. The authors would also like to thank other current and past SPR staff members who contributed to the completion of this report, including Mayte Cruz, Deanna Khemani, Eduardo Ortiz, and Savannah Rae.

❖❖❖

This report does not necessarily reflect the official position of PRNS or the City of San José. PRNS makes no guarantees, warranties, or assurances of any kind, express or implied, with respect to the information in this report, including any information on linked sites and including, but not limited to, accuracy of the information or its completeness, timeliness, usefulness, adequacy, continued availability, or ownership. This product is copyrighted by Social Policy Research Associates, Inc. Internal use by an organization and/or personal use by an individual for noncommercial purposes is permissible. All other uses require the prior authorization of the copyright owner.

This page intentionally left blank.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary E-1

A. The Evaluation of BEST E-2

B. Key Findings and Lessons Learned E-2

1. Impact Study Findings E-2

2. Implementation Study Findings E-4

3. Prospective Evaluation Design Recommendations E-5

C. Concluding Thoughts E-7

I. Introduction 1

A. The Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force and BEST Program 1

B. SPR's Evaluation of the BEST Program 3

1. Implementation Study 3

2. Impact Study 4

3. Prospective Evaluation Design 4

C. Data Collection 4

D. Overview of the Report 6

II. BEST Grants and Grant Spending 7

A. Number of BEST Grants and BEST Grantees 7

B. Overall BEST Funding Levels and Funding Composition 9

C. Varying Size and Influence of BEST Grants Across Grantees 11

III. BEST-Funded Program Services 13

A. BEST Theory of Change 13

B. BEST Participants 15

C. Eligible Service Areas 16

D. Units of Service 17

E. BEST Outcomes of Interest 20

1. Participant Outcomes 21

2. Measuring Outcomes 25

IV. BEST Geography and Crime Context 27

A. BEST Geography 27

B. BEST Service and Crime Locations 29
C. Adapting to Changes in Crime 37
1. BEST Program Responses to Crime and Perceived Changes in Crime 37
2. SJPD's Response to Crime 38
3. City Response to Gang Activity 39

V. Impact Study of BEST 41

A. Study Design 41
1. Assumptions 41
2. Analytic Strategy 42
3. Data Collection 43
B. Trends in Crime and BEST Service Delivery Over the Evaluation Period 44
C. Panel Regression Findings 48
D. Summary of Findings, Limitations, and Next Steps 52

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Evaluations 55

A. Key Findings from the Implementation and Impact Studies 55
1. BEST Is Associated with a Decrease in Crime 55
2. BEST Implementation Provides Input Regarding Future Grantmaking 56
3. A Program-Specific Theory of Change Would Improve BEST 59
4. BEST Needs Improved Output Measurement 59
B. Recommendations for Future Evaluation Efforts 60
1. Future BEST Evaluations 60
2. MGPTF Evaluation Efforts 62
C. Concluding Thoughts 64

References R-1

Appendix A: BEST Target Population Definitions A-1

Appendix B: BEST Grant Funding Over the Evaluation Period B-1

Appendix C: Definitions of Eligible Service Areas C-1

Appendix D: Impact Study Technical Appendix D-1

Executive Summary

Established in 1991, the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF), operated by the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) Department, is a strategic youth violence prevention initiative for the City of San José.[1] The MGPTF works to address issues of youth violence associated with gangs—especially in neighborhoods within San José that experience these problems at a higher rate than others—in two main ways. First, it funds three modes of services: the Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST) program, Youth Intervention Services, and Neighborhood Services. Second, it organizes a broad coalition—including law enforcement, school officials, government leaders (from city, county, and state offices), faith- and community-based organizations, and residents—to collaborate on, plan, share, and implement solutions.

Through BEST, which is the primary focus of this report, PRNS identifies and selects qualified nonprofit and faith-based community organizations to participate in a three-year cycle (referred to as a "triennial period") that includes their participation in MGPTF technical team meetings. PRNS then awards individual grants to select qualified service providers each program year (PY, which is September through August). Since PY 2010-2011, PRNS has awarded between $1.6 and $2.5 million to an estimated 18 to 26 BEST grantees each year.

BEST services range widely but share a common framework. Grants support programming for youth ages six to 24 (and their families) who fit one of four target population profiles that represent increasing levels of risk regarding crime and gang-related crime involvement: at-risk, high-risk, gang impacted, and gang intentional. BEST services are also organized into different, PRNS-defined "eligible service areas," which encompass a wide array of prevention and intervention services, including case management, cognitive behavioral therapy, street outreach services, employment services, health-related services, and other supports. Grantees provide services at community-based organization offices, in schools, at juvenile detention facilities, and on the street in high-crime neighborhoods. These services are distributed in one or more of the four divisions of the San José Police Department (SJPD)—Central, Foothill, Southern, or Western—or citywide, a category that typically encompasses locations that serve youth from across the city, such as juvenile justice system facilities or alternative schools. BEST also emphasizes the provision of services in and around "hot spot" crime areas, which are identified and periodically revised by the MGPTF in partnership with the SJPD.[2]

---

[1] Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force. (2018). *From trauma to triumph II: A plan to foster hope and break the cycle of youth violence. Strategic work plan 2018–2020*. San José, CA: Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department.

[2] Currently, there are 18 hot spots, with six in the Foothill Division, and four each in the remaining three divisions.

A. The Evaluation of BEST

Starting in 2017, PRNS contracted with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to evaluate the BEST program. SPR designed an evaluation covering the eight-year period (hereafter called the "evaluation period") from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018 that included three components: 1) an impact study, 2) an implementation study, and 3) designs for prospective evaluations of both BEST and the MGPTF as a whole.

To conduct the evaluation, the study team collected and analyzed seven types of data: 1) *MGPTF and BEST background documents* (e.g., strategic workplans, planning documents, past evaluation reports, and other materials that described programs, grantees, and services provided); 2) *BEST grant management documents* (e.g., BEST grantee contracts, quarterly workbooks grantees submitted to PRNS on service delivery and financial management, and other records from PRNS on cost and award status); 3) *interviews with all 18 PY 2017-2018 grantee program coordinators and some additional staff* about program context and operations; 4) *focus groups with BEST program representatives* from 15 PY 2017-2018 grantees about program outcomes; 5) *focus groups with youth participants* from four grantees to learn about their experiences in the program; 6) *interviews with MGPTF stakeholders and program leadership,* as well as other PRNS BEST staff, to learn about BEST and the larger context of MGPTF operations and services and to help inform prospective evaluation designs; and 7) *data obtained from SJPD* on incidents (especially those affiliated with gangs) and arrests (especially of individuals ages 24 and under), organized geographically by police division, district, and beat.

B. Key Findings and Lessons Learned

Through the impact study, the study team found an association between the delivery of BEST services and a reduction in certain measures of crime. Through the implementation study, the study team uncovered several trends in program implementation that may inform potential program changes PRNS could institute regarding BEST grant awards and grant management. Finally, these findings, along with analysis of other data, informed recommendations regarding future evaluation work for both BEST and MGPTF activities that the City of San José may wish to pursue. The findings and lessons learned, by evaluation component, are as follows.

1. Impact Study Findings

The impact study examined the effect of both the presence or absence of BEST services and varying levels of BEST services on crime over the evaluation period for various geographic areas of the city (SJPD beats). It showed that BEST services were associated with decreases in both

gang incidents and arrests of individuals ages 24 and under (hereafter "youth arrests").[3] More specifically, the impact study showed:

- **The types of crime that BEST services reduced aligned with the program's intent to reduce youth and gang-related violent crime**. The study examined impacts on crime-related outcomes rather than non-crime-related outcomes because crime was determined to be an outcome of interest for all BEST grantees. The study examined impacts on gang incidents, rather than incidents generally, and youth arrests, rather than arrests generally, because BEST focused on reducing gang-related crime and because BEST grantees generally targeted individuals ages 24 and under.

- **The cumulative provision of BEST services for a given SJPD beat was associated with a decrease in gang incidents and youth arrests for the same beat, although impacts were only statistically significant for some models.**[4] This finding was established based on the relationship between the level of service delivery for beats over time (as assessed by the programs' measurement of output known as units of service, or UOS) and both gang incidents and youth arrest outcomes.

- **The provision of BEST services for a given SJPD beat was associated reductions of gang incidents and youth arrests in adjacent beats.** BEST service delivery was also associated with reductions in gang incidents in adjacent beats, though these impacts were smaller and not all were statistically significant. This approach of looking at adjacent beats attempted to control for the possibility that people served by BEST grantees (and their families) may not have resided (and/or committed crimes) in the same beat in which services were offered.

There are some important caveats to these generally positive findings. First, the observed impacts on crime were modest. However, these modest impacts suggest the possibility of impacts on intermediate outcomes, such as positive youth development or improvements in school attendance or performance, where many BEST programs were designed to have more direct effects. These types of short- and medium-term outcomes, in theory, can be expected to build on one another and eventually lead to reductions in crime. Second, there were some limitations to the statistical models used. These limitations were both inherent to the design or could have been improved through additional types or years of data. The impact study results point to the need for additional, different types of analyses to corroborate these findings and the need to explore topics such as which eligible service areas drove the observed impacts and what outcomes the program influences.

---

[3] Due to limitations in the SJPD data, analysis of arrests was only possible starting in PY 2012-2013.

[4] That impacts were "statistically significant" means that these results were not likely to have appeared by chance alone.

2. Implementation Study Findings

The implementation study provides a detailed account of grantees and the services they delivered over the eight-year evaluation period. In some cases, the following findings suggest actions to be taken, but many present information designed to aid PRNS in future grantmaking and grant management by providing information that can be used alongside PRNS's own agency and BEST program goals. For many of these trends, the evaluation is neutral regarding the approach PRNS should take. However, because the delivery of BEST, as implemented over the evaluation period, is associated with reductions in crime, the most important question to consider is what changes can further improve participant outcomes.

- **Over the evaluation period, PRNS increasingly consolidated BEST grants, providing fewer, larger grants.** The total amount of money PRNS awarded through BEST grants over each year of the evaluation period started at $2,391,932 in PY 2010-2011 then decreased in PY 2011-2012 to $1,679,389, before steadily increasing up to $2,514,495 in PY 2017-2018. At the same time, the number of grantees decreased from 26 in PY 2010-2011 to 18 in PY 2017-2018. Thus, funding stayed about the same overall, but the number of grantees decreased. One reason for this decrease may be that some grantees initially funded in a triennial period lost funding in subsequent years. PRNS may wish to review this funding pattern to consider whether it should alter the number and size of future grants or continue with the current trend.

- **The influence of BEST grants on BEST-funded services varied widely across grantees.** While BEST funding as a percentage of total program expenses increased slightly over the evaluation period, this overall information obscures the variation in funding at the grantee level. BEST grants represented only a small portion of total program costs for some grantees' BEST-funded services (as little as 18 percent) and the majority of total program costs for others (as high as 86 percent). When BEST funding is a higher percentage of total program costs, PRNS has more influence over grantees. When it is lower, grantees are less dependent on PRNS funding and thus less vulnerable to BEST funding fluctuations. PRNS may wish to consider whether an optimal level of total program expenses exists or whether it would help to have a diminishing ratio over time, with a goal of sustainability.

- **BEST programs targeted higher risk youth in middle and high school.** While grantees could serve youth ages six to 24, grantees most often targeted youth ages 12 to 19. Similarly, while grantees could serve youth in one or more of the four risk levels, grantees more often targeted youth in the two middle risk levels.

- **The UOS that grantees delivered each program year decreased over the evaluation period.** This trend is notable given the slight increase in overall funding described above. PRNS may want to further explore the expectations placed on grantees regarding service delivery as well as how UOS are measured. Some possible explanations for this decrease are 1) that these changes reflect the changes in eligible services areas

described above, 2) that grant increases were insufficient to keep up with rising costs, and 3) that the declining number of grantees had insufficient capacity to provide the same levels of UOS delivered by the larger number of grantees observed earlier in the evaluation period.

- **Grantees focused on many intermediate outcomes (e.g., youth development and education-based outcomes) in addition to the long-term outcome of reducing crime.** In interviews and focus groups, grantee representatives and youth explained that BEST-funded programs and services were designed to improve many short- and medium-term outcomes in addition to, and often as a means to, improving long-term criminal justice-related outcomes by providing youth with the skills, support, alternatives, and sense of purpose needed to avoid becoming involved in criminal activity. This finding is important for interpreting the impact study, since, as discussed above, modest impacts regarding crime may suggest larger impacts regarding these intermediate outcomes.

- **BEST grantees and city agencies adapted services and activities designed to support BEST in response to changes in crime.** In interviews and focus groups, grantees spoke about adapting services to crime trends observed in the locations in which they operated. Over the evaluation period, grantees also reported seeing positive changes from SJPD and other city agencies, including PRNS, in support of BEST grantees and in response to changes in crime. Some suggestions for improvement for city agencies included continued growth in prevention services (compared to intervention services) and greater advocacy among public agencies (such as law enforcement, education providers, etc.) for programs such as BEST in the larger community.

3. Prospective Evaluation Design Recommendations

Based on the findings from the implementation and impact studies and some additional data collection activities (including a focus group with grantees regarding a BEST theory of change and interviews with BEST and MGPTF stakeholders), the study team has the following evaluation design recommendations for future BEST and MGPTF evaluation efforts.

Future BEST Evaluations

Overall, the study team recommends future BEST evaluation efforts move away from the beat-level analysis used in this report and instead track the outcomes of individual BEST participants over time. Such an approach would ideally involve:

- *Finalizing a BEST-specific theory of change indicating the outcomes of interest* (a task PRNS has already nearly completed) to clarify the short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes for which data need to be collected; to explain any linkages between eligible service areas and particular outcomes; and to help PRNS support grantees in building services to effect these outcomes;

- *Improving and simplifying the ways BEST grantees record program outputs,* moving away from the averages used to calculate units of service and moving to individual-level

measures of service delivery, which could be related to outcome measures to better understand the relationship between services and outcomes;

- *Obtaining consent to collect individual-level administrative and other data* from participants; and
- *Collecting the data needed to track individual-level outcomes* (including administering surveys and collecting administrative data) and establishing data-sharing agreements with the agencies needed to do so.

The overall evaluation approach, which PRNS has already begun to implement, would involve 1) tracking the outcomes of individual BEST participants; 2) continuing to learn about program implementation; and, once the theory of change and data collection procedures are solidified, 3) implementing quasi-experimental designs (e.g., comparing BEST participants to a similar group of individuals) to assess the impact the program has on outcomes of interest, further corroborate the impact study findings in this report, and expand on them by better identifying where and how the program produces the largest impacts on participant outcomes.

Future MGPTF Evaluations

Given the complex nature of the MGPTF's work, including funding a range of direct and community-based services and organizing coalition partners, SPR recommends that the first stage of an evaluation involving the MGPTF focus on learning about the overall level of influence the program has on the city and different neighborhoods in which it operates through an implementation study. That study would involve:

- *Analysis of MGPTF program documents* to describe the scope and nature of services and activities, the size and distribution of funding, and the overall landscape of services and activities;
- *Interviews and focus groups* with various MGPTF stakeholders, staff, and participants to provide additional information about how the MGPTF operates, how services are delivered, the opportunities for long-term evaluations of them, and some key successes and challenges in operating those services; and
- *A social network analysis* drawing on information obtained through surveys of MGPTF partners and grantees, which will help visualize and provide a detailed account of all the partners involved in MGPTF entities, including the nature and type of the organizations and the number and strength of their relationships with other partners.

This approach should provide transparency about the size and scope of the MGPTF's endeavors; explain the reach, influence, and connectivity of the services it funds; help identify ways in which these endeavors could be strengthened or enhanced; identify places in which targeted outcome or impact studies of specific MGPTF activities could be conducted; and

inform how such additional evaluation efforts might be structured, especially in coordination with existing evaluations of the BEST program.

C. Concluding Thoughts

Overall, this evaluation provides insight into the operations and effectiveness of BEST. The impact study shows an association between the delivery of BEST services in high-crime areas and reductions in both gang incidents and youth arrests. The implementation study identifies patterns in BEST funding and service delivery over the evaluation period that may be useful to PRNS in shaping its future grantmaking efforts. Finally, the report provides PRNS with clear direction for future evaluation efforts to continue to learn about what programs and services can help youth lead better, safer lives and reduce cases of gang-related crime.

This page intentionally left blank.

I. Introduction

At just under one million people, San José is the third largest city in California and the 10th largest city in the country (Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, 2018). While crime rates, and violent crime rates in particular, remain lower for San José than many other similarly sized cities throughout the country, preventing violent crime and gang-related crime has remained an important priority for the city.[1] One reason for this prioritization may be that San José appears to be experiencing an increase in violent crime in recent years (OpenJustice Data Portal, 2010-2017). Another reason is that violent crime occurs at a much higher rate within the City of San José than it does in the surrounding Santa Clara County (OpenJustice Data Portal, 2010-2017; Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office, 2016). Furthermore, specific neighborhoods within San José also experience more day-to-day safety issues related to gang-related crime than other neighborhoods. For example, city officials have identified 18 hot-spot crime areas within San José where gang activity is particularly concentrated (Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force Policy Team, 2015).

A. The Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force and BEST Program

Established in 1991, the Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force (MGPTF), operated by the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) Department, is a City of San José strategic youth violence prevention initiative (Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, 2018). The MGPTF works to address issues of youth violence associated with gangs—especially in San José neighborhoods that experience these problems at a higher rate than others—in two main ways. First, it funds three modes of services: the Bringing Everyone's Strengths Together (BEST) grant program, the city-staffed Youth Intervention Services, and Neighborhood Services.[2] Second, it organizes a

---

[1] According to the California Department of Justice, the number of violent crimes and total incidents of crime per 100,000 people, is lower in San José than other similarly sized cities in California, such as San Francisco and San Diego (OpenJustice Data Portal, 2010-2017). The city closest in size to San José outside California is San Antonio, TX, which, according to the FBI, also has higher rates of violent crime and crime overall (Crime in the United States, 2010-2017).

[2] The services provided through the BEST program are discussed throughout this report. Since the other two modes are not discussed in detail in this report, the following are the key services provided under each mode. As of PY 2018-2019, Youth Intervention Services include case management and other direct service to participants and include the following components: the hospital-based violence intervention Trauma to Triumph Program, the Clean Slate Tattoo Removal Program, the Safe School Campus Initiative, the Female Intervention Team, the MGPTF San José Works youth jobs initiative, the Digital Arts Program, and the Late Night Gym Program. As of PY 2018-2019, Neighborhood Services include several components of services delivered to neighborhoods, but these services do not serve individual participants: the Anti-Graffiti Program, the Anti-Litter Program, and the Project Hope program. As is true of BEST, and explained below, both Youth

broad coalition—including law enforcement, school officials, government leaders (from city, county, and state offices), faith- and community-based organizations, and residents—to collaborate on, plan, share, and implement solutions for reducing crime.

Through BEST, which is the primary focus of this report, PRNS identifies and selects nonprofit and faith-based community organizations in San José to participate in a three-year cycle, known as a "triennial period," through a request for qualifications (RFQ) process.[3]

Organizations identified as qualified to provide services consistent with BEST and MGPTF goals are placed on a qualified service provider list and deemed eligible to participate in MGPTF technical team meetings and planning and coordination activities. PRNS then makes individual BEST grant decisions for each program year of the triennial period, with program years extending from September through August. Between the 2010-2011 program year and the 2017-2018 program year, PRNS has awarded between $1.6 and $2.5 million, annually, in BEST grants to anywhere from 18 to 26 organizations on the BEST qualified service provider list.

BEST grants support programming for youth ages six to 24 (and their families) who fit one of four target population profiles—at-risk, high-risk, gang impacted, or gang intentional[4]—with services organized into different, PRNS-defined "eligible service areas."[5] With this strategy, BEST grants support service delivery around the city, chiefly to target services in one of the four divisions of the San José Police Department (SJPD)—Central, Foothill, Southern, and Western—but also in a citywide capacity, where services geared toward youth from any of the four divisions are provided at location, such as a juvenile justice system facility or alternative school. Emphasis is further placed on delivery of services in and around "hot spots" in the areas mentioned above. Hot spots are identified and periodically revised by the MGPTF in partnership with SJPD.[6] In their applications and contracts, grantees specify the populations, services, and geographic areas for which they plan to use their BEST grants.

Intervention Services and Neighborhood Services have changed over the MGPTF's lifetime (Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, 2018).

[3] The BEST program, and mode of service delivery, was originally formed not long after the creation of the MGPTF as the funding arm of the task force. Only later did the City decide to build its capacity to supply BEST services, which gave rise to the other two modes of service delivery. In contrast to BEST, the other two modes of service delivery—Youth Intervention Services and Neighborhood Services—were created later and are provided directly by city staff members, i.e., PRNS does not (primarily) issue grants for these services.

[4] These four target populations' profiles describe a range of risk levels, from youth who are "at-risk" of becoming involved in gang or criminal activity to youth who are involved and likely have a history with gangs and the criminal justice system. Appendix A provides a detailed definition of each profile as defined by BEST.

[5] The current and past eligible service areas—which have changed in number and category, most recently in PY 2013-2014 and PY 2016-2017—are described in Chapter III and Appendix C.

[6] Currently, there are 18 hot spots, with six in the Foothill Division, and four each in the remaining three divisions.

B. SPR's Evaluation of the BEST Program

Starting in July 2017, PRNS contracted with Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to examine the implementation of the BEST program and to learn about the impact the program has had on criminal justice system outcomes. In two ways, this evaluation effort marks a shift in the approach taken by past BEST evaluations:

- It examines a different and more narrow set of outcomes. Because the BEST program is part of the MGPTF, it has historically relied on the vision and goals set out in MGPTF strategic plans, which are intended for the entirety of MGPTF operations rather than specific to BEST services. PRNS has since begun developing a theory of change specific to the BEST program to explain the ways that BEST-funded services are structured to improve youth outcomes. This theory of change, to the extent it was available for various aspects of the evaluation, has been incorporated into this evaluation.

- It shifts the focus toward outcomes reported through administrative data sources, such as criminal justice system data. In contrast, past evaluations of the BEST program have primarily focused on the extent to which grantees have achieved their stated goals, outcomes as reported by grantees, and customer satisfaction.

Since PRNS is currently developing its BEST theory of change, some considerations had to be made regarding the design of this evaluation to determine what aspects of BEST and what outcomes to examine. The SPR study team established the evaluation design over an initial startup period in which the study team engaged PRNS staff members in critical conversations about the program. During that time, the study team also collected and analyzed data to better understand the priorities of the BEST program and to assess the feasibility of different evaluation designs given the availability of different types of data and BEST grant trends over time. Based on these activities, SPR designed an evaluation that examines an eight-year period (hereafter called the "evaluation period") beginning with program year (PY) 2010-2011 and ending with PY 2017-2018. The evaluation contains three components—an implementation study, an impact study, and a prospective evaluation design analysis—that each address an important research priority.[7]

1. Implementation Study

The first research priority was to **develop a rich understanding of program service delivery and grantee operations.** As a result, SPR designed the evaluation to include an implementation study designed to show how grantees spent BEST funds, the programs and services grantees supported with these funds, the participants whom grantees served, the outcomes grantees

[7] The evaluation period was limited to eight years due to the availability of grantee records. As discussed in Chapter V, there were some limitations regarding the availability of arrest records that would have limited the impact study analysis regardless of the years of grantee data available.

sought to change, and the location of BEST-funded services in relation to crime. Furthermore, the implementation study puts these elements of implementation into perspective over the course of the evaluation period.

2. Impact Study

The second research priority was to **create a rigorous design to help understand the impact of the BEST program, expanding beyond self-reported data.** Previous BEST evaluations were designed primarily to ensure that dollars spent on services were delivered as promised and relied primarily on grantees' self-reported data (in their workbooks) for performance tracking. This evaluation shifts the approach toward determining the impact of BEST services by looking at their impact on the community. The evaluation does so by using a quasi-experimental design (QED) that, over the evaluation period, compares trends in geographic areas of the city that do not have BEST-funded services to trends in geographic areas that do. The methodology for the impact study and its results are discussed in Chapter V.

3. Prospective Evaluation Design

The third research priority was to **address future evaluation needs.** While other activities in this evaluation focus on past BEST grantees, what they implemented, and the impacts of BEST funding and services, the prospective evaluation design component explores PRNS's options for creating ongoing evaluations of subsequent BEST program years. This component also explores evaluation of all MGPTF-funded programs and services and efforts that could be combined. As with prior evaluations, this ongoing evaluation effort (of BEST and possibly MGPTF activities) would need to continue to review grantee and service data and to collect qualitative data on program implementation. This report will also discuss how future evaluation efforts would benefit from collecting administrative data from a range of agencies and learning how the program affects participant outcomes at an individual level. The study team provides recommendations regarding approaches for future evaluation efforts in the final chapter.

C. Data Collection

To complete each of the above evaluation components, the study team collected the following types of data.

- **MGPTF and BEST background documents.** These documents include strategic workplans, planning documents, past evaluation reports, and other materials that describe programs, grantees, and services provided. SPR used these documents to provide general background on organizations and program and service delivery structure, and in framing questions about BEST and MGPTF services.

- **BEST grant management documents.** These documents include BEST grantee contracts; workbooks that each grantee completed and submitted to PRNS (quarterly) to report on service delivery; and additional records on grantees, containing cost and award status, kept by PRNS for grant management purposes. SPR used the data in these documents to describe BEST grantees and their services throughout this report. These documents also provided information about service levels and service locations that was used in the impact study.

- **Interviews and focus groups.** The study team conducted several interviews and focus groups with BEST program staff and participants. This information was used in the implementation study and helped shape the prospective evaluation design.

  - **Interviews with BEST program coordinators.** During spring 2018, the study team conducted small group interviews with all 18 PY 2017-2018 grantee program coordinators and some additional staff. The team asked about community context, service delivery models, and overall implementation successes and challenges.

  - **Focus groups with BEST program coordinators.** The study team conducted one focus group with representatives from a select group of seven (of the current 18) grantees in the summer of 2018 and additional focus groups with representatives from 15 (of the current 18 grantees) during winter 2018.[8] These groups focused primarily on the outcomes that grantees expected their programs to effect and how they measured changes in youth outcomes.

  - **Youth focus groups.** The study team met with 22 youth participants from four grantees during winter 2018 to learn about their experiences in the program and perspectives on how BEST services affected their lives.[9]

  - **Interviews with MGPTF stakeholders.** The study team met with five individuals, who oversee or formerly oversaw the development and operations of both MGPTF and BEST, with the goal of gathering input on organization and larger policy context around the MGPTF and BEST while helping to shape the priorities and needs to be considered as part of developing prospective evaluation designs.[10]

---

[8] Focus groups with BEST grantee representatives and participants that took place in winter 2018 occurred with grantees from PY 2018-2019, each of which were also PY 2017-2018 grantees.

[9] Findings from the youth focus groups are discussed in the report but are also captured in youth profiles presented in Chapter III.

[10] For these stakeholder interviews, members of the study team interviewed: CJ Ryan, Program Manager for the Strategic Partnerships Unit, and Petra Riguero, Senior Analyst, both at PRNS, and responsible for overseeing BEST program operations; Angel Rios, Jr., Deputy City Manager and former Director of PRNS; Ron Soto, consultant and formerly with PRNS and involved in the early development of BEST and the MGPTF; and Mario

- **Criminal justice data.** The study team obtained data from SJPD on incidents and arrests and, more specifically, those involving gang activity. The study team worked with SJPD to obtain these data for as many of the eight years of the evaluation period as possible. SJPD provided data to SPR in May 2018 and again in December 2018.

  - **Incidents**, for the full evaluation period, include criminal events (which may involve more than one individual) as reported by an individual or as identified by police, or are those to which police are called or to which they respond, and specifically those that involved gang activity.

  - **Arrests**, after 2012, include arrests of actual individuals at an incident to which police were summoned.[11]

  In addition, SJPD data include the age of each arrestee (allowing the study team to filter results for youth), locations (i.e., police beats) where the incident or arrest occurred, and a date of occurrence. These data allowed the study team to associate each event with both the location of BEST-funded services and the grant year for those services.

D. Overview of the Report

The rest of this report describes the implementation of BEST grants during the evaluation period, the results of the impact study, and the implications of these findings for the prospective evaluation design. Chapter II describes the number, size, and composition of BEST grants that PRNS awarded to qualified organizations during the evaluation period. Chapter III describes the BEST target populations, the services grantees delivered, and the outcomes BEST grantees intended to effect during the evaluation period. Chapter IV discusses BEST geography, including the locations of BEST-funded services throughout the city in relation to crime, as well as the ways in which grantees and city partners adapted to changes in crime over the evaluation period. Chapter V reports on the evaluation's impact study, explaining the approach and the results of this quasi-experimental design and suggesting an association between BEST service delivery and reduced gang-incidents and youth arrests. Finally, Chapter VI discusses the key findings from this report and presents suggestions for prospective evaluation efforts, which PRNS may wish to undertake to build on this report's findings regarding BEST and to further explore the implementation and operation of the MGPTF's activities as a whole.

Maciel, Division Manager for the MGPTF, responsible for overseeing MGPTF activities and the two non-BEST modes of service delivery.

[11] Data for arrests were not available for 2012 or before, due to an SJPD change in data systems.

II. BEST Grants and Grant Spending

One aspect of the BEST program that sets it apart from many youth programs is its longevity. PRNS has funded BEST grantees for well over 25 years. Over this considerable period of time, funding, grantees, services, and approaches to tracking progress have shifted, even as the central goals of reducing youth violence and helping San José's youth avoid becoming involved in crime, and specifically gang-related violence and crime, have stayed the same. This chapter focuses on the BEST grants awarded during the evaluation period, describing the number and size of the grants and their relative size compared to other funding that grantees used to support BEST-funded services.

Key Findings

- Over the evaluation period, PRNS consolidated BEST grants; the number of grants issued slightly decreased, while the amount of funding issued slightly increased.
- The influence of BEST grants on BEST-funded services varied widely across grantees, reflecting a wide range in grant size and, more importantly, a wide range in the percentage of total program costs that BEST grants represent.

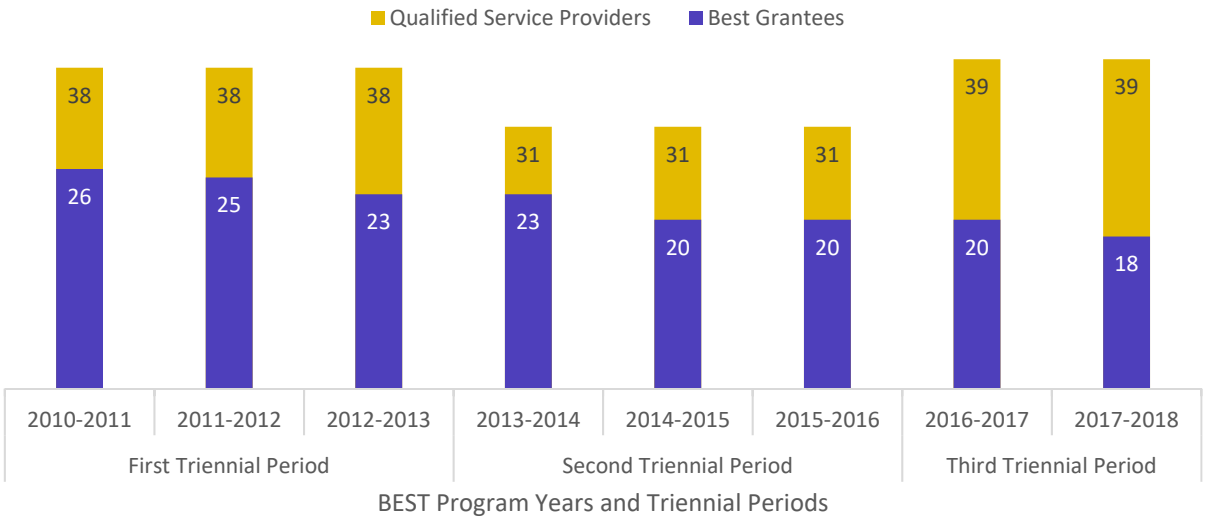
A. Number of BEST Grants and BEST Grantees

Over the eight-year evaluation period, defined by three triennial periods, PRNS awarded 175 BEST grants to 39 unique organizations. Exhibit II-1 shows the number of BEST grantees (purple bars) funded each program year out of the number of qualified service providers (gold bars) and illustrates two notable trends.

- *PRNS awarded funds to 26 BEST grantees in PY 2010-2011, and that number decreased over the evaluation period to 18 grantees in PY 2017-2018.* Some reasons provided by PRNS staff for this decrease include fluctuations in overall funding (discussed further in section B, below) and the defunding of some grantees within a given triennial period, due to performance issues or a grantee's inability to meet existing program and community needs. This decrease in the number of grantees over time is a change that PRNS could further evaluate to make sure it aligns with organization and community needs and goals: having fewer grantees may represent a more efficient approach to grant management, but fewer grantees could also limit the areas served.
- *The pool of qualified service providers fluctuated, moving from 38 to 31 to 39 organizations in the first, second, and third triennial periods, respectively.* According to interviews with PRNS staff, at least one factor in the decrease in qualified service providers during the second triennial period was the limited operational capacity of grantees and reduced city budgets related to the economic recession. This decrease was

not optimal, since fewer qualified service providers means fewer contributing members to MGPTF activities. Qualified service providers are invited to participate in MGPTF technical team meetings and otherwise contribute to formal community planning efforts to reduce crime, even if they are not awarded BEST grants. PRNS was pleased to see the number increase in the third triennial period because it helped increase these organizations' involvement in planning efforts, even if the number of BEST grantees as a proportion of this pool was lower than it was in earlier triennial periods.

Exhibit II-1: Number of Qualified BEST Service Providers and BEST Grantees Over the Evaluation Period, by Program Year and Triennial Period

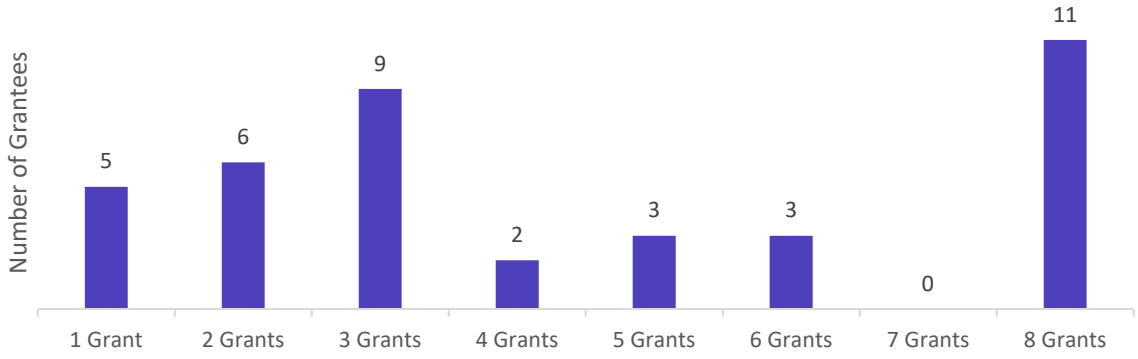


Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018.

Notes: Gold bars represent the total number of qualified service providers selected in each triennial period. Purple bars represent the number of organizations awarded BEST grants in each program year out of the list of qualified service providers.

Given the number of BEST grants that PRNS awarded and the total number of grantees, it follows that *many grantees received BEST grants in more than one year during the evaluation period*. PRNS staff indicated that this was partly by design: while PRNS does not guarantee ongoing funding to grantees, a continued funding relationship reflects PRNS's interest in developing long-term partnerships with grantees. As is shown in Exhibit II-2, 34 (87 percent) of the 39 BEST grantees received BEST grants in more than one year during the evaluation period. At the extremes, 11 organizations (28 percent) were awarded a BEST grant in each of the eight evaluation period years, while five (13 percent) were awarded BEST grants in only one year of the evaluation period. Appendix B provides additional information on grant awards; it shows the grants issued to each of the 39 BEST grant recipients in each program year.

Exhibit II-2: Number of BEST Grantees Receiving BEST Grants in One or More Years of the Evaluation Period



Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018.

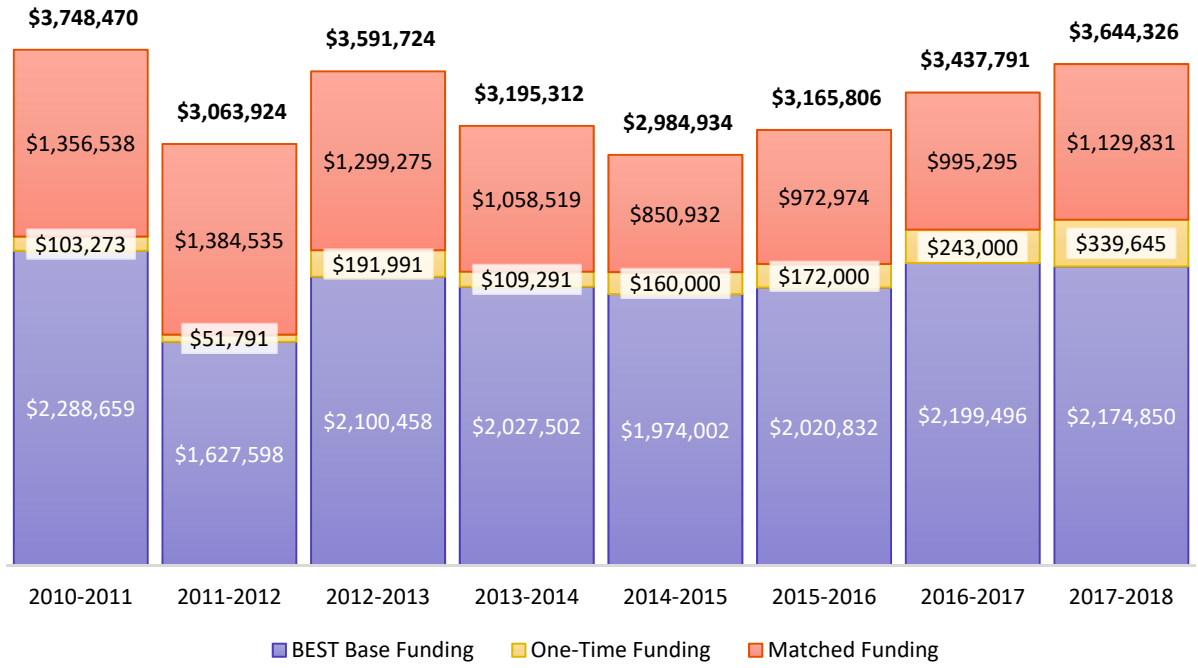
Notes: The years of BEST funding received by a grantee may be nonconsecutive. Grantees could not receive more than one BEST grant in a given year.

B. Overall BEST Funding Levels and Funding Composition

The funding used to support BEST-funded programs has three main components. BEST grants consist of *base funding*, which is a somewhat static amount across each triennial period, as well as *one-time funding*, which includes additional funds, such as funding from state and federal grants, carryover funds (related to decreased awards, defunded agencies, etc.), and funding for other modes of service delivery from the MGPTF.[12] In addition to BEST grant funding, grantees also report on *matched funding*, which comes from various other sources (e.g., school district funds, state grants, foundations, etc.) and supports the same services that BEST grants support. In other words, BEST grants represent only a portion of the total funding (known as total program expenses) used to support BEST-funded services. Exhibit II-3 shows the amounts recorded for each of these types of funding for each program year of the evaluation period.

[12] During the evaluation period, BEST grants were sometimes used to deliver non-BEST modes of MGPTF funding, such as Late Night Gym Program funding. This analysis excluded these non-BEST funds when they could be readily identified, to isolate BEST services from other MGPTF funding.

Exhibit II-3: Total Program Expenses for BEST-Funded Services Over the Evaluation Period



Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018.

Notes: Each bar in the exhibit represents the total program expenses for BEST grant-funded programs for each program year. The component parts of each bar, each of which come from a different data source, are the BEST base grant amount (purple) and one-time funding (yellow) (amounts taken from contracts and PRNS financial records), and matched funds used to support BEST-funded services (red) (amounts taken from grantee workbooks).

Exhibit II-3, especially in conjunction with the information shown in Exhibit II-1, shows two notable trends in BEST grant funding.

- *Despite a decrease in the second year of the evaluation period, BEST grant funding (base plus one-time funding) stayed relatively steady throughout the eight-year evaluation period*. Total BEST grant funding decreased from the first to the second year of the evaluation period. According to PRNS staff, this change was driven partly by recession-induced budget reductions. The next three years, starting in PY 2012-2013, saw some fluctuations followed by three years of steady increase. The highest year of base funding was the first year of the evaluation period, while the highest years of BEST grant funding (base funding plus one-time funding) were the last two years of the evaluation period.

- *The average BEST grant amount increased over the evaluation period.* Given the slight increase in BEST grant funding and the decline in the number of BEST grantees, the

average BEST grant amount increased from $91,997 in PY 2010-2011 to $139,694 in PY 2017-2018.[13]

Overall, BEST grants were gradually being consolidated over the evaluation period.

C. Varying Size and Influence of BEST Grants Across Grantees

Another trend observable in Exhibit II-3 is that BEST funding as a percentage of total program expenses increased slightly over the evaluation period. PRNS awarded $17,784,388 in BEST grants (base funding plus one-time funding) over the eight-year evaluation period, which is 66 percent of the $26,832,287 in total program expenses for BEST-funded services during the evaluation period. However, total BEST grants for the first triennial period were 61 percent of total program expenses for that period, a percentage that increased to 69 and 70 percent of total program expenses in the second and third triennial periods, respectively.

Examining only these overall budget numbers, however, obscures wide variation across grantees in terms of BEST grant size and the size of BEST grants relative to the services grantees support and organizations' overall budgets. According to BEST grantee documents, the smallest BEST grant during the evaluation period was $9,000, while the largest was $376,500. This wide range of grant amounts reflects a wide range of BEST program sizes and, to some extent, grantee organization sizes. Grantee documents also show that BEST grants as a proportion of total program expenses ranged widely, from 18 to 86 percent. In other words, BEST grants represented only a small portion of total program costs for some grantees' BEST-funded services and the majority of total program costs for others. Appendix B shows BEST base grant amounts awarded to each grantee in each program year over the evaluation period. For each grantee, the appendix also shows total BEST funding (base plus one-time funding) for each grantee over the evaluation period and the percentage that funding is of each grantee's total program funding for the evaluation period.

These variations in grant sizes and proportions of overall funding are important for two reasons. First, they inform the impact study by indicating that the presence or absence of BEST grants in a given neighborhood may be less important than the amount of BEST funding, or the relative influence of that funding in helping to deliver BEST services. In other words, the number of grants serving a particular neighborhood may not matter as much as the size of these grants or the overall grant funding.[14] Second, this information may be important to PRNS

[13] Even if BEST grant funding is adjusted for inflation and shown to decrease slightly over the evaluation period, the average BEST grant amount still increases in size to about $124,270, assuming an 11 percent inflation rate.

[14] While the impact study, in Chapter V, does not directly examine program funding, it does look at the units of services provided, which is somewhat correlated with program funding.

in guiding future BEST funding decisions. For instance, PRNS should consider, and further investigate, the importance of larger or smaller BEST grants, and grant sizes relative to total program (or organizational) expenses, when it comes to supporting grantee programs and services. When BEST grants constitute a larger portion of total program expenses, PRNS and BEST funding may have more influence and are thus able to help shape and guide program services. When BEST grants constitute a lower portion of total program expenses, grantees are less dependent on BEST funding and thus less vulnerable to BEST funding fluctuations. PRNS may wish to consider in future planning efforts whether BEST grants should represent a smaller or larger level of total program (or organizational) expenses or whether they should represent a diminishing amount over time, with the goal of helping programs achieve sustainability by decreasing their reliance on BEST grants as a funding source.

III. BEST-Funded Program Services

The previous chapter discussed BEST funding and BEST grantees, which constitute critical inputs for successful implementation of the BEST program. This chapter begins by presenting the BEST program's preliminary theory of change, which illustrates the overall BEST program model. The rest of the chapter then discusses aspects of this model, including BEST program participants (i.e., another program input), the program's eligible service areas (part of the service delivery model), the program's units of service (i.e., one measure of program outputs), and various program outcomes—or the intended results and ways in which BEST services are designed to improve participants' lives and ultimately reduce crime in San José communities.

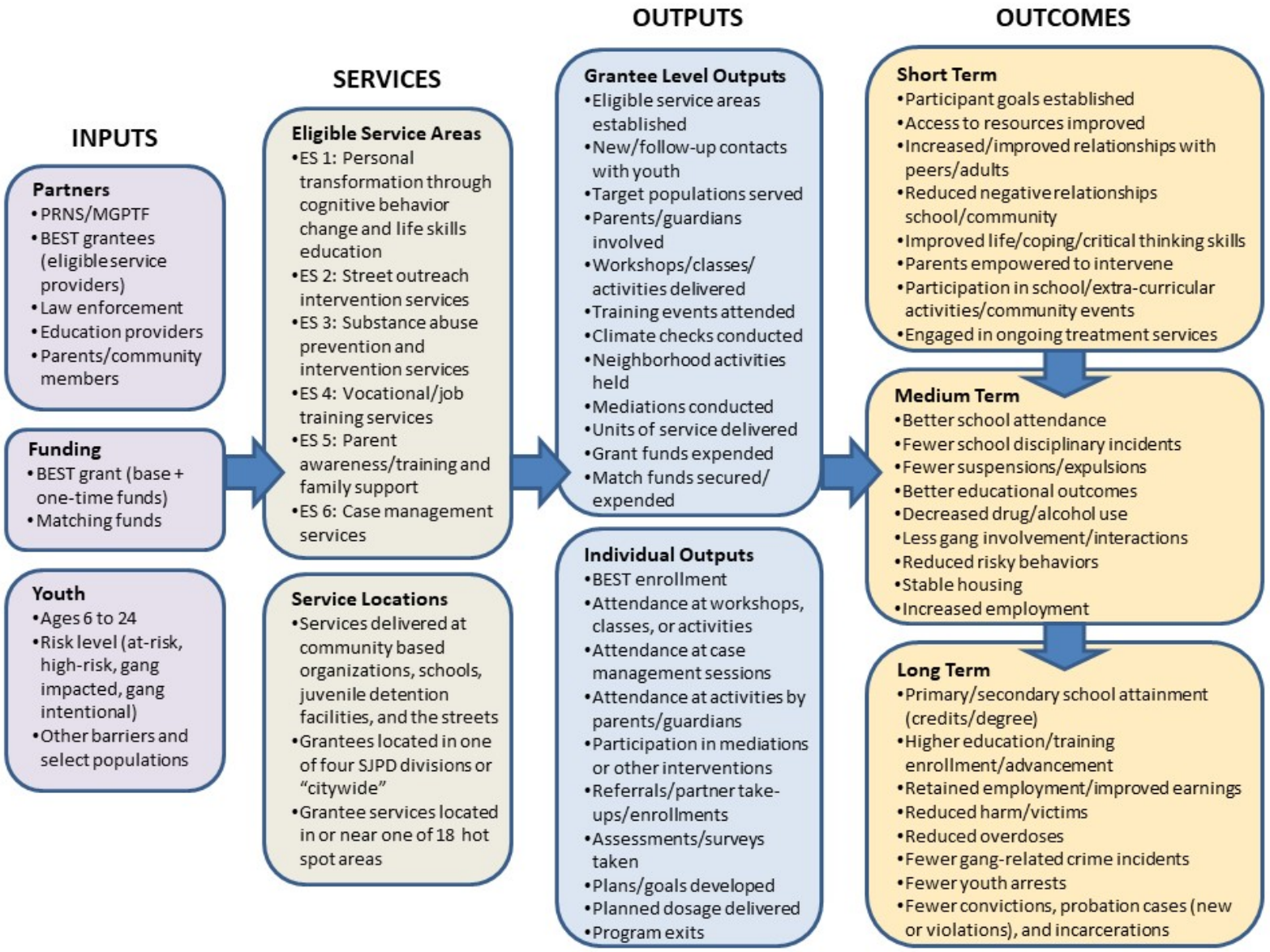
Key Findings

- While BEST grantees in each program year targeted the full age range of youth (6 to 24) and youth fitting all four risk profiles, BEST grantees more often worked with a narrower group of youth: on average, grantees targeted youth ages 12 to 19, and grantees most often targeted youth in the middle two risk profiles.
- Despite some fluctuations, the units of service (UOS) that BEST grantees delivered each program year declined slightly over the evaluation period (from 188,723 in PY 2011-2012 to 160,667 in PY 2017-2018). This decrease may reflect an emphasis on more intensive, in-depth services.
- While crime reduction was a central outcome for BEST, and for the impact study in this evaluation, BEST services also focus on intermediate outcomes, such as positive youth development and improved academic engagement.

A. BEST Theory of Change

As discussed in the introduction, this evaluation began without a BEST-specific theory of change. Since then, based on some earlier data-gathering efforts conducted as part of this evaluation and in coordination with SPR, PRNS has developed a preliminary theory of change model that describes the inputs (partners and funding, described in the prior chapters—as well as the target population, described below), service delivery model, outputs, and outcomes that BEST funding is designed to change. This preliminary theory of change is shown in Exhibit III-1.

Exhibit III-1: Preliminary BEST Theory of Change



B. BEST Participants

In addition to the program partners and funding, outlined in the prior chapter, BEST program inputs include program participants. BEST grants support services for youth ages six to 24 (and their families) who fit one of four target population profiles: at-risk, high-risk, gang impacted, or gang intentional.[15] In their funding applications and in their contracts, each BEST grantee specified the ages and target population profiles of youth they intended to serve. Grantees could also choose to narrow their target populations. For instance, some grantees planned to serve specific subpopulations, such as family members of youth who fit the population profile or youth of a certain gender or race. Over the evaluation period, the populations grantees targeted can be described as follows.

- **Grantees consistently targeted youth, on average, in the 12- to 19-year-old age range.** Grantees, collectively, targeted the full BEST age range (six to 24), but only a few grantees in each program year tended to target services to youth 11 and younger or 20 and older. On average, grantees targeted youth as young as 12 and as old as 19. This average age range was observed for seven of the eight years in the evaluation period, with only slight fluctuation over the eight years.

- **Grantees most often targeted services toward youth at the two middle risk levels.** On average, 85 percent of grantees planned to work with high-risk youth, while 78 percent planned to work with gang-impacted youth. In contrast, only 44 percent planned to work with at-risk youth, and 52 percent planned to work with gang-intentional youth. These numbers represent a consistent pattern among grantees over the evaluation period, with the exception of a shift from the first to the second triennial period away from at-risk youth toward high-risk youth.

- **A few grantees in each program year chose to target specialized populations**. The number of grantees with specialized target populations fluctuated from year to year but ranged between 9 and 28 percent of grantees. These grantees narrowed their focus to serve specific subpopulations, such as females, youth of specific ages or ethnicities, youth in juvenile detention facilities, youth with absent parents, parenting youth, and parents or families of youth meeting the eligibility criteria.

[15] These four target populations profiles describe a range of risk levels, from youth at-risk of becoming involved in gang or criminal activity to youth who are heavily involved and likely to have a history with the criminal justice system. See Appendix A for a detailed definition of each profile as defined by the BEST program.

Participant Profile: "Sara"

"Sara" is an 18-year-old high school student who has been attending late night gym services in the Central Division for a little over a year. In addition to late night gym, she attended a BEST-funded girls' group, during which the case managers discussed a range of topics with her peers, including pregnancy, bullying, and peer support. Sara also received case management services and additional support when her family became homeless. The case managers were able to help her family with acquiring housing and other supportive services. She explained how helpful and understanding the staff had been: "It's nice to see how a person comes up to you and how that person can relate to you and have gone through what you have. That's important since it shows that if you work hard enough you can get through it."

C. Eligible Service Areas

The second column in Exhibit III-1 lists the service delivery model, which includes the location of services (discussed in the next chapter) and the services provided. While BEST grantees delivered a wide range of services over the evaluation period, one thing that unified them as BEST was the provision of services according to PRNS-defined eligible service areas, which included a range of service categories, such as mentoring, case management, street outreach, or substance abuse treatment services. When applying for a BEST grant, qualified service providers specified which eligible service (ES) areas they intended to provide and, if requesting funding for multiple service areas, how each grantee would like BEST funding to be allocated across ES areas. Grantees then reported on the provision of (and expenditures for) each of these ES areas in their grantee workbooks. During the evaluation period, most grantees provided services that fit into one to three ES areas.

As of PY 2016-2017, grantees have provided services in one or more of six eligible service areas. However, over the evaluation period, PRNS twice changed the names and what is included in ES areas—at the start of each of the new triennial periods within the eight-year evaluation period. Between the end of the first and the beginning of the second triennial period (between PY 2012-2013 and PY 2013-2014), PRNS revised each of the ES areas and reduced the total number from 10 to five. Then, at the start of PY 2016-2017 (i.e., the beginning of the third triennial period), PRNS reorganized the ES areas slightly, breaking one of the existing areas into two, creating a total of six. Appendix C provides a description of each ES area by triennial period.

Overall, these changes were important. They helped better manage program resources by identifying and eliminating ES areas that were not often used by grantees. According to PRNS staff members, these changes both reflected community input on the need for specific services and marked an overall shift from less intensive, outreach-focused services to more in-depth

services, such as case management services. While these changes were important, they also limited the ability of the evaluation to compare service delivery across program years.

D. Units of Service

To measure the quantity of service that grantees delivered using their BEST grants (i.e., one measure of program output), grantees reported on the delivery of units of service (UOS) using a formula defined by PRNS (the average number of participants per session times the total number of sessions times the average number of hours per session). Based on reviews of grantee data, this formula could at times be difficult for grantees to implement and may have resulted in some differences among grantees in how they computed "averages"—a challenge that PRNS responded to in PY 2018-2019, with adjustments to the formula. Overall, the goal of using UOS was to create a consistent measure across ES areas and grantees for examining and comparing service output.

Below, Exhibits III-2, III-3, and III-4 show the total UOS all grantees delivered in each program year both overall and broken down by ES area. Exhibit III-2 shows the UOS delivered by grantees for each program year in the first triennial period of the evaluation period (PY 2010-2011 to PY 2012-2013), when grantees offered 10 eligible service areas. Exhibit III-3 shows the UOS delivered by all grantees for each program year in the second triennial period (PY 2013-2014 to PY 2015-2016), when there were five eligible service areas. Exhibit III-4 shows the UOS all grantees delivered for the first two program years of the third triennial period (PY 2016-2017 to PY 2017-2018), when there were six eligible service areas.

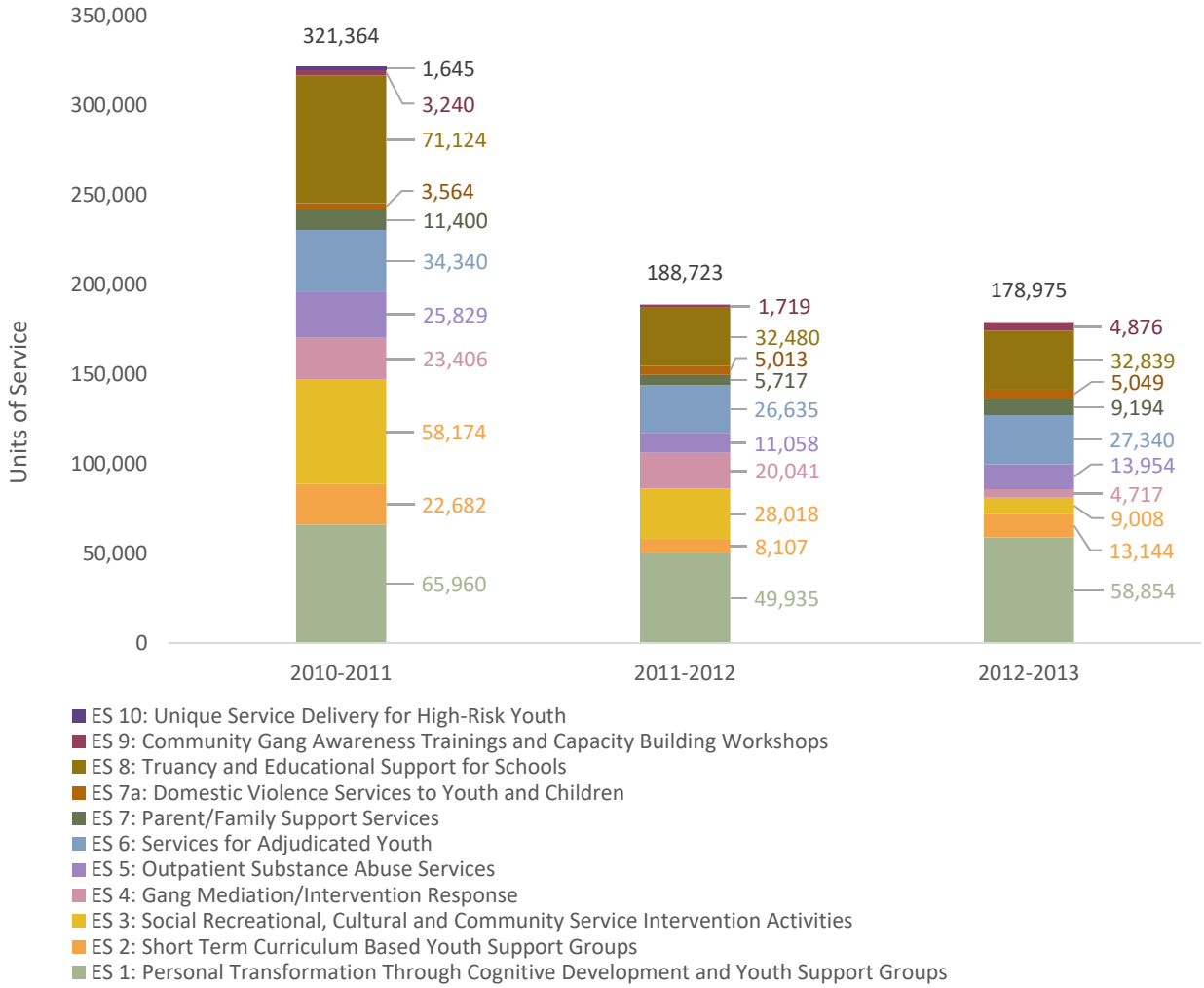
While comparisons across Exhibits III-2, III-3, and III-4 are difficult given the changes in eligible service areas, there are two notable trends both within and across the exhibits.

- **The overall UOS that grantees delivered declined over the evaluation period.** UOS in PY 2010-2011 were considerably higher than in other years during the evaluation period. However, as is shown in Exhibit II-3, in the prior chapter, funding during PY 2010-2011 was also high, compared to many other years, and decreased in PY 2011-2012 due to recession-driven budget reductions. Nevertheless, even starting in PY 2011-2012, UOS fluctuated somewhat but declined overall. This is notable, especially when considering that total funding, as described in Chapter II, stayed relatively steady over the evaluation period.[16] However, it should also be considered alongside the fact that changes in ES areas meant that grantees were also sometimes delivering more intensive types of services in later program years.

[16] As noted in Chapter II, even if BEST funding is adjusted for inflation, the decrease in UOS does not track the decrease in costs, with the cost per unit of service slightly increasing over the evaluation period.

- **The proportion of UOS for each eligible service area remained similar across program years.** Within triennial periods, when eligible service areas can be easily compared, this finding is most apparent. However, it can be seen across the second and third triennial periods as well, when there were only small changes in ES areas. Overall, while total UOS changed year to year, grantees tended to deliver about the same number of UOS for a given ES area relative to that year's UOS from one year to the next. So other than changes in ES areas, grantees appeared to deliver a relatively consistent mix of ES areas.

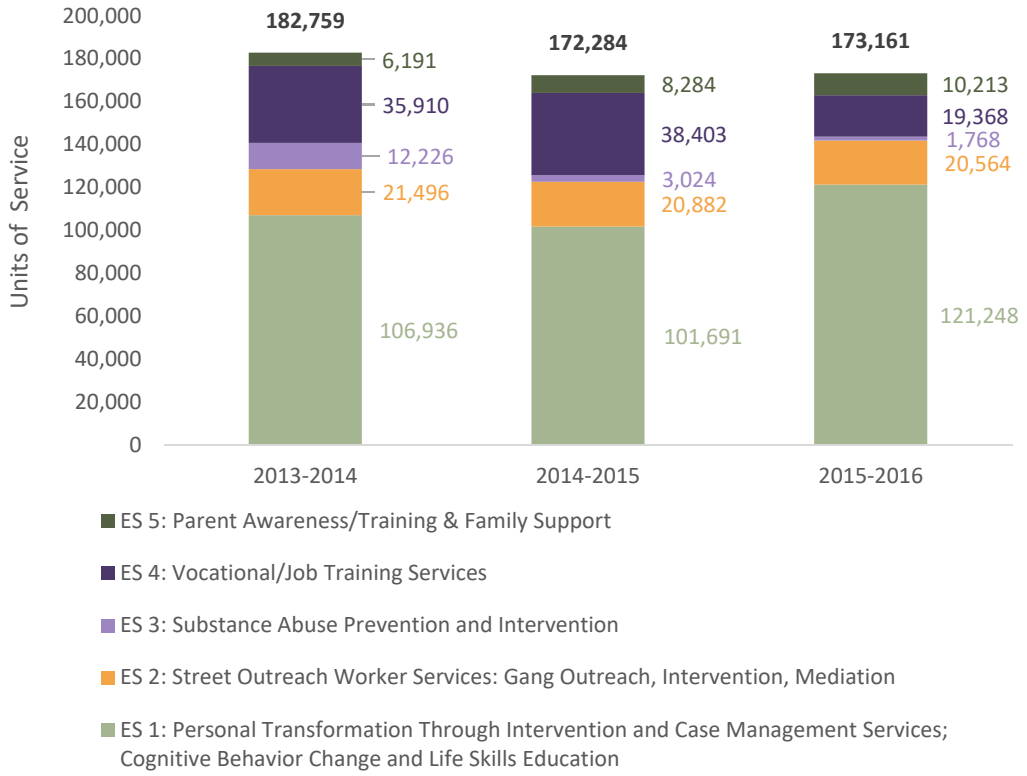
Exhibit III-2: UOS Delivered in Eligible Service Areas and Overall, for All BEST Grantees by Triennial Period, PY 2010-2011 to PY 2012-2013



Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2012-2013.

Notes: Units of service = (average number of participants per session) x (total number of sessions) x (average number of hours per session).

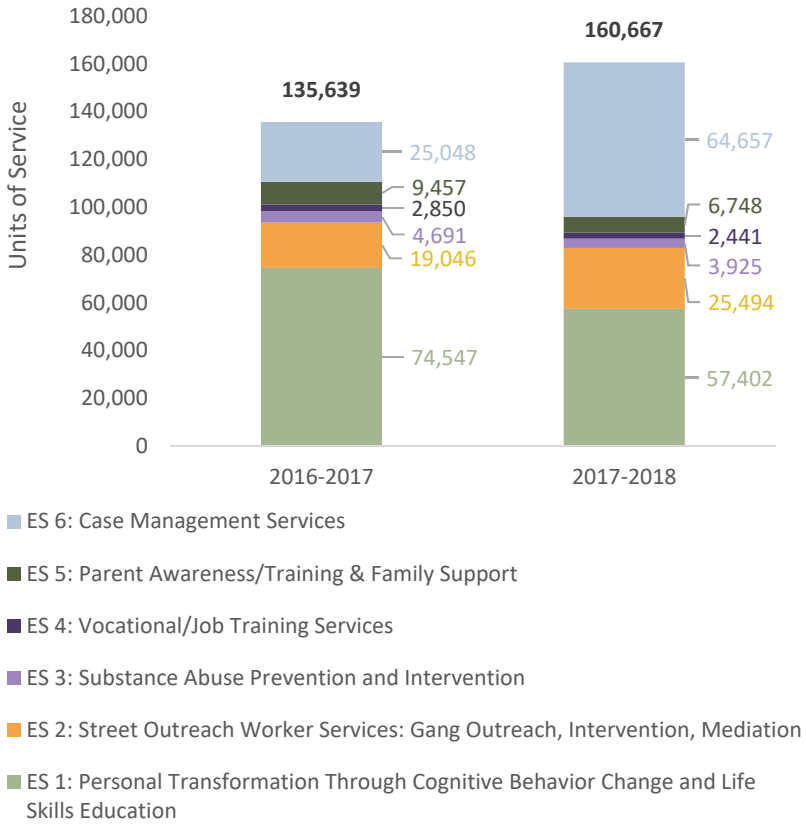
Exhibit III-3: UOS Delivered in Eligible Service Areas and Overall, for All BEST Grantees by Triennial Period, PY 2013-2014 to PY 2015-2016



Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2013-2014 to 2015-2016.

Notes: Units of service = (average number of participants per session) x (total number of sessions) x (average number of hours per session)

Exhibit III-4: UOS Delivered in Eligible Service Areas and Overall, for All BEST Grantees by Triennial Period, PY 2016-2017 to PY 2017-2018



Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2016-2017 to PY 2017-2018.

Notes: Units of service = (average number of participants per session) x (total number of sessions) x (average number of hours per session). In PY 2016-2017, ES 1 from PY 2015-2016 (Personal transformation through intervention and case management services; cognitive behavior change and life skills education) was split into two eligible service areas, ES 1 and ES 6.

E. BEST Outcomes of Interest

The final column in the theory of change model (Exhibit III-1) includes the outcomes BEST services are intended to change. One element of the implementation study was to gather data regarding the outcomes of interest to BEST grantees in order to inform PRNS's efforts to develop a BEST theory of change. Interviews and focus groups with BEST grantee representatives and participants were used to examine the outcomes that these grantees sought to change and yielded valuable information about where BEST services made the

greatest changes in participants' lives and how grantees measured these changes in participant outcomes.[17]

Participant Profile: "Quinn"

"Quinn" (who uses the pronoun "they") is an 18-year-old youth who sought housing services at a BEST-funded program in the Central Division. Homeless for four years, they have now gotten into a supported housing program. "For youth coming out of prison or off the street, this is the place." They felt that the program was a great resource and helped youth escape domestic violence, find a safe place to live, or look for employment. "Some things do take time, but they will help you and get you into services." Quinn participated in a youth impact board that gave input on youth programing, aired youth grievances, and shared ideas for improving services. They also used computers, got help with transportation, and received access to therapy through the program. Without the program, Quinn feels they would be less safe, would be in danger on the streets, and would not be sober.

1. Participant Outcomes

The following are the areas in participants' lives where grantee representatives expected to see the greatest changes due to the delivery of BEST-funded services.

Youth Development/Psychosocial Outcomes. All grantees interviewed indicated that their BEST-funded services were designed to improve a broad range of interpersonal, psychosocial skills and personal attributes loosely categorized as positive "youth development." More specifically, these outcomes include:

- *Improved interpersonal behaviors.* Multiple grantee staff members shared that an important ingredient in their work was providing participants with "someone who is positive and consistent in their life." Improving interpersonal behaviors involved exposing participants to pro-social activities or everyday activities they may not have otherwise been exposed to, such as going out to eat or visiting a college campus. One staff member discussed taking participants on field trips to college campuses and exposing them to a new experience that was "outside of their comfort zone."
- *Increased confidence or improved self-image.* One BEST participant described how the BEST program changed how she communicated, including improving her negative self-

[17] Because this data collection effort included only grantees from PY 2017-2018, the discussion below presents a more contemporary picture of program outcomes and not one that is necessarily as comprehensive or historical as earlier analyses in this chapter. That said, many of these grantees were also BEST grantees in earlier program years. This analysis is also a high-level summary of outcomes. It does not associate outcomes with particular ES areas and may not be comprehensive or include all outcomes grantees strive to achieve.

talk. She explained that prior to the BEST program, she described herself as "weak, ugly, and unhappy," whereas now she describes herself as "fearless, happy, and confident."

- *Improved communication, conflict resolution, or anger management skills.* Improving these skills included teaching youth "how to deal with anger" or to "regulate their thoughts." A youth participant explained that case managers helped teach participants how to "handle your emotions." One grantee representative explained that staff focused on improving the way youth communicated with each other, helping them learn how to productively describe their frustrations with one another, as opposed to fighting in disagreement.

- *Increased sense of cultural identity.* Grantees identified several ways their services helped youth improve their cultural identities, such as providing youth with culturally responsive case management services, providing African American history lessons, or exposing youth to a radical healing camp.

- *Improved communication and connections with others, including family and friends.* Staff for one grantee described the program as a "family program" that included a team-building activity for the entire family and provided "families with a time where they [could] just focus on spending time with each other."

School Engagement and Improved Educational Outcomes. Improved education-related outcomes included mostly short-, medium-, and long-term outcomes, which grantees and participants identified as follows:

- *Re-engaging in school.* Some grantees supported participants' reconnection to school, for example, by reconnecting youth to education programs after being released from juvenile detention or providing the same service for youth who had dropped out of school.

- *Staying in school.* Often, grantees focused on keeping youth in school, which included services encouraging youth to improve attendance or behavior at school. Interview and focus group respondents mentioned improving school attendance, improving conflict resolution at school, and reducing disciplinary actions at school as examples of these types of outcomes. Many BEST services were embedded in the school day and located at schools, where program staff worked closely with school counseling staff and administrators to support students who experienced disciplinary actions or were at risk of academic failure. These services provided additional supports and more intensive counseling than would otherwise have been available.

- *Improving grade point averages.* Grantee services often focused on improving participants' grades by providing tutoring or homework assistance. Often, grantees explained that small improvements in grades were often large strides for youth. A BEST participant explained that "the case managers tell you if you come to the center then

you can't just hang out. They tell you that you have to get a tutor or work on your homework. They check your grades and will tell you if you are failing."

- *Completing a GED or high school diploma.* To help participants obtain their GED or high school diploma, some grantees provided education services on site or referred youth to partner services.
- *Attending college or getting advanced training.* Lastly, some grantees assisted youth in preparing to attend college or obtaining advanced training. These services included providing participants with college visits, assisting them in applying for financial aid, and assisting with college applications.

Participant Profile: "Anthony"

"Anthony" is a 19-year-old college student and a recent participant of a BEST-funded high school program for students in the Foothill Division. The program provides mentoring and life coaching. Youth learn skills such as healthy decision making. Now a high school graduate, he enjoyed the sense of community that the program provided him. "I've never had that anywhere else. This is my home." Anthony explained how the program kept him out of harm's way: "It is the reason I'm not in a gang right now. I was on that path. It set me straight every time I wanted to go on that path. [BEST-funded program staff] reminded me of my goals." Anthony explained that he developed transferrable skills by leading youth programming alongside a regular staff member. He feels that these opportunities provided him with skills that will help him succeed in his management and business career goals. When asked where he might be if not for the BEST program, Anthony explained that he had thought he wasn't going to live until he was 18. "I think I would be dead if not for the program."

Taking Participants Out of Harm's Way. Related to, but not the same as, the goal of reducing crime were both the short- and long-term goals of keeping participants safe. Interview and focus group respondents for multiple grantees discussed how their BEST-funded services provided participants with a safe place to go—including school-based programs that provided workshops and classes during school time, and after-school and evening programs that also provided services. These services allowed participants to meet with staff, work on issues in their lives, and simply not be around situations that otherwise may have led to them getting in harm's way. For example, one participant talked about how she was getting harassed and was able to call the staff and get support for navigating the situation. Helping participants stay engaged in positive activities had the benefit of helping them stay off the streets, where they could be exposed to or harmed by violent crime. Some grantees provided training for participants on how to be safe in the streets, for example, by advising them not to wear clothing in local gang colors. Other programs offered creative alternatives to being on the street, such as music classes. For grantees providing street outreach services, where staff

members contacted youth when they were out and had the greatest potential to get into trouble, staff members described their focus as not only keeping participants "out of juvenile hall" but "keeping them alive."

Crime Reduction. All BEST grantees focused on crime reduction, which grantees identified as:

- *Reducing gang activity or violence.* Several grantees focused on reducing gang activity or violence in the community. This included providing street outreach services or case management services in hot-spot areas.
- *Reducing the generational cycle of gangs.* Several grantees described other program activities that encouraged youth to break the generational cycle of gangs, including engaging them in positive self-expression or other tools to help participants "walk away" from gangs. Grantee staff viewed pro-social outcomes—such as making better choices, learning how to behave appropriately with peers, and learning how to appropriately express anger—as a means for preventing future gang and criminal justice system involvement.
- *Decreasing participants' juvenile justice system involvement and reducing arrests.* Several grantees described how they focused on decreasing participants' juvenile justice involvement, efforts that included several services and activities with youth. For example, several grantees served as a liaison to help youth navigate the juvenile justice system, going with them to probation meetings and supporting them through the process. Some grantees provided criminal justice education, while other grantees provided training for participants on the impact of incarceration (for example, losing the right to vote). Others served as advocates for participants involved in the justice system, with the goal of minimizing any further involvement. Lastly, many grantees noted that when they provided youth with educational and employment services, youth were less likely to become involved in the criminal justice system.

Other Outcomes. Interview and focus group respondents discussed other outcomes that programs (less frequently) sought, such as improving participant employment, helping participants achieve better physical health, improving parenting skills, improving financial literacy, reducing substance use, and helping participants obtain stable housing. While fewer grantees pursued these goals, a small number of grantees received BEST funding for services to support vocational training or substance abuse treatment (see also Exhibits III-2 through III-4 above, which show the delivery of these eligible service areas).

Participant Profile: "Jonathan"

"Jonathan" was a sixth-grade student when he was referred to a BEST-funded program in the Foothill District. That program, for at-risk middle school students, provides academic and emotional support aimed at preventing the cycle of school failure and delinquency. Over the past year and a half, he has received mentoring and academic tutoring, and participated in life skills classes, school workshops, and enrichment activities. The program supported his positive academic and social/emotional outcomes, turning around his school performance and helping to improve his self-esteem. Jonathan cheerfully explained that "fail" means "first attempt in learning." Now he is an enthusiastic eighth-grader who is excited about his mentor and improving his grades. "My mentor is cool; he's fun and plays games with me. He likes science." Since taking part in a life skills class, tutoring, and after-school activities, Jonathan finds that it's easier to express himself and enjoys making new friends. He is sure that, without the great experiences that the program has offered—such as field trips, mentoring, and hearing from guest speakers—he wouldn't be doing as well in school.

2. Measuring Outcomes

Interview and focus group respondents indicated that BEST grantees used a variety of methods to measure outcomes, including hiring independent evaluators, using internal surveys and assessments, and sharing data with education providers and criminal justice system partners (such as probation officers). Overall, grantees relied heavily on surveys to assess participant outcomes. Some used modified versions of a survey from earlier evaluation efforts, while others used surveys developed for their particular programs, which were created with the help of consultants or the grantees' own research staff.

However, during interviews and focus groups, grantee representatives noted three challenges in measuring participant outcomes that can inform suggestions for long-term evaluation efforts and, to some extent, may be addressed through this evaluation's impact study.

- Grantees experienced difficulty measuring long-term outcomes and linking them to changes in measures of youth development. One person said, "It is hard to evaluate how the relationships formed between students from different middle schools may help prevent antagonism later in high school."

- Grantees experience difficulty measuring the larger community impact of their services, often due to both a lack of administrative data and the absence of clarity about how to analyze it. One person mentioned that recidivism is difficult to measure because there are multiple measures—probation violation, crime, or return to juvenile services. Another grantee representative mentioned that it is difficult to measure the lasting impacts of prevention in the community (e.g., long-term reductions in crime). Representatives for several grantees also mentioned the challenge of getting education data from school districts, particularly since doing so required relying on relationships

with individual administrative staff, where turnover was high. Overall, it seems that measuring the outcomes of BEST participants would be improved by increased and more stable access to administrative data, as well as ways to link it to existing survey data.

- Interview respondents also noted that tracking outcomes cannot happen quickly, since participants needed time to progress through program services. While the period to progress through services varied by provider, representatives for about two-thirds of the grantees estimated that it could take about a year from the point of service delivery to see changes in outcomes. A few grantee representatives indicated less time, and one indicated that it could take more time (up to two years). This timeline is important to consider as PRNS considers ongoing options for BEST evaluation services. Sufficient follow-up and lag time in data collection activities may be needed to observe changes in outcomes.

IV. BEST Geography and Crime Context

The final aspect of BEST implementation, and one that is critical for setting up the impact study, is locating BEST services in relation to crime. This chapter provides information on the locations of BEST-funded services and different types of crime using a series of maps. It also explains ways in which the criminal justice system context may change and how BEST grantees and other agencies and organizations have adapted to these changes.

Key Findings

- BEST grantees are located where they should be, near or within the SJPD beats in the city with some of the highest levels of gang incidents and arrests of individuals ages 24 and under (i.e., youth arrests).
- For SJPD data, given grantee service locations in relation to crime, gang incidents compared to all incidents, and youth arrests compared to all arrests, are the outcomes of greatest interest for the impact study.
- BEST grantees have adapted their programs in response to changes in crime within the neighborhoods they serve, and many indicate that SJPD and other city agencies have adapted their services accordingly, even if there are still ways in which these agencies could further promote prevention services.

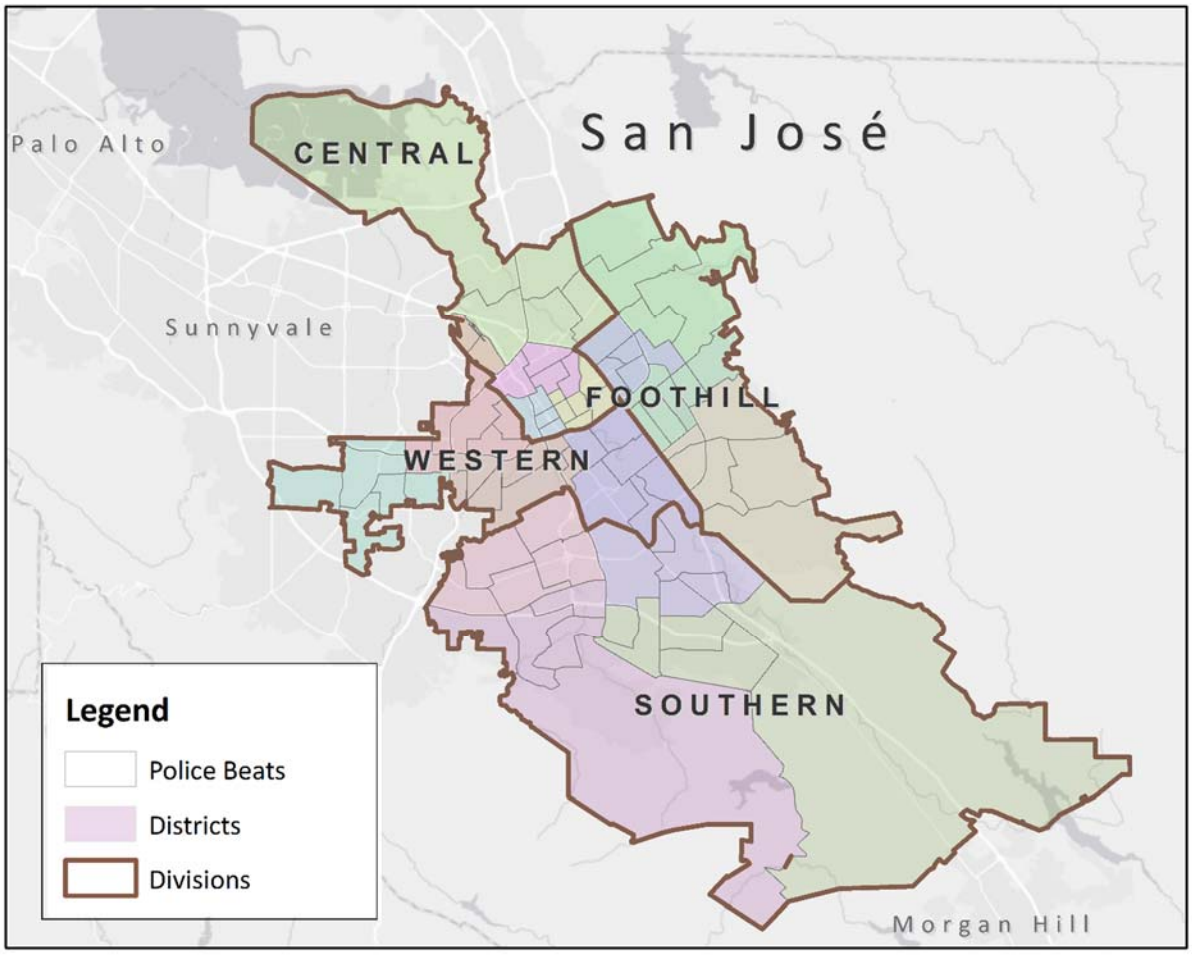
A. BEST Geography

As discussed in the introduction, BEST grantees initially indicated to PRNS the areas within the city in which they wanted to locate their BEST-funded services. These locations are then further negotiated with PRNS based on geographic considerations. Due to the program's emphasis on crime reduction, and the MGPTF's reliance on police divisions, grantees needed to indicate the police division(s) in which their programs and services would be located. The choices included the city's four police divisions (Central, Foothill, Southern, and Western). Also included among the choices was a fifth "division" known as "citywide," which refers to service locations, such as juvenile detention facilities, that serve participants from across the city (compared to services located in schools or community centers, which tended to serve participants in the geographic areas they served).

That said, the four police divisions are large geographic areas and encompass the entirety of the city. Therefore, they provide only limited specificity about where BEST grantees have located services (i.e., whether services are provided within a specific quadrant of the city provides little detail about where it is actually located) and their locations' relation to crime (since crime reported by division represents an average rate, combing crime rates for many different

neighborhoods where crime rates may vary). Two additional smaller geographic units are useful in increasing this understanding. First, to aid grantees in better situating services near where crime occurs, the MGPTF, in partnership with the SJPD, identified 18 hot spots, or areas where more intense levels of violent crime occur: Six are in the Foothill Division, and four each are in the remaining three divisions.[18] Grantees are encouraged to locate services in relation to the se hot spots. Second, SJPD classified its four divisions into 16 districts (four districts in each division) and 87 beats. These additional subdivisions provided smaller geographic areas through which to view the location of grantee service delivery and criminal activity, providing a much more precise visual understanding of the relationship between grantee service locations and crime. Exhibit IV-1 shows a detailed map of each SJPD division, district, and beat.

Exhibit IV-1: San José Police Department Divisions, Districts, and Beats



Source: San José Police Department

[18] In 2015, the MGPTF, in partnership with SJPD, identified 18 gang hot spots throughout the city where gang activity was particularly concentrated (Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, 2015; Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, 2018; Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force Policy Team, 2015).

B. BEST Service and Crime Locations

To identify where BEST services were located in relation to criminal activity and to assess the type of crime data most suitable for the impact study, the study team developed a series of initial maps that showed the locations of BEST grantee services (obtained through grantee contracts and workbooks) for each program year, overlaid against different types of crime data (obtained from SJPD).[19] The crime data included 1) all incidents to which SJPD were called, 2) gang incidents to which SJPD were called, 3) all arrests made, and 4) all youth arrests.[20] These maps confirmed that BEST grantee service locations were more closely associated with gang incidents than they were with general incidents, and more associated with youth arrests than they were with general arrests. In other words, this analysis confirmed that BEST grantee services were located near gang-related and youth-associated crimes and that grantees' crime outcomes were of the greatest interest to the impact study.

Exhibit IV-2: Composition of Each San José BEST Evaluation Service and Crime Map

Map Exhibits	Triennial Period	Crime Data Type
Exhibit IV-3	PY 2010-2011 to PY 2012-2013	Gang incidents
Exhibit IV-4	PY 2010-2011 to PY 2012-2013	Youth arrests
Exhibit IV-5	PY 2013-2014 to PY 2015-2016	Gang incidents
Exhibit IV-6	PY 2013-2014 to PY 2015-2016	Youth arrests
Exhibit IV-7	PY 2016-2017 to PY 2017-2018	Gang incidents
Exhibit IV-8	PY 2016-2017 to PY 2017-2018	Youth arrests

Notes: As discussed in Chapter V, the way in which SJPD defined gang incidents changed starting in PY 2016-2017, when SJPD started tracking both gang-related incidents (a broader definition, less consistent with the prior approach used) and gang-motivated incidents (a more narrow and more consistent definition to the one used in prior years). Consistent with the approach taken in Chapter V—which only includes gang-motivated incidents (during the last two years of the evaluation period) in the impact analysis—the map in Exhibit IV-7 includes only gang-motivated incidents.

Following this initial mapping exercise, the study team generated six new maps (described in Exhibit IV-2): two for each triennial period, with one map in each period showing the level of

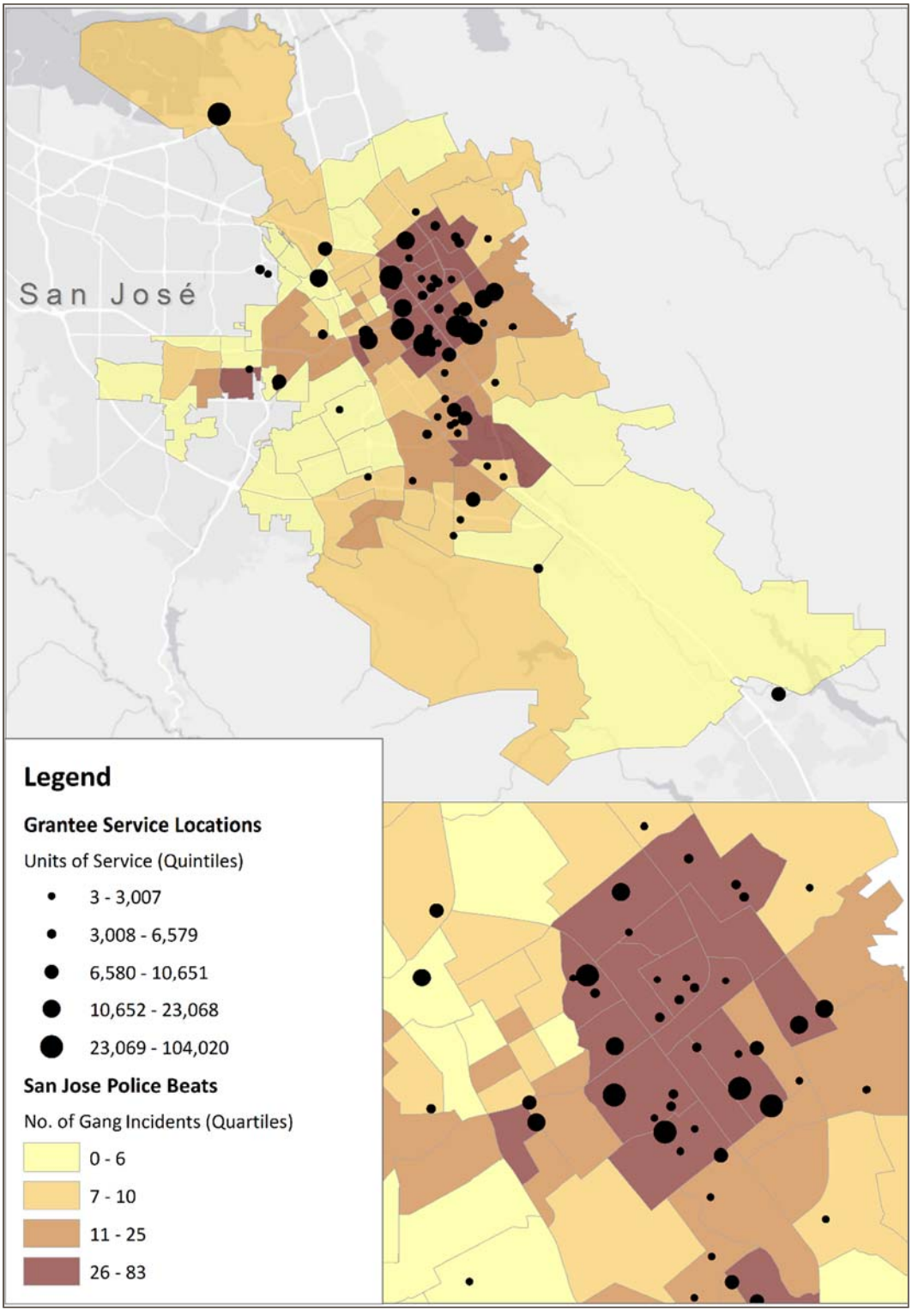
[19] For each program year, the study team used ArcGIS software to geocode the address of each eligible service area location as provided by each BEST grantee. Some grantees, especially those in specific service areas such as street outreach, had limited location data available and thus may be underrepresented in this analysis.

[20] The study team collected incident data for the entire evaluation period but was only able to collect arrest data starting in 2012 (for PY 2012-2013), due to a data system transition. Data included the police beat where the incident/arrest occurred, a date of occurrence, and an arrestee's age. This information allowed the study team to associate each event with the location of BEST-funded services and the program year for those services, and to identify individuals ages 24 and under.

gang incidents by SJPD beats and the other showing youth arrests by SJPD beat. Each map also shows the locations of BEST services and the units of service provided by grantees at each location, summed over the period covered in each map. Division by triennial period was necessary due to changes across the triennial periods in 1) eligible service area definitions, which may affect both service locations and UOS calculations, and 2) how SJPD reported and categorized certain types of criminal activity (these changes are explained further in Chapter V).

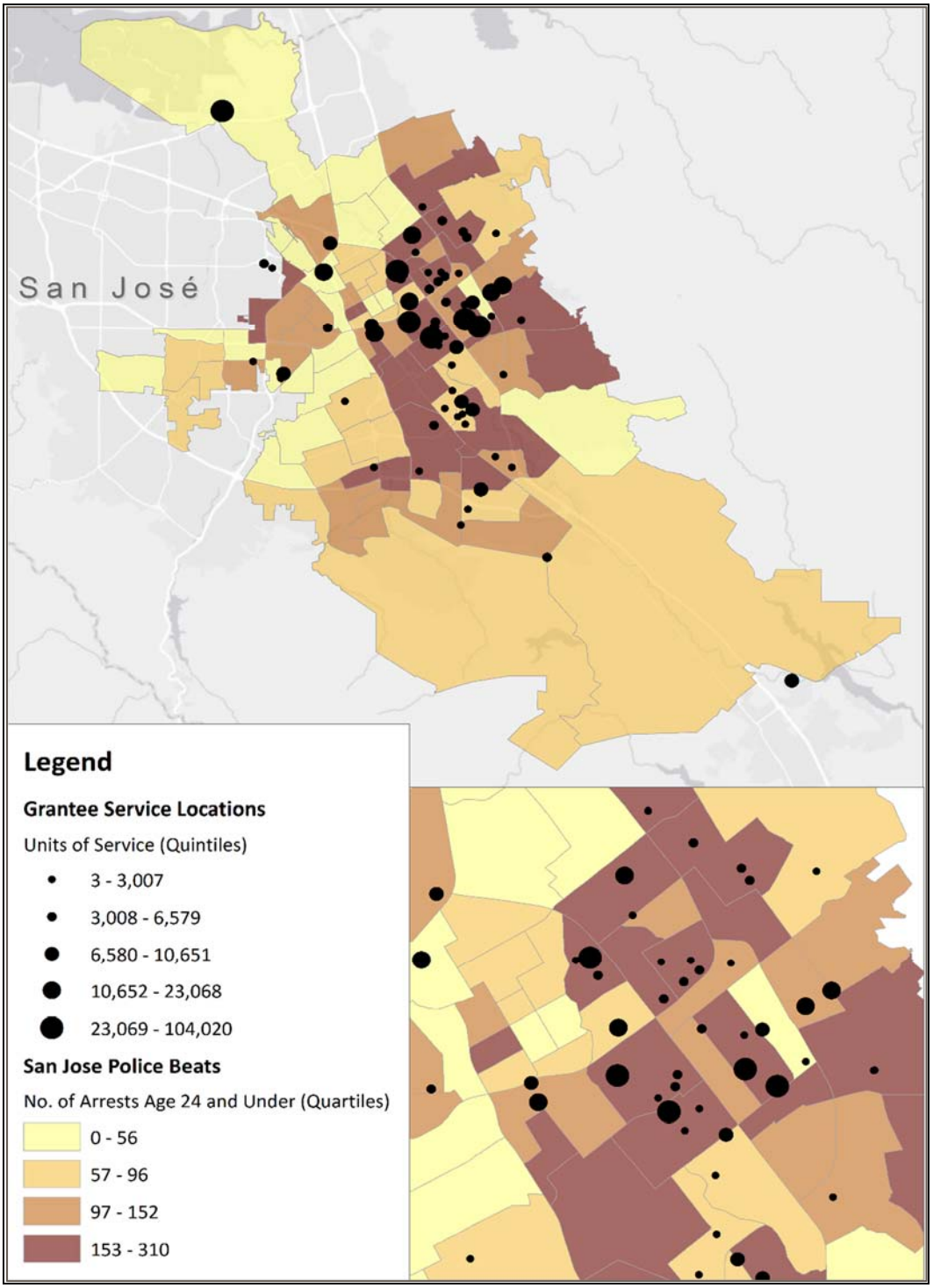
For the following maps (Exhibits IV-3 through IV-8), service locations are represented in black circles of different sizes, with each circle representing UOS for all BEST services provided at that location, summed for each grantee at that location (i.e., sometime more than one grantee delivered services at a given location, such as at a school) over the triennial period. The size of the circle increases with the amount of UOS that grantees provided at that location during the triennial period. Circles are categorized into quintiles based on the maximum units of service provided during the triennial period at any location. Each police beat is shaded a different color based on the number of crimes in that beat during the triennial period, with four different colors representing the four quartiles of incidents. Darker shades indicate that the police beat had a higher number of crimes in the given (triennial) time period. Crime data are reported in absolute numbers, rather than rates of crime per capita.

Exhibit IV-3: BEST Units of Service by Grantee Service Location in Relation to Gang Incidents, PY 2010-2011 to PY 2012-2013



Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2012-2013 and SJPD crime data.

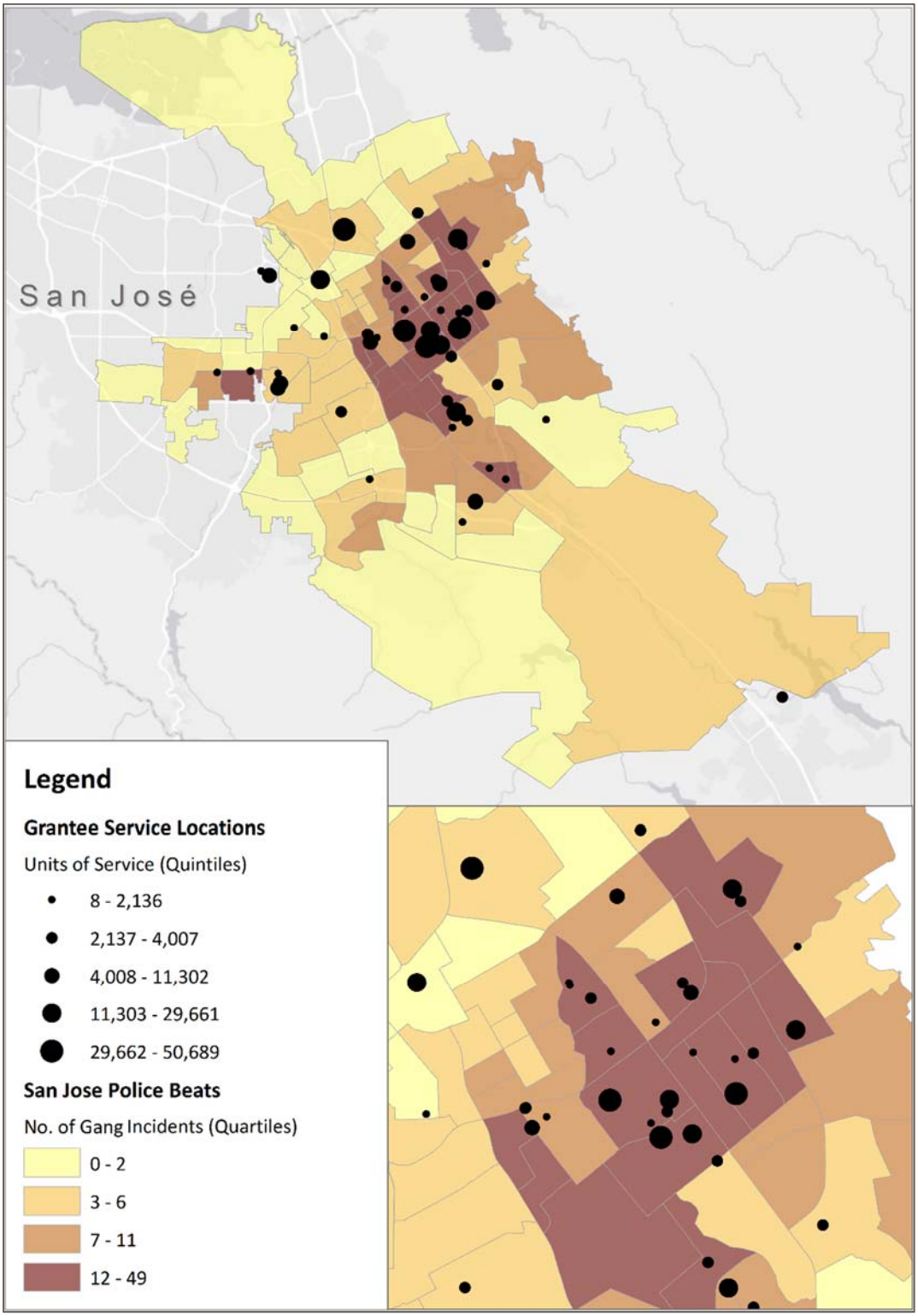
Exhibit IV-4: BEST Units of Service by Grantee Service Location in Relation to Youth Arrests, PY 2010-2011 to PY 2012-2013



Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2012-2013 and SJPD crime data.

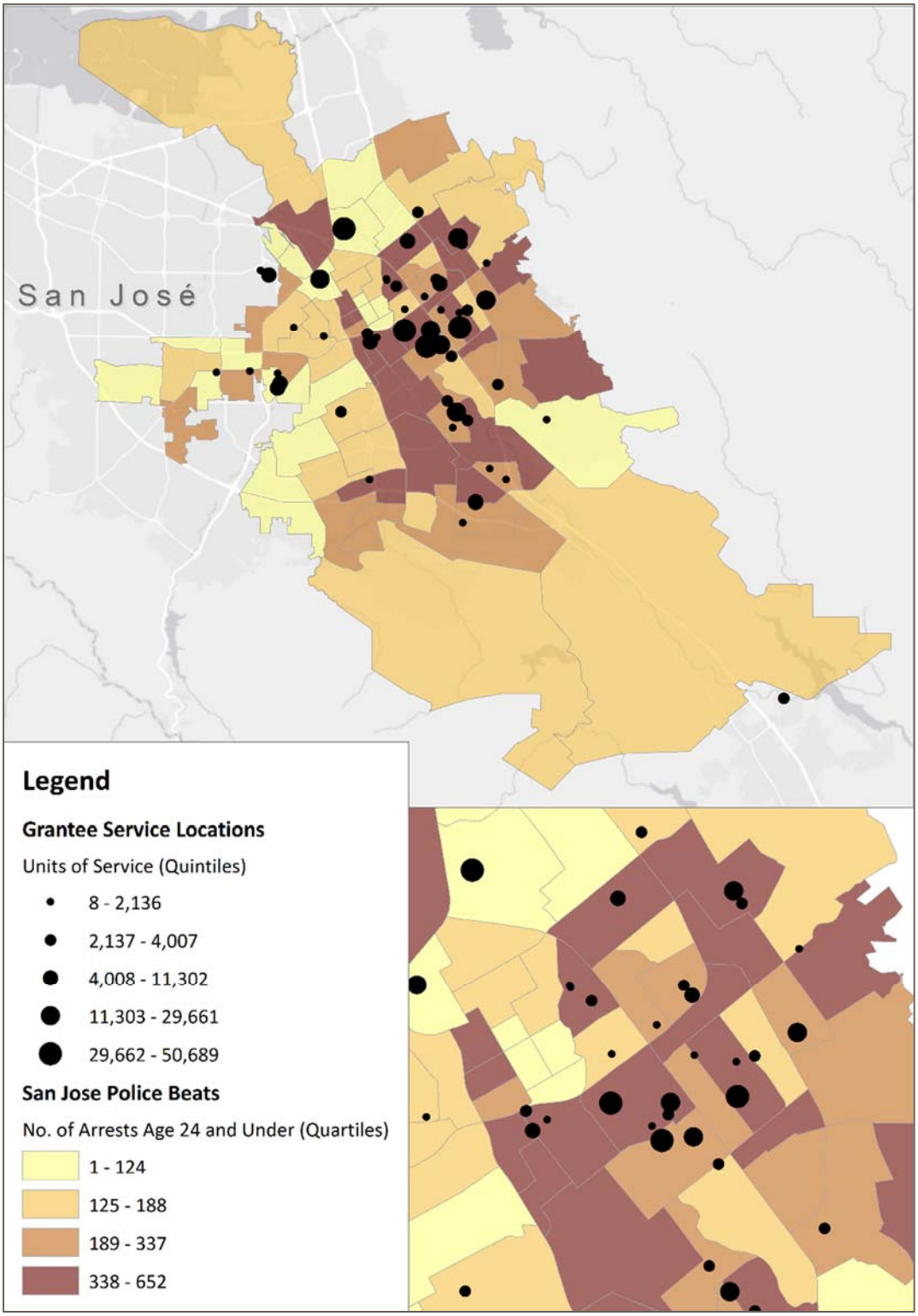
Notes: Data for arrests were not available prior to 2012, so the exhibit includes crime data only for PY 2012-2013.

Exhibit IV-5: BEST Units of Service by Grantee Service Location in Relation to Gang Incidents, PY 2013-2014 to PY 2015-2016



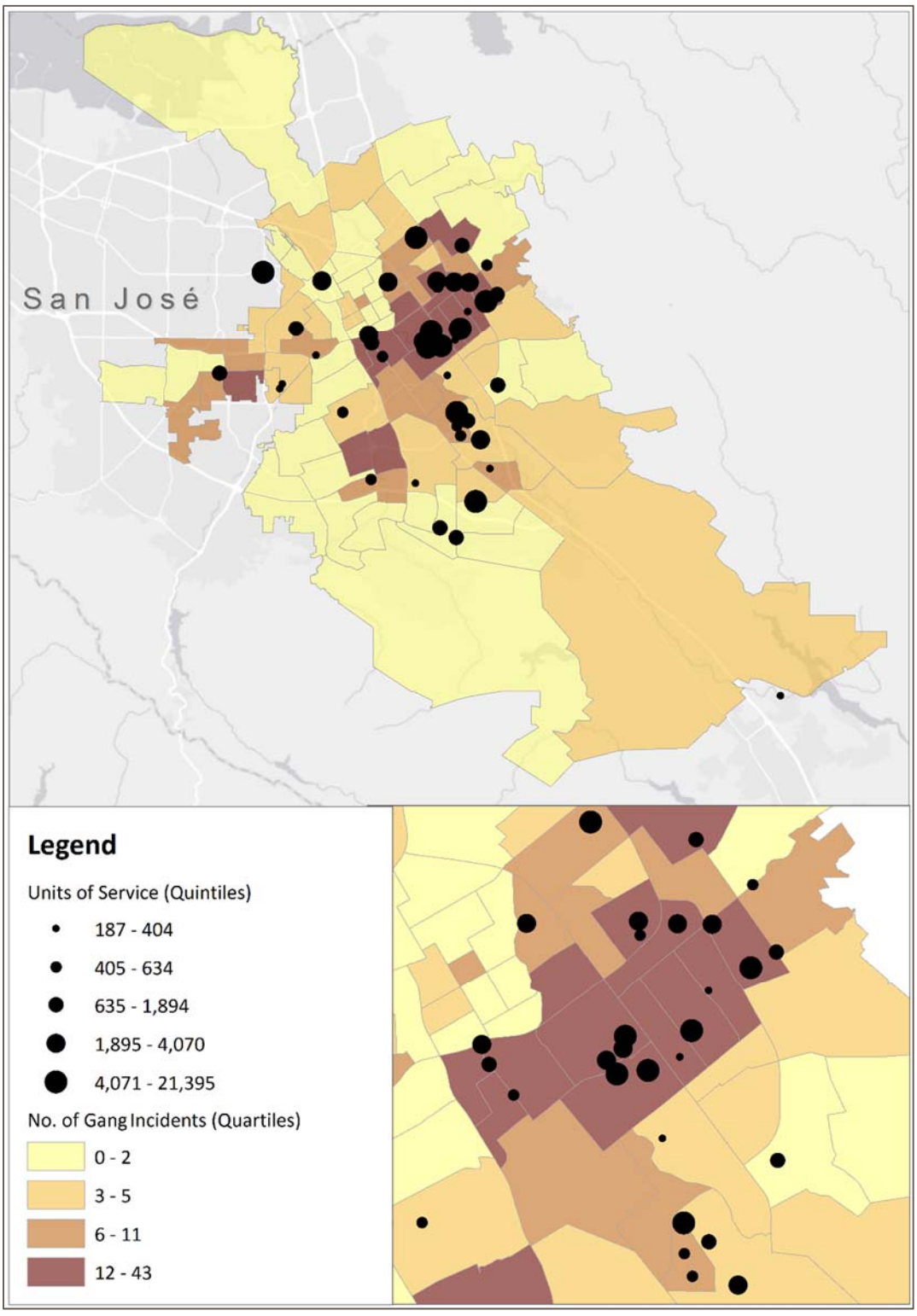
Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2013-2014 to PY 2015-2016 and SJPD crime data.

Exhibit IV-6: BEST Units of Service by Grantee Service Location in Relation to Youth Arrests, PY 2013-2014 to PY 2015-2016



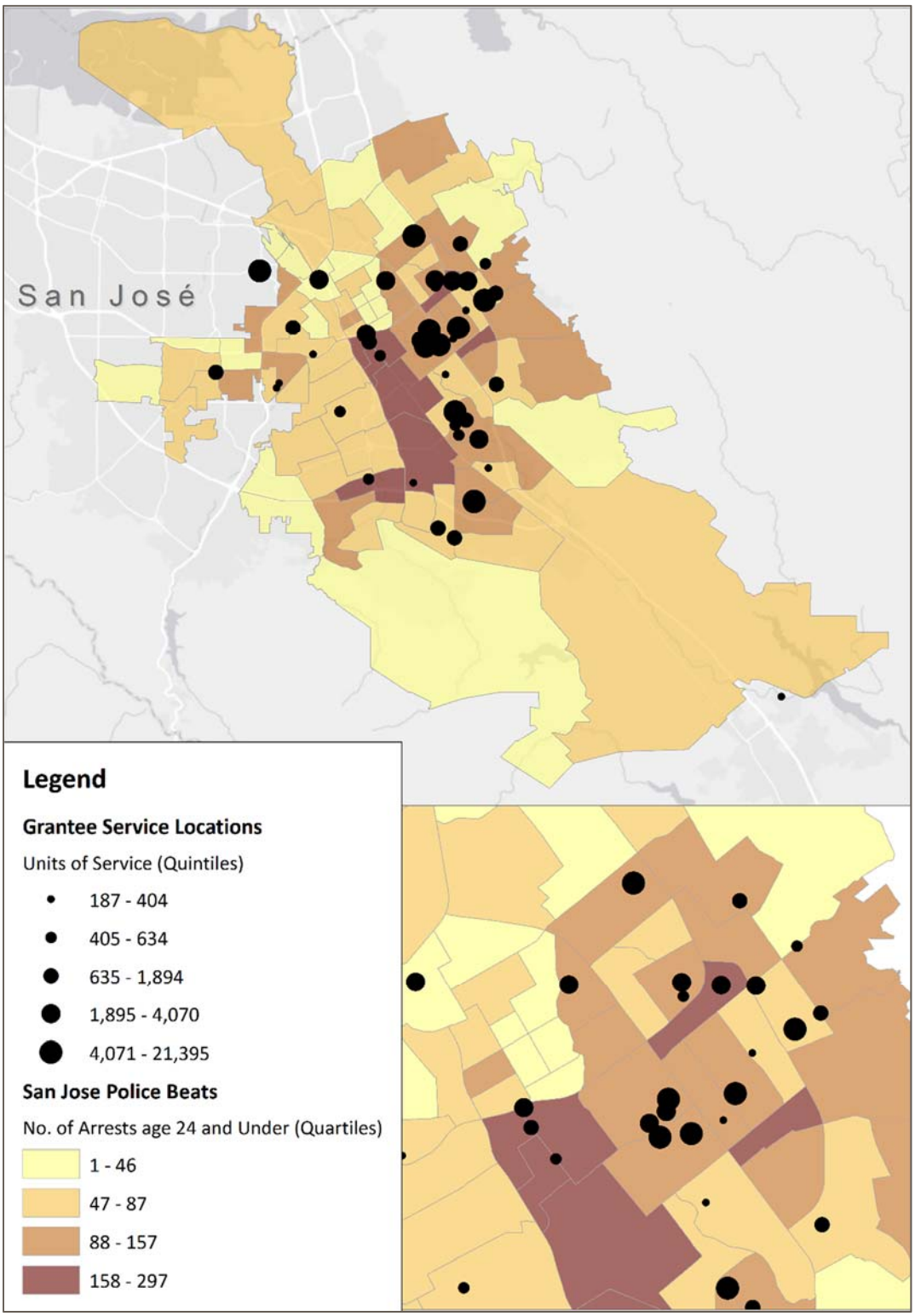
Source: BEST grantee documents for PY 2013-2014 to PY 2015-2016 and SJPD crime data.

Exhibit IV-7: BEST Units of Service by Grantee Service Location in Relation to Gang Incidents, PY 2016-2017 to PY 2017-2018



Source: BEST grantee documents for PY 2016-2017 to PY 2017-2018 and SJPD crime data.

Exhibit IV-8: BEST Units of Service by Grantee Service Location, Compared to Youth Arrests, PY 2016-2017 to PY 2017-2018



Source: BEST grantee documents for PY 2016-2017 to PY 2017-2018 and SJPD crime data.

C. Adapting to Changes in Crime

The maps show that BEST grantees were located, appropriately, near gang incidents and youth arrests. However, this information says little about how grantees and other city partners have responded to changes in crime over the evaluation period or what these changes may have looked like to agencies at the neighborhood level. In interviews, coordinators and other representatives of BEST grantees discussed changing crime patterns and their perspectives on the ways SJPD and PRNS have reacted to those changes. These findings reflect the responses of only BEST grantees from PY 2017-2018, but many of these grantees received BEST grants for multiple years of the evaluation period.

1. BEST Program Responses to Crime and Perceived Changes in Crime

Grantee interviews indicated that nearly all PY 2017-2018 grantees adapted their BEST-funded programs over the years in several different ways, including expanding their service areas geographically to new areas within the city; expanding their programs to new schools; increasing their use of evidence-based practices; and adapting services to provide more individual, as opposed to group, services. While these modifications were sometimes motivated by policy changes, such as the recast eligible service areas, respondents indicated that the alterations were often due to changes in hot-spot definitions or perceived changes in crime and gang activity in the neighborhoods in which their programs operated. Some of these environmental changes included:

- **Changes in the amount of crime.** Respondents for several grantees spoke about how crime and gang-related crime had risen, including increases in the number of younger youth who had joined gangs and participated in gang-related crimes, increases in gang-related crimes, and increases in violent crimes.

- **Changes in the types of crime.** Respondents for some grantees reported that the types of crime gangs were committing had changed, with some gangs engaging in human trafficking and prostitution. Several grantees involved in street outreach reported that these had typically been forbidden or off-limits areas of crime for gangs, but the grantees were hearing increasingly about human trafficking among gangs. They explained that some youth were "skipping the entry-level crimes."

- **Changes in gang behavior.** Interview respondents spoke about how gangs operated differently than they had in the past, making it more difficult to identify who gang members were or how to engage and intercept youth involvement. Some indicated that gangs were becoming more sophisticated, using technology to recruit new members and plan gang activities. Other respondents indicated that some gangs were no longer representing themselves by colors, making them harder to identify.

- **Challenges in working within hot spots.** Respondents for several grantees noted that working within hot-spot locations could be challenging because the actual hot-spot locations changed over time and could vary quite a bit, making it difficult to target services to a single hot spot. Furthermore, they noted that youth might often not be from a particular hot spot but simply come there to engage in activity. Thus, providing services could be challenging because there may have been a location closer to the youth's home that was more appropriate.

These data may not always be consistent with a citywide picture of crime; however, they may still reflect highly local changes. What these impressions point out is that grantee perspectives are specific and, more importantly, that BEST grantees have their "ears to the ground" and are working with the information they have to modify and adapt service delivery according to the trends in crime they observe in their local service areas. The information also shows that grantees are working with different types of youth (e.g., different ages, different levels of risk, and different levels of need) or considering ways to adapt classes and programs to different family needs. As one respondent stated: "As a provider you have to change with [participants]."

2. SJPD's Response to Crime

BEST grantee coordinators and other respondents also discussed in interviews SJPD's response to crime and gangs overall and in recent years. Most thought that SJPD had done a good job in recent years of engaging community organizations to address gang involvement and crimes. Several program coordinators noted that SJPD played an active part in MGPTF technical team meetings (one of the organizational meetings held by the MGPTF for partners). Some coordinators also discussed how SJPD had become increasingly focused on rehabilitating youth, including its emphasis on restorative justice practices with a cognitive behavioral therapy focus. One coordinator in particular spoke about a unique example in which SJPD invited community partners to attend a new recruits training event to discuss gangs and the underlying issues affecting today's youth. This coordinator reported that this training event provided an opportunity for community partners to reframe how law enforcement views gang-involved youth and to help police officers focus on intensive interventions, such as BEST services, rather than incarceration.

Interviews with a few grantees suggested that there were still opportunities for SJPD to improve its image in the community. Coordinators for a small group of grantees, for example, discussed how many of the youth they work with did not trust the criminal justice system, including police, parole officers, and courts, and staff expressed that SJPD officials can sometimes seem more focused on arrests than on gaining a better understanding of the root causes that draw young people to gangs (e.g., lack of affordable housing, the high cost of living, lack of positive adult role models, poor behavioral responses, poor educational attainment) and on prevention and rehabilitation. While SJPD has clearly changed its approach in recent years,

as noted above, there still may be ways for it to continue to adapt and/or continue to better convey its approach to community members.

3. City Response to Gang Activity

Another area in which BEST program coordinators and other respondents provided feedback was regarding how the City of San José has responded to crime and gang activity in recent years. Several coordinators indicated that the city has made a concerted effort to address the underlying problems. Most notable are the contributions city officials have made through the MGPTF. More specifically, interviewees noted how, through the task force, the city has funded grantees to provide services and coordinated with the district attorney's office to develop meaningful alternatives to jail (e.g., intervention programs, substance abuse programs, mental health programs). As one coordinator said, "building a bridge for our communities has become a priority for the county and the city."

Coordinators for a few grantees did have some constructive feedback. Some suggested that PRNS play a more active role to ensure that BEST grantees coordinate service delivery to the community. Others suggested that city agencies in general be more invested in BEST grantees—perhaps placing a stronger focus on BEST programming within schools as well as within police divisions and the community—and focus more on intervention than suppression activities. Over the years, PRNS has made several strides along these lines. Such efforts include developing communities of learning with BEST grantees, prescribing street outreach standards, and helping to establish collaboratives between agencies or city governments and schools. Overall, these types of efforts seem to be recognized by many grantees, but these grantee concerns indicate that additional work could be done to help communicate city-level changes to all BEST partners.

This page intentionally left blank.

V. Impact Study of BEST

Through the impact study, this evaluation sought to answer whether BEST funding improved youth outcomes, specifically criminal justice system outcomes, in the communities in which BEST-funded programs and services operated. In other words, were the youth in the communities served by BEST better off—did they have fewer interactions with the criminal justice system—than they would have been in the program's absence? This chapter reviews the impact study's approach and methodology, describes the data used and the broader context of crime trends observed within San José during the evaluation period, and presents the results and implications of the analysis.

Key Findings

Overall, BEST services were found to be associated with modest decreases in both gang incidents and arrests of individuals ages 24 and under (i.e., youth arrests).

- The provision of BEST services within a given police beat was associated with a decrease in gang incidents and youth arrests for the same beat, although impacts were only statistically significant in some models.
- The provision of BEST services within a given police beat was associated with statistically significant reductions of gang incidents and youth arrests for adjacent beats, although impacts were only statistically significant in some models.

A. Study Design

The impact study examined the relationship between BEST service delivery within specific geographic areas (in this case, the 87 police beats found in San José) and gang incidents and arrests of individuals 24 years old and under (hereafter referred to as "youth arrests"), according to SJPD data over the eight-year evaluation period. The study examined this relationship using a quasi-experimental design (QED) that relied on cross-sectional time series regression modeling (otherwise known as panel data modeling).[21]

1. Assumptions

The impact study design was based on three assumptions. The first was that a reduction in crime, and more specifically gang-related crime, was the primary outcome of interest. As noted

[21] SPR considered other QED options for the BEST impact study. However, in consultation with the city, SPR determined that the individual-level data required for those options would not be obtainable or available for either program participants or a comparison group within the project timeline.

in earlier chapters, BEST grantees provided varying services (i.e., eligible service areas) that were designed to impact many varying outcomes (e.g., criminal justice system outcomes, outcomes related to educational progress and attainment, youth development outcomes, etc.). At the start of the evaluation, the BEST theory of change, which helps to define the outcomes of interest, was still in development, so the study team engaged in conversations with PRNS and reviewed MGPTF and BEST background and grant management documents, all of which agreed that crime, and gang-related crime in particular, was an outcome that all BEST-funded services were intended to reduce, even if some or all grantees also addressed other types of outcomes.

The second assumption was that the specific crime outcomes of interest were the number of gang incidents compared to all incidents and the number of youth arrests compared to arrests of all individuals. Studying the number of gang incidents is appropriate given BEST's focus on gang prevention. In addition, given BEST's stated focus on serving youth (persons under 24 years of age), the impact study is narrowly focused on arrest outcomes for those in this age group. This assumption and the prior one regarding crime as an outcome of interest were further reinforced through the mapping activity described in Chapter IV, which analyzed the extent to which BEST grantee service locations were closely related to different types of criminal activity. The maps showed a relatively strong association between BEST services and gang incidents and youth arrests but not such a strong relationship between BEST services and all incidents or all arrests.

A third assumption underlying the impact study's approach was that crime events were spatially bound. In other words, crime events were more likely to occur in some geographic areas rather than others, and the effects of the crime prevention aspects of BEST-funded services were strong enough to be felt within these areas. The crime maps presented in Chapter IV suggest that this is a reasonable assumption. They show that gang incidents and youth arrests tended to be clustered in specific areas of the city. Based on this premise, the impact study examined the relationship between BEST program service delivery and criminal justice system activity at the level of police beat.

Given these assumptions, the analysis presented here is exploratory in nature and is designed to guide future research. Consequently, the results should be interpreted with caution, but they form a solid basis on which to engage in future research of BEST services to help confirm and expand on these impact study findings.

2. Analytic Strategy

Panel data regression models analyze outcomes (in this case, gang incidents and youth arrests) for specific units (in this case, SJPD beats). These outcomes are measured at multiple time intervals (e.g., program years) and modeled as a function of receipt of program-funded services (e.g., presence or absence of these services, or degree of BEST-funded services measured in

UOS). The technique controls for characteristics of each unit. Given that BEST services were designed to reduce criminal justice system involvement and that criminal justice system activity was often highly localized, the police beat—the smallest geographic unit for SJPD data—was the most appropriate geographical unit over which the effects of BEST could be observed.[22]

The type of models used in this analysis, known as two-way fixed effects models (Goodman-Bacon, 2018), control for characteristics of units that either do not change over time or that change slowly (such as poverty level or population size). The models also control for changes that occur for all units at the same time (such as economic booms and recessions and the enactment of citywide policies). Some models also included beat-specific time trends to control for changes that occur for some beats but not others. Appendix D details several of the types of sensitivity analyses that were conducted.

Finally, spatial autoregressive techniques were employed to assess whether the receipt of BEST services was associated with changes in criminal justice outcomes for beats other than those that received BEST services. Details about these methods are also offered in Appendix D.

3. Data Collection

The study team collected and utilized two different types of quantitative data for the impact study: BEST grantee workbook data and criminal justice data from SJPD.

BEST Grantee Workbook Data

As discussed previously in this report, the study team collected data on BEST service delivery as reported by BEST grantees in their grantee workbooks. SPR received workbook data pertaining to PY 2010-2011 through PY 2017-2018. For each program year, SPR used ArcGIS software to geocode the address of each eligible service area location as provided by each BEST grantee. In other words, if a grantee provided two different eligible service areas and provided one of these eligible service areas in two different locations, the study team noted the locations of all three areas of service delivery for each year. Using location data (i.e., shapefiles) provided by SJPD for police beats, SPR then identified the police beats in which BEST services were delivered, coded all beats as having been served by BEST or not, and determined the total UOS delivered to each beat (by adding all UOS delivered within that beat for a given year, regardless of the provider).

Criminal Justice Data

The study team also gathered administrative data from SJPD in May 2018 and again in December 2018. These data included:

---

[22] Beat-level analyses are also quite frequent in the literature on the effectiveness of interventions to reduce gang violence; see, for example, Papachristos, Meares, & Fagan (2007).

- Incidents—which included events (which may have involved more than one individual) to which police were called and specifically gang incidents—for the entire evaluation period; and
- Arrests (starting in 2012[23]), which included information on arrests of individuals at an incident to which police were summoned and the age of the arrestee.[24]

In addition, SJPD data included both the police beat where the incident or arrest occurred and a date of occurrence, which allowed the study team to associate each event with both the location of BEST-funded services and the grant year for those services.

B. Trends in Crime and BEST Service Delivery Over the Evaluation Period

The crime data show two broad trends over the course of the eight years of the evaluation period. As shown in Exhibit V-1, the number of gang incidents increased in PY 2016-2017 and PY 2017-2018, while the previous years trended downward. Although this pattern might reflect changes in the underlying prevalence of crime, it also reflects changes in how gang incidents were measured during the evaluation period. In 2013, SJPD adopted Uniform Crime Reporting guidelines developed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation for the reporting of gang incidents (Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act, California Penal Code § 186.22 PC). These guidelines are stricter in how they define a gang incident; therefore, the decrease in the number of gang incidents recorded in PY 2013-2014 through PY 2015-2016 was partially the result of adopting these new guidelines.

In another change adopted in 2016, which took effect in calendar year 2017, SJPD introduced a distinction between incidents that were gang motivated (i.e., those committed by a known or suspected gang member for the benefit, or at the direction of, or in association with a known street gang—which are harder to identify and thus fewer in number) and gang related (i.e., those that merely involve known gang members—which are easier to identify and thus larger in number). Prior to this change, incidents tagged as gang incidents more closely aligned with the definition of gang-motivated. The spike in the number of gang incidents reported in PY 2016-

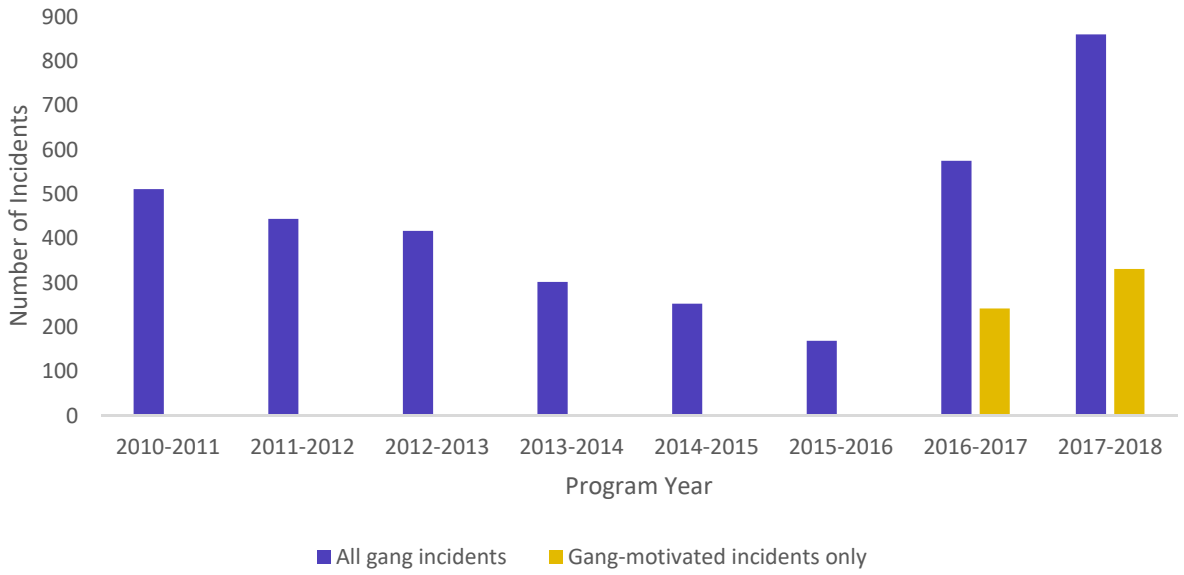
---

[23] Due to transitions in data systems at SJPD, arrest data were only available starting in 2012 and for PY 2012-2013, thus reducing the sample available for the analysis of arrests.

[24] Arrests are not universally accepted as an indicator of crime among researchers and advocates (as opposed to other indicators, such as convictions, parole violations, and incarcerations). However, given the nature of the BEST program, which tries to equip youth with interpersonal and life navigation skills—as well as time off the streets and personal supports designed to help them avoid getting into situations where they may be arrested—the study team considered arrests are a valid measure of the program's efficacy. That said, it is important to note that while SJPD data allowed filtering of only gang-related arrests, since this subset of arrests was very small and all arrests seemed relevant to the analysis, the study team analyzed all arrests and not just gang-related arrests.

2017 and which continues in PY 2017-2018 is likely related to the introduction of this broader including of "gang-related" incidents in the definition of gang incidents. As shown in Exhibit V-1 below, using only the stricter definition of gang-motivated incidents during these two program years, results in gang incident numbers that are much more in line with the overall numbers of gang incidents reported in previous years. Therefore, to make estimates more comparable across years, the study team limited gang incidents to gang-motivated incidents.

Exhibit V-1: Number of Gang Incidents Over the Evaluation Period

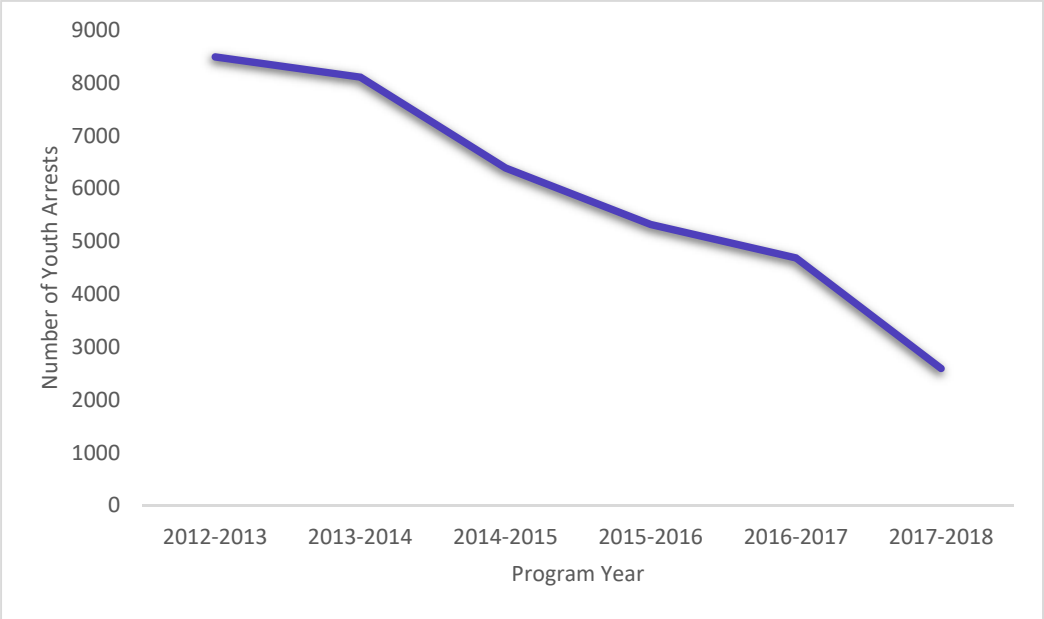


Source: SJPD crime data.

Notes: The purple bars show all gang incidents, for which the definition changed twice. In PY 2013-2014, the definition narrowed and became similar to what is now referred to as "gang motivated," incidents for which there is clear evidence that the crime furthered the motivations of the gang members involved. In PY 2016-2017, the definition came to include both gang-motivated and gang-related incidents, the latter of which is broader and includes incidents that simply involve gang members. The gold bars show incidents marked as gang-motivated only and exclude gang-related incidents.

In contrast to the trend for gang incidents, the number of youth arrests (shown in Exhibit V-2 below) shows a clear downward trend over the six years of the evaluation period for which there are data. This appears to be a more straightforward trend, considering there were no definition changes for this indicator over the observed period.

Exhibit V-2: Number of Youth Arrests Over the Evaluation Period



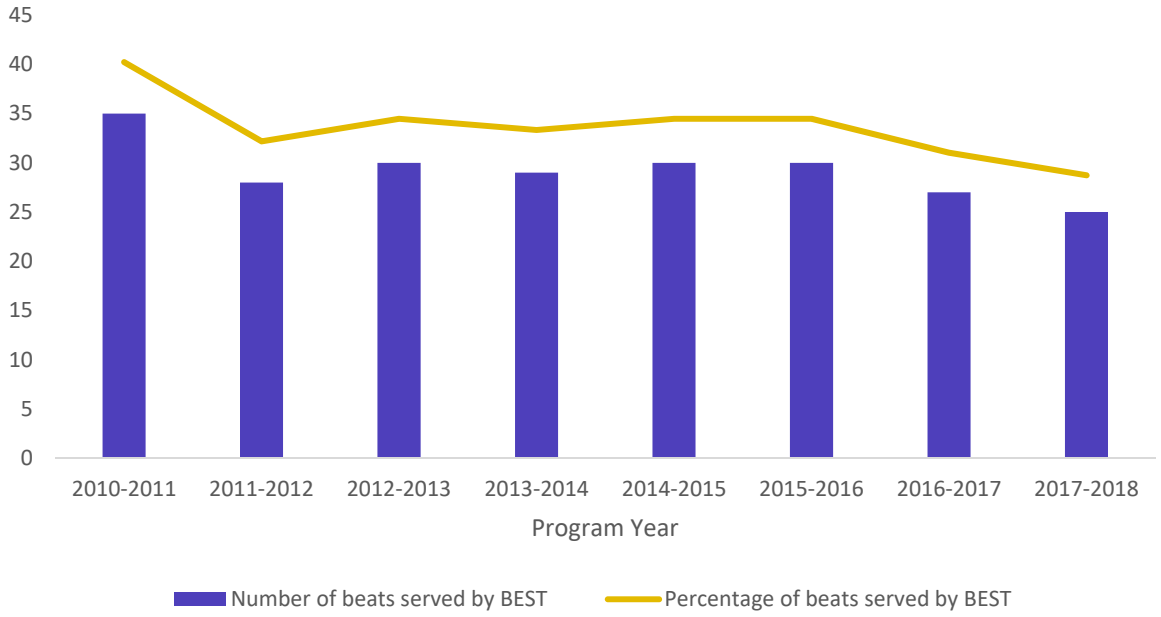
Source: SJPD crime data.

Notes: Data on the number of arrests were available only starting in PY 2012-2013.

The trends in the number of beats served by BEST programming can be seen in Exhibit V-3. As seen in this exhibit, the number of police beats served by the program saw a sizable decrease from PY 2010-2011 to the next year, followed by a period of relative flattening, which is relatively consistent with the pattern of BEST funding shown in Chapter II. As a result, during the last observed program year, the program served only slightly under 30 percent of all beats, compared to the more than 40 percent it served at the beginning of the evaluation period.[25]

[25] These percentages were calculated by dividing the number of beats served by BEST into the total number of beats in San José (87) and multiplying by 100.

Exhibit V-3: BEST Service Provision at the Beat Level Over the Evaluation Period



Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018; SJPD crime data.

A final notable trend when observing the implementation of BEST around the city involved the frequency with which beats were served by BEST, shown in Exhibit V-4. For the eight years of the evaluation period, about half of San José's police beats were not served by BEST at all, whereas 35 percent were served during some program years but not others, and 16 percent were always served (meaning they had at least one BEST grantee located within their borders in every program year). This finding is consistent with the map shown earlier in Chapter IV, reflecting that BEST funding is heavily clustered around areas with higher criminal activity.

Exhibit V-4: Number and Percentage of Beats Served by BEST During the Evaluation Period (Cumulative)

	Number of Beats	Percentage of Beats
Never served	43	49.4
Sometimes served	30	34.5
Always served	14	16.1

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018.

C. Panel Regression Findings

The impact study started with the assumption that the presence of BEST in a given beat would reduce the number of gang incidents or youth arrests. The study looked at BEST involvement in two ways: *whether* a beat was served by BEST in a given program year and *how much* a given beat received in BEST services for a given program year, measured by that beat's annual UOS. The advantage of the former approach was that it captured the breadth of the BEST program's influence, regardless of the specific services that were performed. However, this approach did not measure the intensity of service provision. In contrast, examining UOS assessed the role of service intensity but was much more sensitive to how the UOS were measured. For example, if grantees were not equally diligent in recording the services provided, the analysis may have overestimated or underestimated the impact of services.

The impact study's primary approach to the analysis viewed BEST's effects as cumulative over time—in other words, the effects of the program were greater as the overall number of UOS increased over time.[26] This approach essentially modeled the number of crime-related events as a function of cumulative exposure to the program. To accomplish this, the study team estimated two-way fixed effects models where the cumulative number of UOS received by a police beat during a program year *and* all previous years of observation were used to predict the number of gang incidents from that year.

However, there were several ways that past exposure might have influenced outcomes. For example, it could have been the case that all previous investments mattered for outcomes, regardless of how long ago they were offered. Alternatively, the effects of BEST investments may have become less pronounced over time.[27] Therefore, the study team examined three alternative models for each outcome. In the primary model, all UOS (past and current) were equally important, regardless of when they were rendered. In the two alternative models, the study team assumed that the effect of BEST decreased over time. The second model assumed that BEST UOS became 10 percent less effective with each passing year. The third model

---

[26] A standard approach is to estimate the impact of BEST services from one year on outcomes from the same year. The study team began the analysis using this approach but discontinued it once it became clear that it produced biased estimates. Please see Appendix D for a full explanation.

[27] As shown in Chapter III, "personal transformation through intervention and case management; cognitive behavior change and life skills education" was the eligible service area with the most UOS delivered. If many individuals receive case management services from the program several years in a row, the program's impact on them is arguably higher than if they were served only once. In the first case, the effects of case management on that individual are fully cumulative over time; in the second, they are not. Extending this argument to aggregate levels, if a high proportion of youth served by the program are "repeat customers," this would make it more likely for cumulative UOS to have an impact. The data at SPR's disposal when this analysis was conducted did not allow the study team to estimate whether individual participants are typically served repeatedly or only one time.

assumed a 20 percent yearly loss of effectiveness. For all three scenarios, models were estimated with and without beat-level time trends, for a total of six models.

Exhibit V-5: Cumulative Effects of BEST on Gang Incidents

	No loss of effectiveness over time		10% yearly loss of effectiveness		20% yearly loss of effectiveness	
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**
Cumulative dosage (UOS)	-0.4	-0.8	-0.6	-1.2*	-0.6	-1.2
Beat-level time trends	-	Included	-	Included	-	Included

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018; SJPD crime data.

Notes: All models estimated with clustered robust standard errors. Results from this model were shortened for ease of presentation. Full results are presented in Appendix D.

* statistical significance at 90%

The results from these six models for gang incidents are shown in Exhibit V-5.[28] In this exhibit, positive numbers indicate that increases in UOS were associated with *increased* gang incidents, while negative numbers indicate that increases in UOS were associated with *decreased* gang incidents. All models in Exhibit V-5 show that increases in UOS were associated with reductions in gang incidents, which is consistent with the hypothesis that BEST was associated with a decrease in crime. While most of the associations shown in Exhibit V-5 are not statistically significant—"statistical significance" means that the result is not likely to have appeared by chance alone—many are close to being so. In addition, it appears that adding beat-level time trends improved the precision of the models. In Model 4, receiving 10,000 units of service was associated with an average decrease of 1.2 gang incidents per beat. Given that the average number of gang incidents per beat across all years was 3.8, this

SPR's analysis found that an increase of 1,000 cumulative units of service over time in an average police beat was associated with an average 3.1 percent decrease in gang incidents in that beat.

[28] Based on the analysis of gang incidents shown in Exhibit V-1, and an understanding of how gang incident definitions have changed over time, the study team removed gang-related incidents from PY 2016-2017 and PY 2017-2018 gang incident data, restricting gang incidents in these two years to only gang-motivated incidents so that this outcome could be more consistently measured over time. As a sensitivity analysis, shown in Appendix D, SPR also ran the gang incident models without data from PY 2016-2017 and PY 2017-2018 altogether. Results from this sensitivity analysis show similar findings to the analysis presented in this chapter.

would translate into a 31.3 percent decrease in the number of gang incidents. However, only a few police beats received this level of exposure. A cumulative dosage of 1,000 units, more typical of what police beats actually received,[29] was associated with an average 3.1 percent decrease in the number of gang incidents in Model 4.

Exhibit V-6: Cumulative Effects of BEST on Youth Arrests

	No loss of effectiveness over time		10% yearly loss of effectiveness		20% yearly loss of effectiveness	
	Model 1	**Model 2**	**Model 3**	**Model 4**	**Model 5**	**Model 6**
Cumulative dosage (UOS)	-8.3*	-1.9	-9.3*	-3.5	-3.3	-3.9
Beat-level time trends	-	Included	-	Included	-	Included

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018; SJPD crime data.

Notes: All models are estimated with clustered robust standard errors. Results from this model were shortened for ease of presentation. Full results are presented in Appendix D.

* statistical significance at 90%

Similar to results seen with gang incident models, all the cumulative effects models of youth arrests showed that cumulative exposure to BEST services was associated with reduced crime at the beat level. As shown in Exhibit V-6, in two scenarios (the "no effectiveness loss" and the "10% yearly loss"), this relationship was statistically significant. In Model 3, an increase of 10,000 units of service was associated with an average decrease of nine arrests—or 17.6 percent, given the average number of 53 arrests per beat and year. However, a cumulative dosage of 1,000 units, more typical of what police beats actually received, was associated with an average 1.8 percent decrease in the number of gang incidents in Model 3, and a 1.6 percent decrease in Model 2. The relationships shown in Exhibit V-6 all suggest that a higher dosage of BEST services was associated with some decrease in youth arrests over time.

SPR found that an increase of 1,000 cumulative units of service over time in an average police beat was associated with between an average 1.6 and 1.8 percent decrease in the number of youth arrests in that beat.

[29] Across all years, the average UOS per beat was 1,687, with a minimum of 0 and maximum of 72,453.

Lastly, the study team estimated the average effect of receiving BEST services in an average beat on outcomes of other beats in the city using spatial autoregressive models (SAR) for panel data. Essentially, SAR models used for this portion of analysis were the same two-way fixed effects regressions used in the analyses above, with the added benefit of being able to estimate the spatial effects of BEST. For estimating these models, the study team assumed that the effects of delivering BEST within a beat to crime in other beats decrease with increasing distance between them. In this way, the study team was able to estimate the association between the receipt of BEST services and outcomes throughout the city. This approach attempted to control for the possibility that people served by the BEST grantees (and their families) may not have resided (and/or committed crimes) in the same beat in which the services were offered.

Exhibit V-7: BEST's Spatial Spillover Effects, Gang Incidents

	(1) Beat Served by BEST	(2) Cumulative-No Loss Rate	(3) Cumulative-10% Yearly Loss Rate	(4) Cumulative-20% Yearly Loss Rate
Direct Effect in Same Beat	0.5	-0.3*	-0.5*	-0.6*
Indirect Effect on Other Beats	-1.2	-2.3*	-4.2*	-7.1*
Total Effect	-0.7	-2.6*	-4.7*	-7.7*

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018; SJPD crime data.

Notes: Coefficients represent the predicted change in the average number of crime events associated with being served by BEST in a year (Column 1) or with a cumulative increase of 10,000 UOS (Columns 2-4).

* statistical significance at 90%

Spatial models estimated two types of effects: direct effects that occurred within the same area and indirect effects that "spilled over" into other areas. For each outcome, the influence of BEST was measured in four ways (shown in Exhibit V-7): as the instantaneous effect of whether a beat was served by BEST (first column) and using the three cumulative dosage variables developed earlier. As shown in Exhibit V-7, the effects of BEST on gang incidents are reflected in negative numbers, which is consistent with the previous findings that the program was associated with a decrease in crime. The indirect effects were larger than the direct effects, which suggests that the program may indeed have had spillover effects into other areas. Models 2-4 estimate that an increase of 10,000 UOS in one beat was associated with a reduction of between 2.6 and 7.7 gang incidents throughout the city (including the beat where the UOS were provided). Given an average total number of 334 gang incidents per year at the city level, these estimates are equivalent to reductions of between 0.8 percent and 2.3 percent overall. Correspondingly, a more typical dosage of 1,000 UOS in one beat and year is estimated

to have resulted in total decreases of between 0.08 and 0.2 percent in the number of gang incidents at the city level.

The spatial models developed for the number of youth arrests (Exhibit V-8) show that exposure to BEST services was associated with a reduction in youth arrests. While the estimates for direct effects are generally in line with the estimates from Exhibit V-6 above, BEST appears to have had indirect spatial spillover effects (although the size of the indirect effect varies considerably depending on the modeling strategy). Models 2-3 estimate that an increase of 10,000 UOS in one beat was associated with a reduction of between 22 and 60 arrests throughout the city (including the beat where the UOS were provided). Given the average total number of 5,933 arrests of youth per year at the city level, these estimates are equivalent to reductions of between 0.1 and 1 percent in the number of arrests at the city level.

Exhibit V-8: BEST's Spatial Spillover Effects, Youth Arrests

	(1) Dummy Program Indicator	(2) Cumulative-No Loss Rate	(3) Cumulative-10% Yearly Loss Rate	(4) Cumulative-20% Yearly Loss Rate
Direct Effect in Same Beat	-7.7	-7.8*	-8.8*	-4.9
Indirect Effect on Other Beats	-58.9	-14.1	-51.5*	-123.2
Total Effect	-66.6	-21.9*	-60.3*	-128.1

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018; SJPD crime data.

Notes: Coefficients represent the predicted change in the average number of crime events associated with being served by BEST in a year (Column 1) or with a cumulative increase of 10,000 UOS (Columns 2-4).

* statistical significance at 90%

D. Summary of Findings, Limitations, and Next Steps

The findings presented in this chapter suggest that cumulative BEST service provision was associated with decreases in two crime outcomes: the number of gang incidents and the number of youth arrests at the beat level. In addition, BEST service delivery in one police beat showed an indirect effect on gang incidents and youth arrests in other police beats. Taken together, these findings suggest an association between BEST and decreases in crime outcomes.

However, the study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the impact study covered a relatively small portion of the time since BEST began over 25 years ago. Because of the challenges of collecting grantee data since program inception and crime data before that point, the study team's analysis cannot offer a pre-post measure of the program's impact on

crime. In other words, the analysis cannot compare crime outcomes of BEST-served areas after the program started with crime outcomes for those same areas prior to BEST.

Second, while they offer a feasible tool for estimating impacts, the fixed-effects models used for this analysis have some limitations. First, they are prone to underestimating effects in the presence of measurement error (Angrist & Pischke, 2008).[30] The procedure that BEST grantees used to record units of service is complicated, and because it may not have been similar across grantees and over time, the number of UOS may not always be a true reflection of how intense the service provision was. Standardizing recording procedures for UOS may result in greater precision in measurements. In addition, a large portion of BEST service delivery consists of street outreach services, but grantees do not record the locations in which they conduct outreach. The study team used grantees' locations (police beat) as a proxy for where outreach services were provided, but this assumption may be inaccurate if outreach extends into multiple police beats.[31] Fixed-effects models are also statistically inefficient, meaning that they require many years of observation to yield consistent estimates.

The lack of data on beat-level characteristics that may change over time also posed a challenge. The inclusion of such beat-level characteristics (such as economic growth, poverty, and population density) typically improves the precision of fixed-effects estimates. In addition, the availability of a rich set of area-level characteristics would have allowed additional analytical strategies. For example, BEST areas could have been compared with areas that are otherwise very similar, but not served by the program. The SJPD data, however, only specified the police beat, district, and division where an incident took place, along with a text field indicating the street intersection where the incident was recorded. It did not include sociodemographic data for police units, such as beats and districts, and did not contain geocodes that would have allowed the study team to tally crime data by census tracts, which would have enabled the study team to incorporate the rich data available for these units from the U.S. Census.

The analysis presented in this chapter also only focuses on a small set of outcomes. However, knowledge of the program suggests that the impacts of the program may lie significantly beyond crime. As described in Chapter III and elsewhere, grantees and participants point to many psychosocial and education-related outcomes the program is designed to change, as well as services designed to provide participants with the skills, capacity, and support mechanisms needed to stay out of harm's way and decrease the likelihood of becoming involved in gangs or of returning to gang activities and criminal activity more generally. It would be beneficial to extend impact analyses to these outcomes as well. But because many of these other outcomes

[30] "Measurement error" refers to the precision with which a certain measure captures the true nature of a phenomenon.

[31] Location data for many street outreach services were also unavailable.

are best measured at the individual level, the next chapter suggests that future analyses involve individual-level analyses as a useful addition to the impact study, a change that PRNS has already put in motion in partnership with SPR.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations for Future Evaluations

Prior chapters of this report have described BEST implementation and impact studies over the eight-year evaluation period. This concluding chapter summarizes the findings from these studies and presents recommendations for future evaluation efforts of the BEST program and the MGPTF overall. These recommendations address the third research priority—identifying prospective evaluation designs—to help expand the knowledge base regarding what works in delivering gang-prevention and intervention services in the City of San José.

A. Key Findings from the Implementation and Impact Studies

The implementation study examined the landscape of BEST-funded services, including 1) the number and size of BEST grants, 2) the nature and types of services that grantees used BEST grants to support, and 3) the location of BEST services within San José in relation to crime. The impact study then took this account of BEST and examined the impact that BEST services have had on crime throughout the city. Together, these studies suggest several important lessons about how the BEST program operates, what PRNS has accomplished with the program, and how PRNS may adjust the program in the future.

1. BEST Is Associated with a Decrease in Crime

The most prominent finding in this evaluation comes from the impact study: **BEST services were found to be associated with decreases in both gang incidents and arrests of individuals 24 years old and under (i.e., youth arrests).** This finding should be interpreted with some important caveats, discussed in Chapter V. First, while increases in the delivery of BEST services were generally associated with reductions in crime, the impacts were only statistically significant for some models.

Second, the size of the impacts, while not insubstantial, is modest. However, as the evaluation shows, BEST is designed to improve many different youth-related outcomes, such as youth development-related measures or school attendance and performance. As much of the literature suggests, there is reason to believe that many of these types of psychosocial youth development outcomes and education-related outcomes that BEST services are designed to change may help lead to reduce crime.[32] Thus, modest impacts estimated for crime may

[32] Some examples of literature that connects these types of intermediate outcomes to risk-reducing behavior and, in some cases, reduced criminal activity include: two studies of Functional Family Therapy that suggested reductions in risky behavior by youth (Celinska et al., 2013) and reduced rates of felony and violent crimes (Sexton and Turner, 2010); a meta-analysis that described how social and emotional learning can help reduce conduct problems and education punishments (Durlak et al., 2011); an impact study of the school-based Gang

suggest nontrivial impacts on these intermediate outcomes, since this is where the program is designed to have a more direct impact.

Third, the impact study outlines many important limitations to the design and describes how the analysis may be enhanced or improved. Some of these changes are impractical or unlikely to be realized. For instance, obtaining data prior to BEST's implementation to provide strong baseline measures (i.e., prior to 1991) would be helpful, but doing so is challenging.

What these caveats and limitations point to, however, is the need for additional evaluation efforts, ideally centered on individual-level outcomes, that further explore the positive impacts observed in this report. Some recommendations around these efforts are described in the prospective evaluation design section below.

2. BEST Implementation Provides Input Regarding Future Grantmaking

The implementation study identified several trends in BEST program implementation over the evaluation period. While some of the following findings suggest further actions for PRNS, many are presented for PRNS to consider alongside the goals of the agency and the BEST program. For many of these trends, the evaluation is neutral regarding the approach PRNS should take. Importantly, however, as mentioned in the section above on the impact study findings, the delivery of BEST programs, as implemented over the evaluation period, is associated with reductions in crime. Therefore, the important question upon acknowledgment of the following findings is what changes in grantmaking and program implementation can further improve participant outcomes.

- **Over the evaluation period, PRNS increasingly consolidated BEST grants, providing fewer, larger grants.** This trend was driven by two factors. First, despite some fluctuations, the total amount of BEST funding remained relatively consistent over the evaluation period. Second, over the evaluation period, the number of grantees decreased, declining from 26 grantees in PY 2010-2011 to 18 grantees in PY 2017-2018. A potential reason for the decrease in grantees is the defunding of grantees, which explains decreases within triennial periods. PRNS may wish to review this funding pattern more closely to consider whether to alter the number and size of future grants (or to continue with the current pattern). More consolidated funding may represent a more efficient approach to grantmaking, but it could also limit the size and scope of the overall program.

Resistance Education and Training, which showed reduced gang involvement and improved pro-social outcomes; a study of the Broader Urban Involvement and Leadership Development program, a violence prevention curriculum, which showed how youth who participated were less likely to recidivate than others (Lurigio et al., 2000); a study of the Gang Resistance Is Paramount program, which showed lower reported gang involvement and stronger negative perceptions of gang activity; and an evaluation of the Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project, which connected youth with community-based services, showing reduced arrests for violent crimes, serious violent crimes, and drug crimes (Spergel et al., 2003).

- **While BEST funding as a percentage of total program expenses increased slightly over the evaluation period, the influence of BEST grants on BEST-funded services varied widely across grantees.** BEST funding as a percentage of total program funding increased from around 61 percent in the first triennial period to 69 and 70 percent in the second and third triennial periods, respectively. However, grant sizes and percentages of total funds at the grantee level varied widely. Over the evaluation period, the smallest grant was $9,000, while the largest was $376,500, and the percentage of total program costs any grantee's BEST funding represented varied from 18 to 86 percent. To some extent, these extremes reflect different-sized grantee organizations and programs, but they also reflect different levels of BEST grant influence on grantee program operations. In other words, BEST funding represented only a small portion of total program costs for some grantees' BEST-funded services and the majority of total program costs for others, and this variation reflects the range of influence BEST grants had on overall organization budgets. This trend suggests that the presence of BEST is not a large determinant of the overall level of BEST contribution and influence (in terms of funding or the services delivered through those funds). This trend may also be an area of further examination for PRNS in investigating whether BEST grants should constitute higher or lower portions of total program expenses (or of grantee budgets). When higher, PRNS and BEST funding have more influence. When lower, grantees are less dependent on BEST funding and thus less vulnerable to BEST funding fluctuations. PRNS may wish to pursue one approach or the other, or consider a changing ratio over time to support grantee program sustainability.

- **BEST programs targeted higher risk youth in middle and high school.** While grantees could serve youth ages six to 24, grantees most often targeted youth ages 12 to 19. Similarly, while grantees could serve youth in one or more of four increasing categories of risk, grantees most often targeted youth in the two middle risk levels. A more in-depth examination of enrollment patterns would provide greater insight into actual participant composition. PRNS may wish to pursue such an examination of participant data at the individual level, depending on whether this target composition accurately reflects the desired composition of participants.

- **PRNS changed the eligible service areas twice over the evaluation period for vetted programmatic reasons; this made cross-year comparisons in the evaluation difficult.** During the three triennial periods in the evaluation period, PRNS altered the eligible service (ES) areas that describe the services grantees were to deliver. From PY 2010-2011 to 2012-2013, there were 10 ES areas. Starting in PY 2013-2014, PRNS reorganized the ES areas and reduced the number to five. Then, in PY 2016-2017, PRNS divided one ES area into two, making six ES areas. These changes enabled PRNS to better focus training and support, eliminate services that grantees did not widely practice, and change the emphasis of services from lighter touch services to more intensive services. The latter action was consistent with community input and PRNS's program goals, based on the belief that more intensive services would produce stronger changes. Future changes to ES areas may still be needed to address, for example, the small number of

grantees providing services in some ES areas or to adapt to new research. In weighing any potential modifications, however, it is important to note that changes in eligible service areas limit the extent to which evaluations can compare service delivery across program years.

- **The amount of BEST services that grantees delivered each year declined over the evaluation period.** During the evaluation period, grantees measured outputs through a customized measure (intended to standardize outputs across the different eligible service areas) known as units of service (UOS). UOS are computed as "(average number of participants per session) x (total number of sessions) x (average number of hours per session)." The total UOS delivered by grantees declined slightly over the evaluation period, which is notable given the slight increase in overall funding described above. PRNS may want to further explore the expectations placed on grantees regarding service delivery as well as measurement of UOS. One possible explanation for the decline is that grant increases were not sufficient to keep up with rising costs. Or, perhaps, the capacity of fewer grantees was insufficient to provide the same UOS previously provided by more grantees. Either way, PRNS should consider (and, indeed, has already undertaken some changes regarding) assessing raw output measures (e.g., attendance, hours, sessions provided) rather than averages, as the composite measure of the equation may obscure and lead to errors in reporting outputs.

- **Grantees focused on many intermediate outcomes (e.g., youth development and education-based outcomes) in addition to the long-term outcome of reducing crime.** In interviews and focus groups, grantee representatives explained that BEST-funded programs and services were designed to improve many outcomes in addition to, and often as a means to, improving criminal justice-related outcomes. The services grantees delivered through BEST were designed to provide youth with the skills, support, alternatives, and sense of purpose and individuality—as well as the educational background and personal goals—needed to stay out of harm's way and avoid criminal activity. This finding is important since it helps to guide the interpretation of impact study findings—suggesting that programs may have an impact on these other outcomes that is greater than the impacts shown on criminal justice outcomes—and provides direction to future research by identifying a wider range of outcomes to examine.

- **During the evaluation period, BEST services were located in high-crime areas.** BEST grantee service locations were generally in or near police beats with the highest levels of reported gang incidents and youth arrests. This finding suggests that BEST grantees were located where they were supposed to be (i.e., near criminal activity associated with target participants) and that these two measures—gang incidents and youth arrests—were good outcomes for the impact study and future evaluation efforts.

- **BEST grantees and city agencies adapted services and activities designed to support BEST in response to changes in crime.** Because BEST services were located in communities (whether at community centers or schools) with specific geographic needs, unique contextual factors rooted in different neighborhood populations, and specific

types of criminal activity, grantees often adapted services based on changes in crime they observed in these neighborhoods. Over the evaluation period, most grantees also reported seeing positive changes from SJPD and other city agencies, including PRNS, in the support these agencies provided to BEST grantees. Some potential areas of improvement grantees noted included SJPD's and PRNS's continued development in the area of prevention services (compared to intervention services) and greater advocacy for programs such as BEST in the larger community (e.g., law enforcement, education).

3. A Program-Specific Theory of Change Would Improve BEST

As discussed throughout the report, **BEST needs a finalized program-specific theory of change that identifies the outcomes that services are designed to improve.** While BEST is clearly designed to reduce crime, and especially gang-related crime, interviews and focus groups with grantees indicate that grantees consider their programs designed to influence other, often short- and medium-term, intermediate outcomes, such as youth development outcomes (e.g., improved self-esteem, improved coping mechanisms, stronger adult relationships); education-related outcomes (e.g., reduced disciplinary measures or suspension and expulsions, improved academic performance); and possibly other outcomes related to employment (e.g., improved employment and earnings), housing (e.g., improved housing stability), or substance abuse (e.g., reduced dependence or use). Importantly, as grantees note and the literature suggests, these outcomes may build on one another, and improving many of these intermediate outcomes may be important for producing better criminal justice-related outcomes, because in executing them, grantees provide youth with the skills, support, alternative activities, and sense of purpose needed to avoid becoming involved in criminal activity.[33] Along those lines, PRNS has nearly completed a theory of change, which was described in Chapter III (Exhibit III-1). Having a finalized version at the start of subsequent evaluation efforts—especially one that further clarifies the relationships among specific eligible service areas and specific outputs and outcomes (clarification that is also already in development)—will provide better guidance regarding where to expect improved outcomes and how to interpret any findings, and will provide a guide to PRNS for modifying the program when any outlined changes are not observed or new research emerges regarding specific approaches.

4. BEST Needs Improved Output Measurement

PRNS, BEST grantees, and future evaluation efforts may benefit from improving (and simplifying) how BEST grantees record program outputs. As discussed in Chapter III, PRNS currently measures BEST service delivery through UOS, which involves a calculation of the average number of participants per session times the total number of sessions times the average number of hours per session. This unit of measurement may be prone to error—as

[33] See footnote 32 above for examples from the literature.

grantees estimate figures for average number of participants or average number of hours—and it cannot be used to develop unduplicated counts of participants or to associate outputs with individual-level outcomes, as it is an aggregate measure. Indeed, based on some initial feedback from SPR early in the evaluation process, PRNS has already begun to implement changes regarding UOS measurement in PY 2018-2019 to limit these types of data entry challenges, and PRNS plans to keep evolving this measurement process in the future.

For the long term, the simplest and most flexible approach would be to have grantees report on individual-level service delivery (i.e., the activities and services delivered to each participant). Grantees could record measures such as class attendance, case management session attendance, or program activity. These measures could then be combined more easily into discernable program outputs (e.g., the number of unique participants attending a specific type of class or average number of participants per session). From this information, PRNS could generate unduplicated counts of attendance or overall enrollment levels. These outputs would be easier to record and generate, and would be more meaningful to an outside audience. A separate accounting of which specific activities grantees provided would also benefit the tracking process, as it would help to identify the grantee-level outputs (see Exhibit III-1) and provide a record of outputs that cannot be captured at an individual level (e.g., initial outreach), since participants will not yet be enrolled. Such tracking would also better guide the development of appropriate individual-level output measures.

B. Recommendations for Future Evaluation Efforts

The prospective evaluation design component is intended to help PRNS develop an approach for conducting ongoing evaluations of BEST, and possibly of MGPTF funding and activities, starting with PY 2018-2019. Based on the findings from the implementation and impact studies and additional data collection activities—outlined in the introduction for this evaluation component (such as a focus group with grantees regarding a BEST theory of change, study team attendance at MGPTF technical team meetings, and interviews with BEST and MGPTF stakeholders)—the study team has several recommendations regarding long-term evaluation planning for both BEST and the MGPTF as a whole.

1. Future BEST Evaluations

There are two reasons why PRNS should pursue additional BEST evaluation activities. First, such efforts can help corroborate the findings of this report. For the reasons discussed above, the impact study design used in this evaluation faces certain limitations. Additional evaluations, using different approaches, may be able to overcome some of these limitations and improve the estimates shown in this report. Second, additional evaluation activities can help clarify and expand upon the findings from this evaluation by exploring additional outcomes of interest and

by better parsing the effects of different aspects of the BEST service delivery model (e.g., showing how different eligible service areas effect different types of outcomes).

For any additional research, the study team recommends moving away from the beat-level analysis used in the impact study in this report and instead focusing on tracking the outcomes of individual BEST participants. Grantees (and PRNS) already gather information on participants, including some demographic and participation information. Expanding on this approach as described above regarding outputs and outcome data, collected through surveys or administrative data, should position PRNS for strong future evaluations of BEST services. More specifically, the proposed approach that SPR recommends includes the following components:

- **Determining the outcomes of interest to the program.** A finalized theory of change will guide decisions regarding any research to determine both short- and long-term outcomes of interest for which data need to be collected, as well as how particular eligible service areas are designed to effect each type of outcome. This information will also be important for helping PRNS better guide grantees in building services to effect these outcomes.

- **Obtaining consent to collect individual outcome data.** While some outcomes of interest may require direct measurement through survey tools, others will be best measured through administrative data sources. Obtaining the consent of participants (and from parents or guardians of participants under 18) will be critical for procuring individual-level data on a wide range of outcomes.

- **Collecting the data needed to track individual-level outcomes.** Data collection efforts might include developing and administering surveys and collecting administrative data intended to measure both intermediate and final outcomes of interest. Collecting administrative data may involve establishing (ideally long-term) agreements with agencies—such as SJPD, the Santa Clara County Department of Probation, and various education agencies—and establishing a process for obtaining participant outcome data from these agencies.

- **Conducting outcomes and impact analyses.** The analysis of the data would include two main components. First, it would include an analysis of program outcomes, which would describe the intermediate and long-term outcomes of BEST participants and any changes in participant outcomes that occur over time. This analysis would explore whether improved outcomes are observed along different measures. Accompanied by additional implementation study data, this information would help PRNS identify what additional support grantees may need to improve intended outcomes or where the theory of change may need to be modified. Second, these additional evaluation efforts could include other quasi-experimental impact study designs to assess the impact the program has on the desired outcomes of interest to further corroborate and expand upon the findings in this report.

PRNS has already begun implementing several of these recommendations in partnership with SPR. It is drafting consent tools and making plans to begin individual-level analysis of BEST participant outcomes for PY 2018-2019.

2. MGPTF Evaluation Efforts

As noted in the introduction, the MGPTF is a strategic youth violence prevention initiative for the City of San José (Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, 2018) that includes gang intervention, and prevention and suppression components, and encompasses BEST. Importantly, then, an evaluation of BEST isolated from an evaluation of other MGPTF activities tells only part of the story about what the City of San José is doing to reduce youth violence and crime more generally and gang violence and activity more specifically. Therefore, part of this evaluation's prospective evaluation design task was to consider what an evaluation of MGPTF activities might look like alongside of, or in coordination with, ongoing BEST evaluations.

Important to considering potential evaluation designs is understanding the MGPTF's complex structure. According to the MGPTF 2015-2017 strategic plan, the program is built around several guiding principles, strategic goals, and a central mission: "to ensure safe and healthy opportunities for San José's youth, free of gangs and crime, to realize their hopes and dreams, and become successful and productive in their homes, schools, and neighborhoods" (Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force, 2015). It also seeks to address five broad outcomes: 1) reduced gang violence; 2) safe schools, community centers, and neighborhoods; 3) informed and engaged communities; 4) well-trained and -funded direct service providers; and 5) a seamless delivery system. The MGPTF tries to accomplish these goals and produce these outcomes through two broad mechanisms. The first is the funding of three modes of services, including BEST, Youth Intervention Services (including funding for programs such as the hospital-based violence intervention Trauma to Triumph Program, the Clean Slate Tattoo Removal Program, the Safe School Campus Initiative, the Female Intervention Team, the MGPTF San José Works youth jobs initiative, the Digital Arts Program, and the Late Night Gym Program), and Neighborhood Services (including funding for programs such as the Anti-Graffiti Program, the Anti-Litter Program, and the Project Hope program).[34] The second mechanism is the organization of a diverse coalition—including law enforcement, school officials, government

[34] BEST involves issuing grants to community-based agencies, whereas the other two modes of service involve city staff providing these services directly.

leaders (from city, county, and state offices), faith- and community-based organizations, and residents—to collaborate, plan, share, and implement solutions for reducing crime.[35]

An evaluation of MGPTF overall presents some inherent challenges due to the size, scope, and nature of its activities. For instance, while some services, such as Neighborhood Services, affect communities through community organizing, self-help and leadership development, they do not directly serve individuals. Therefore, their direct impact on communities may be more difficult to measure. Another challenge lies in the use of multiple funding sources to support and supplement these services, so an evaluation will tend to focus on the services provided and not a distinct funding stream. Also, many of the activities are focused on communication, networking, and building coalitions within the community. As a result, the MGPTF is focused more on producing community systems-level changes that would be difficult to measure in an outcomes or impact study, as recommended above for the BEST program.

Regarding a future evaluation design, SPR recommends focusing, at first, on describing the overall level of influence the program has on the city and different neighborhoods in which it operates. Such an evaluation would primarily focus on the implementation of task force efforts and on describing the nature, size, and scope of the services it provides, pulling from existing documents and qualitative data such as interviews with various key stakeholders and community members. An evaluation plan might include the following components:

- **An analysis of program documents,** including strategic workplans, RFQs, funding applications and contracts, planning documents, division breakout documents, and financial records, which will help describe the scope and nature of services and organizing activities supported by the MGPTF, the size and distribution of funding, and the overall landscape of the different mechanisms the MGPTF uses to reach its goals and achieve its outcomes;

- **An implementation study,** drawing from interviews with MGPTF leadership who have oversight of the program and who deliver program services, and with key partners and participants, which will provide additional information about how the MGPTF operates, how its services are delivered, the opportunities for long-term evaluations of them, and some key successes and challenges in operating those services; and

- **A social network analysis,** drawing on information obtained through surveys of MGPTF partners and grantees, which will provide a detailed account, illustrated through a series of connected nodes, of all the partners involved in MGPTF entities. The account will include the nature and type of the organizations involved, the number and strength of the relationships they have to other partners, and the ways in which partners are

[35] MGPTF community organizing efforts are broken down into multiple teams and meetings, including policy team meetings held for agency leadership; policy team subcommittees; and the technical team, which includes a large group of (invited) coalition members, who further break out into police division subgroups.

connected to each other. This illustration will identify stronger and weaker partnerships and areas where MGPTF may wish to focus efforts to strengthen relationships and build the networking and relationships aspect of its work.

Overall, this approach should provide better transparency about size and scope of the MGPTF's endeavors and help identify how these endeavors could be strengthened and how to enhance the capacity for the overall task force to better connect its many points of service delivery. This evaluation would do so by mapping the network of services and partners that comprise MGPTF activities. While the growing or changing networks that the MGPTF affects are probably not possible to measure given the longevity of the MGPTF and the fact that most changes occurring year to year are going to be relatively limited in size or scope, an evaluation should be able to identify the stronger and weaker points in the network and where systems change efforts may prove most efficient and/or valuable.

This evaluation approach will also help to identify areas in which more targeted outcomes or impact studies could be conducted, by identifying partners and specific services that partners are delivering that might be included in such studies (such as a study of Neighborhood Services similar to the ones in this report or a more traditional impact or outcomes study approach, perhaps of Youth Intervention Services), how these services relate to other services to better identify how easily the services can be studied, and how such additional evaluation efforts might be structured (whether programs might be suitable candidates for impact studies and which particular impact study designs might work best given the data available and types of enrollment processes or services delivered), especially in coordination with any ongoing evaluations of the BEST program.

C. Concluding Thoughts

Overall, this evaluation provides insight into the operations and effectiveness of BEST. The impact study shows an association between the delivery of BEST services in high-crime areas and reductions in both gang incidents and youth arrests. The implementation study identifies patterns in the evolution of funding and service delivery that may be useful to PRNS in shaping its future grantmaking efforts. Finally, the report provides PRNS with clear recommendations for future evaluation efforts of both BEST and MGPTF activities, to continue to learn about what works to reduce gang-related crime and what programs and services can help youth lead better, safer lives.

References

Angrist, J. D., & Pischke, J. S. (2008). *Mostly harmless econometrics: An empiricist's companion.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Autor, D. H. (2003). Outsourcing at will: The contribution of unjust dismissal doctrine to the growth of employment outsourcing*. Journal of Labor Economics, 21*(1), 1–42.

Besley, T., & Burgess, R. (2004). Can labor regulation hinder economic performance? Evidence from India. *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, *119*(1), 91–134.

Celinska, K., Furrer S., & Cheng C. 2013. "An Outcome-Based Evaluation of Functional Family Therapy for Youth with Behavioral Problems." *OJJDP Journal of Juvenile Justice* 2(2): 23-36.

Crime in the United States (2010-2017). Table 8: Offenses known to law enforcement by state by city. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Retrieved from: https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2017/crime-in-the-u.s.-2017/tables/table-8/table-8.xls/view

Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R.P., Dymnicki, A. B., Taylor, R. T., & Schellinger, K. B. 2011. "The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social and Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions." *Child Development* 82(1):405–32.

Engel, R. S., Tillyer, M. S., & Corsaro, N. (2013). Reducing gang violence using focused deterrence: Evaluating the Cincinnati initiative to reduce violence (CIRV). *Justice Quarterly*, *30*(3), 403–439.

Goodman-Bacon, A. (2018). *Difference-in-differences with variation in treatment timing* (No. w25018). Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.

Lurigio, A., Bensinger, G., Thompson, S. R., Elling, K., Poucis, D., Selvaggio, J., & Spooner, M. 2000. *A Process and Outcome Evaluation of Project BUILD: Years 5 and 6*. Unpublished Report. Chicago, Ill.: Loyola University.

Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force. (2015). *From trauma to triumph: A plan to foster hope and break the cycle of youth violence. Strategic work plan 2015–2017*. San José, CA: Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department. Retrieved from http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/53054

Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force. (2018). *From trauma to triumph II: A plan to foster hope and break the cycle of youth violence. Strategic work plan 2018–2020*. San José, CA: Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services Department. Retrieved from http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/79233

Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force Policy Team. (2015). *MGPTF 2015 draft hot spot areas by police division.* San José, CA: City of San José. Retrieved from https://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/44303

OpenJustice Data Portal (2010-2017). Crimes & clearances. California Department of Justice. Retrieved from: https://openjustice.doj.ca.gov/crime-statistics/crimes-clearances

Papachristos, A. V., Meares, T. L., & Fagan, J. (2007). Attention felons: Evaluating project safe neighborhoods in Chicago. *Journal of Empirical Legal Studies*, *4*(2), 223–272.

Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office, The Crime Strategies Unit. (2016). *The Crime Strategies Unit's annual report: Crime in Santa Clara County – 2016*. Retrieved from https://www.sccgov.org/sites/da/newsroom/newsreleases/Documents/2017NRDocs/CSU%202016%20Annual%20Report%20Final.pdf

Sexton, Thomas L., & Turner C. W. 2010. "The Effectiveness of Functional Family Therapy for Youth with Behavioral Problems in a Community Practice Setting." *Journal of Family Psychology* 24(3):339–48.

Spergel, I. A., Wa, K. M., Grossman, S. F., Jacob, A., Choi, S. E., Sosa, R. V., Barrios, E. M., & Spergel, A. 2003. The Little Village Gang Violence Reduction Project in Chicago. Chicago, Ill.: Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority.

Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act, California Penal Code § 186.22(a) PC

Wing, C., Simon, K., & Bello-Gomez, R. A. (2018). Designing difference in difference studies: Best practices for public health policy research. *Annual Review of Public Health*, *39*, 453–469.

Appendix A: BEST Target Population Definitions

The follows are PRNS's definitions of the four Target Population Profiles that grantees select in describing their target populations for BEST-funded services.

At-Risk: This category may be distinguished from other at-risk youth in that they are residing in a high-risk community (**Hot Spot areas**, low socio-economic) and have some of the following gang risk characteristics.

- Has a high potential to exhibit high-risk gang behaviors.
- Has not had any personal contact with juvenile justice system.
- Exhibits early signs of school-related academic, attendance and/or behavior problems.
- Has periodic family crises and/or is a child welfare case.
- Is low-income and/or lives in overcrowded living conditions.
- Knows some neighborhood gang members but does not associate with them.
- Is beginning to experiment with drug/alcohol use.

High-Risk: This category may be distinguished from the "at-risk" population based on the additional characteristics and **level of intensity** of the following:

- Admires aspects of gang lifestyle characteristics.
- Views gang member as "living an adventure."
- Lives in gang "turf" area where the gang presence is visible.
- Has experienced or participated in gang intimidation type of behaviors or has witnessed violent gang acts.
- Feels unsafe being alone in neighborhood.
- Has family members who have lived or are living a juvenile delinquent, criminal and/or gang lifestyle.
- Has had several contacts with the juvenile justice system and law enforcement.
- Does not see the future as providing for him/her; has a perspective of "you have to take what you can get."
- Casually and occasionally associates with youth exhibiting gang characteristics.
- Has a high rate of school absences, and experiences school failure and disciplinary problems.

- Uses free time after school to "hang out" and does not participate in sports, hobbies or work.
- Is suspicious and hostile toward others who are not in his/her close circle of friends.
- Does not value other people's property.
- Believes and follows his/her own code of conduct, not the rules of society.
- Only follows advice of friends; does not trust anyone other than friends.
- Uses alcohol and illegal drugs.
- Has had numerous fights and sees violence as a primary way to settle disagreements and maintain respect.
- May have been placed in an alternative home or living arrangement for a period.
- Does not have personal goals/desires that take precedence over gang-impacted youth groups.

Impacted: Youth exhibiting high-risk behaviors related to gang lifestyles.

- Has had several contacts with the juvenile justice system and law enforcement. Has likely spent time in juvenile hall. Has had a probation officer and/or may have participated in delinquency diversion program.
- Has had numerous fights, and views violence as primary way to intimidate, settle disagreements and maintain respect.
- May claim a turf or group identity with gang characteristics, but still values independence from gang membership.
- Personally knows and hangs out with identified gang members.
- Considers many gang-related activities socially acceptable.
- Feels he/she has a lot in common with gang characteristics.
- Views gang involvement as an alternative source for power, money, and prestige.
- Wears gang style clothing and/or gang colors/symbols.
- Promotes the use of gang cultural expressions and terminology.
- Identifies with a gang-related affiliation and/or turf, but has not officially joined a gang. Is ready to join a gang.
- Does not seek employment, and regards “underground economy” as a viable option.

- Probably has gang-related tattoos.
- Has drawing of gang insignia or symbols on notebook/book covers, other personal items.

Intentional: This category is distinguished from all other categories in that youth must be identified and/or arrested for gang-related incidents or acts of gang violence through the justice system (police, DA, probation, etc.).

- May have been identified or certified as a gang member by law enforcement agencies.
- Associates almost exclusively with gang members, to the exclusion of family and former friends.
- Views intimidation and physical violence as the way to increase personal power, prestige, and rank in gang. He/she is active in "gang banging."
- Regularly uses/abuses alcohol and other drugs.
- Self-identifies as a gang member.
- Has spent time in juvenile hall, juvenile camp, or California Youth Authority.
- Regularly deals with gang rival and allied gang business.
- Has gang-related tattoos.
- Identifies specific individuals or groups as enemies.
- Is engaged in the gang lifestyle.
- Rejects anyone or any value system other than that of the gang.
- Believes that the gang, its members, and/or his/her family live for or will die for the gang.
- Has fully submerged his/her personal goals and identity in the collective identity and goals of the gang.
- Has adopted and/or earned gang status within the gang system.

This page intentionally left blank.

Appendix B: BEST Grant Funding Over the Evaluation Period

BEST Grantees	BEST Grant Base Funding by Program Year ($)								Total BEST Base Funding ($)	Total BEST Grant Funding incl. One Time Funding ($)	Total Program Expenses ($)	BEST Funding Percentage of Program Expenses
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018				
Alum Rock Counseling Center	154,543	99,414	144,414	144,414	144,414	144,414	144,414	144,414	1,120,441	1,356,575	2,093,734	65%
Asian American Center of Santa Clara County	15,000	9,000	24,000	-	-	-	-	-	48,000	48,000	83,770	57%
Asian American Recovery Services	40,000	24,000	34,000	75,000	55,000	44,000	-	-	272,000	281,000	342,983	82%
Asian Americans for Community Involvement	50,000	39,950	74,950	60,000	60,000	-	-	-	284,900	290,900	520,134	56%
Bay Area Tutoring Association	-	-	-	-	-	-	40,000	65,000	105,000	113,470	134,470	84%
Bill Wilson Center	65,000	52,000	77,000	77,000	77,000	77,000	132,000	132,000	689,000	713,016	855,417	83%
California Youth Outreach	372,196	320,000	376,500	376,500	348,000	348,000	-	-	2,141,196	2,371,196	2,894,292	82%
Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County	198,000	160,073	248,073	252,000	267,000	267,000	300,393	297,159	1,989,698	2,207,490	2,640,596	84%
Center for Training and Careers[a]	50,400	30,240	45,240	55,000	165,000	165,000	165,000	165,000	840,880	866,150	1,451,560	60%
Community Partners for Youth	100,000	80,000	110,000	110,000	-	-	-	-	400,000	400,000	852,887	47%
Empowering Our Community for Success	-	-	-	-	-	-	40,000	40,000	80,000	87,520	103,320	85%

BEST Grantees	BEST Grant Base Funding by Program Year ($)								Total BEST Base Funding ($)	Total BEST Grant Funding incl. One Time Funding ($)	Total Program Expenses ($)	BEST Funding Percentage of Program Expenses
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018				
Family and Children Services	64,000	41,600	61,600	60,000	60,000	80,000	80,000	80,000	527,200	541,240	976,863	55%
Filipino Youth Coalition	40,000	26,000	44,000	-	-	-	-	-	110,000	110,000	147,800	74%
Firehouse Community Development Corporation	100,000	106,000	140,000	220,000	220,000	240,000	260,000	45,500	1,331,500	1,466,620	1,834,394	80%
Fresh Lifelines for Youth	106,000	84,800	114,800	124,800	114,800	114,800	114,800	114,800	889,600	944,162	2,509,269	38%
From the Streets to the Grave	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,000	-	10,000	38,000	44,072	86%
Generations Community Wellness Center, Inc.	45,000	35,500	55,500	-	-	-	-	-	136,000	136,000	183,061	74%
Girl Scouts of Northern California	32,000	22,063	42,063	42,000	42,000	66,490	66,490	66,490	379,596	393,123	1,374,306	29%
Happy House dba Community United	-	-	-	-	-	17,500	-	20,000	37,500	44,260	55,660	80%
Joyner Payne Youth Services Agency	63,000	45,800	32,000	-	-	-	-	-	140,800	140,800	198,531	71%
Lighthouse of Hope Counseling Center	-	-	-	20,000	20,000	20,000	-	-	60,000	65,000	129,842	50%
Mexican American Community Services Agency, Inc.	128,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	128,000	128,000	158,258	81%

BEST Grantees	BEST Grant Base Funding by Program Year ($)								Total BEST Base Funding ($)	Total BEST Grant Funding incl. One Time Funding ($)	Total Program Expenses ($)	BEST Funding Percentage of Program Expenses
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018				
Midtown Family Services	-	-	-	-	-	-	36,666	-	36,666	92,666	110,199	84%
New Hope for Youth	-	-	-	-	-	-	256,662	256,662	513,324	644,077	755,148	85%
Next Door Solutions to Domestic Violence	36,800	22,080	37,080	-	-	-	-	-	95,960	95,960	528,557	18%
Pathway Society Inc.	264,000	158,400	178,400	40,000	-	-	-	-	640,800	640,800	769,175	83%
Positive Alternative Recreation Teambuilding Impacting Program (PARTI)	-	-	-	25,000	-	-	-	-	25,000	25,000	131,876	19%
Rohi Alternative Community Outreach	58,320	51,840	-	-	-	-	-	-	110,160	110,160	135,180	81%
San José Conservation Corps	-	-	-	55,000	55,000	55,000	-	-	165,000	178,000	363,872	49%
San José Jazz Society	-	-	-	20,000	45,000	65,000	65,000	65,000	260,000	273,470	634,397	43%
San José State University Research Foundation	20,000	16,000	22,000	30,000	60,000	40,000	-	-	188,000	193,000	250,812	77%
Santa Clara Unified School District on behalf of George Mayne Elementary School	68,000	47,798	62,798	-	-	-	-	-	178,596	178,596	254,699	70%

BEST Grantees	BEST Grant Base Funding by Program Year ($)								Total BEST Base Funding ($)	Total BEST Grant Funding incl. One Time Funding ($)	Total Program Expenses ($)	BEST Funding Percentage of Program Expenses
	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018				
Silicon Valley African Productions	40,000	24,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	64,000	64,000	74,020	86%
Teen Success, Inc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	35,000	57,254	92,254	100,430	208,310	48%
The Art of Yoga Project	-	-	-	45,500	45,500	45,500	45,500	240,000	422,000	434,729	492,152	88%
The Tenacious Group	40,000	32,000	42,000	42,000	42,000	62,000	75,000	75,000	410,000	431,850	549,346	79%
Ujima Adult and Family Services, Inc.	80,000	64,000	89,000	89,000	89,000	104,840	152,571	152,571	820,982	861,780	1,028,196	84%
Unity Care Group Inc.	-	-	-	19,288	19,288	19,288	22,000	-	79,864	87,864	121,748	72%
Uplift Family Services[b]	58,400	35,040	45,040	45,000	45,000	45,000	158,000	158,000	589,480	614,484	824,381	75%
Total	2,288,659	1,627,598	2,100,458	2,027,502	1,974,002	2,020,832	2,199,496	2,174,850	16,413,397	17,784,388	26,832,287	66%

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018.

Notes: "BEST Grant Base Funding by Program Year" shows base grant funding for each PY, as taken from grantee contracts and PRNS budget documents. "Total BEST Grant Funding" shows the sum of all BEST grant funding received by each grantee during the evaluation period. "Total Program Expenses" refers to the sum of total BEST funding and total matched funding, as reported by grantees in their workbooks (matched funding is not reported separately in this exhibit). "BEST Funding Percentage of Program Expenses" is the percentage of total program expenses supported by BEST base funding for each grantee.

[a] dba ConXion to Community

[b] formerly EMQ Families First

Appendix C: Definitions of Eligible Service Areas

The following are the definitions of each eligible service area used by BEST during each triennial period in the eight-year evaluation period, from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018. Definitions come (with some limited modifications) from documents including request for qualifications, grantee workbooks, and other grantee documents.

Triennial Period 1: PY 2010-2011 to PY 2012-2013

1. **Personal Transformation Through Cognitive Development and Youth Support Groups.** This service area was designed to provide ongoing interventions to provide youth with a learning group environment for teaching new pro-social life skills and behaviors and preparing youth to access and participate in other mainstream resources available, such as school, job training, health, and other services. Services were also designed to provide youth with an opportunity to become part of the larger community through activities and projects that reinforced healthy community and culture, build trust-based relationships, promote peer-to-peer support/coaching, and leadership development. Youth who successfully completed service cycles were to be given the opportunity to provide peer mentoring and leadership roles in group mentoring life skills, support groups and recreational/community service intervention activities. For this service, staff were also to meet regularly with parents or guardians through home visit and phone contacts and were to continually update a personal development plan for youth, building on youth strengths.

2. **Short-Term Curriculum-Based Youth Support Groups.** This service area was designed to provide short-term curriculum-based youth support groups, workshops, and activities that included psycho-social education and intervention groups incorporating cognitive learning approaches, social-recreational activities, community service learning projects, and other youth-relevant learning group activities in such topics as law-related education, staying out of the juvenile justice system, career exploration, job search, making the most of school, college planning, personal wellness, gang diversion/refusal skills, conflict resolution/anger management, how to use community resources, how to communicate with parents and adults, family management, personal health and wellness, and other related topics. Services in this area also incorporated one-on-one mentoring opportunities for youth in need of greater personal support during the program or after completion of the program. Services also were to provide program structures for youth who had successfully completed a program to return as peer mentors in the program.

3. **Social Recreational, Cultural, and Community Service Intervention Activities.** This service area was designed to provide structured recreational, educational, and cultural activities, and field trips to build intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, such as the ability to understand emotions and practice self-discipline, working with others, and

developing and sustaining friendships through cooperation, empathy, negotiation, and conflict management. These services were also designed to provide a safe place for activities; use activities to build a trust relationship between youth and adult mentors; expose youth through field trips to various cultural activities that were new experiences for them to view how others live in our society; expose them to a wide range of arts, music, and dance; and use camping and hiking trips to expose youth to nature and the wilderness.

4. **Gang Mediation/Intervention Response.** This service area was designed to provide a mobile street unit to deliver gang mediation and intervention services that would intervene with youth altercations and volatile conditions and work collaboratively with the MGPTF, strong neighborhoods initiative staff, and the youth intervention program. Service providers in this eligible service area were also expected to participate in the Community Crisis Intervention Team (CCIT), a coordinated effort with other BEST-qualified agencies, to provide gang mediation/intervention response services.

5. **Outpatient Substance Abuse Services.** This service area was designed to provide assessments (ASAMI) of youth, substance abuse intervention and treatment group services, counseling and support groups, mentoring services, services to re-engage youth into the school system, parent and youth groups, professional development and consultations with school staff, and health classes.

6. **Services for Adjudicated Youth.** This service area was designed to provide follow-up and aftercare (post-release) support services to youth transitioning from the criminal justice system (including local systems such as Juvenile Hall and the Ranches) into the community and those incarcerated at juvenile justice facilities; initiate community re-entry discussions and planning with youth and their families, pre-release; develop relationships that could be the foundation for aftercare; provide a support system to prevent youth from re-offending; provide services to aid with family reunification and stabilization of school enrollment, attendance, and performance; support and advance the goals of the Santa Clara County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council and the MGPTF; and collaborate with the Santa Clara County Probation Department and other organizations to ensure youth successfully complete their probation requirements.

7. **Parent and Family Support.** This service area was designed to provide highly collaborative, early intervention workshops and/or support groups for parents and families of youth identified as being vulnerable to academic failure, gang involvement, substance abuse, and other behavioral and emotional problems; programs with the purpose of helping parents improve the educational, home, and school environments of the youth and learn how the school system functions, to help their children avoid negative influences (gangs and drugs); culturally and linguistically appropriate recruitment and facilitation for the program; support to parents and families of youth

who have either dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of school; and family wellness and the skills to communicate and solve problems without using violence.

- **7a. Domestic Violence Services to Youth and Children.** This sub-eligible service area was designed to provide services to youth exposed to domestic violence; support services to teens experiencing dating abuse; services to youth who have a history of assaulting parents, and/or significant others (e.g., boyfriends, girlfriends), and have serious anger management and physical assault profiles and/or have a history of using physical violence as a way to deal with emotions and feelings. Services may have also included one-on-one counseling and support groups, programs to increase youth awareness of their behavior and their ability to act appropriately, and provision of ongoing support to youth to continue practicing skills learned to increase reliance on healthy choices and anger management skills.

8. **Truancy and Educational Support for Schools.** This service area was designed to provide coordinated care services and support groups for youth identified as habitual truants; develop a service intervention plan for each youth enrolled in the program, with 30-day service objectives, outcome benefit goals, and a schedule of services; have staff meet with youth to review/update service plans—preferably in groups; have staff meet regularly with the parents or guardians of the targeted youth through home visits and phone contacts; track progress of clients and their parents before and after intervention services; provide parent education workshops on truancy prevention and intervention, including legal issues surrounding truancy; collaborate with the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Saturday School for truant youth in providing life skills workshops; provide an alternative, structured day support and education program for youth who have experienced repeated academic and behavior problems in the regular school setting; provide services aimed at reducing the high school drop-out rate by using a school to career approach; provide services that lead to GED or high school diploma; provide services that lead to career development and/or job training; and use ADA recovery funding in collaboration with co-sponsoring school district to provide services for truant, suspended, and other disconnected or high-risk youth.

9. **Community Gang Awareness Trainings and Capacity-Building Workshops.** For this service area, grantees were to provide trainings/workshops to BEST service providers for the purpose of building the ability of partner agencies to effectively work with the targeted population. These trainings were to include service shadowing, mentoring, and assistance in providing direct service to high-risk/gang-involved youth. Service providers were to build capacity to work with the target population by delivering direct services while being mentored by staff from other agencies with the capacity to serve the target population. Grantees were also to provide trainings/workshops to community members and parents for the purpose of helping participants identify types of gangs and signs of gang involvement; have participants increase their understanding of the reasons that youth join gangs and the type of activities and behaviors in which they might be involved; and provide information to help parents prevent the impact of gangs in their community.

10. **Unique Service Delivery for High-Risk Youth.** For this service area, grantees were to provide an innovative service delivery method to work with the target population, with groups encouraged, and to coordinate care and support groups for youth identified as habitual truants. Services were also to include a service intervention plan and updates to this plan, meetings with guardians through home visits and phone contacts, progress tracking of clients and their parents before and after intervention services, parent education workshops on truancy, and collaborations with the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Saturday School for truant youth in providing life skills workshops. Services were also designed to provide an alternative, structured day support and education program for youth who have experienced repeated academic and behavior problems in the regular school setting; services aimed at reducing the high school drop-out rate by using a school to career approach; services that lead to GED or high school diplomas; services that lead to career development and/or job training; and use of ADA recovery funding in collaboration with co-sponsoring school district to provide services for truant, suspended, and other disconnected or high-risk youth.

Triennial Period 2: PY 2013-2014 to PY 2015-2016

1. **Personal Transformation Through Intervention and Case Management Services; Cognitive Behavior Change and Life Skills Education.** For this service area, intervention and education groups were to focus on internal thinking and attitudes as they related to external personal/social attributes and behaviors, while school support groups were to focus on intrapersonal and interpersonal problems, which were designed to enhance youth school engagement and performance. This service area was also designed to include case management-related services, including one-on-one scheduled assessments and client appointments in home, school, and community settings in order to establish an understanding of youth life challenges, presenting problems and issues, family influences, skills/abilities, personal strengths, interests, and aspirations. The results of risk/needs assessments were to be used to inform the tailoring of individual service and/or specialized intervention plans.

2. **Street Outreach Intervention Services.** For this service area, street outreach workers were to reach out to hot spot communities to make contacts with youth, service providers, schools, and families. Outreach and mediation activity were to occur in targeted neighborhoods and surrounding areas, at the street and home levels.

3. **Substance Abuse Intervention and Prevention Services.** This service area was designed to involve support groups, whether peer-to-peer or staff-driven, aimed at decreasing student use of alcohol and drugs, and alcohol or substance abuse early detection and intervention services.

4. **Vocational/Job Training Services.** This service area was designed to provide youth with educational and vocational training, and work opportunities to discourage future delinquency and involvement with the justice system.

5. **Parent Awareness/Training and Family Support.** For this service area, grantees were to provide positive reinforcement skills, and parents were to learn to decrease inappropriate punitive behaviors and chastisements. Parent awareness classes were designed to educate parents and youth about the dangers of gangs and signs of gang involvement, and discourage San José's youth from joining gangs. Services in this area were also designed to provide parents with resources to help prevent or eliminate the early signs of gang activities in their homes and neighborhoods.

Triennial Period 3: PY 2016-2017 to PY 2017-2018

1. **Personal Transformation Through Cognitive Behavior Change and Life Skills Education**. For this service area, intervention and education groups were to focus on internal thinking and attitudes as they related to external personal/social attributes and behaviors, while school support groups were to focus on intrapersonal and interpersonal problems, enhancing youth school engagement and performance.

2. **Street Outreach Intervention Services.** For this service area, street outreach workers were to reach out to hot spot communities to make contacts with youth, service providers, schools, and families. Outreach and mediation activity were to occur in targeted neighborhoods and surrounding areas, at the street and home levels.

3. **Substance Abuse Intervention and Prevention Services.** This service area was designed to involve support groups, whether peer-to-peer or staff-driven, aimed at decreasing student use of alcohol and drugs, and alcohol or substance abuse early detection and intervention services.

4. **Vocational/Job Training Services.** This service area was designed to provide youth with educational and vocational training, and work opportunities to discourage future delinquency and involvement with the justice system.

5. **Parent Awareness/Training and Family Support.** For this service area, grantees were to provide positive reinforcement skills, and parents were to learn to decrease inappropriate punitive behaviors and chastisements. Parent awareness classes were designed to educate parents and youth about the dangers of gangs and signs of gang involvement, and discourage San José's youth from joining gangs. Services in this area were also designed to provide parents with resources to help prevent or eliminate the early signs of gang activities in their homes and neighborhoods.

6. **Case Management.** This service area was to include initial one-on-one scheduled assessments and client appointments in home, school, and community settings in order to establish an understanding of youth life challenges, presenting problems and issues, family influences, skills/abilities, personal strengths, interests, and aspirations. The results of a risk/needs assessment were also to inform the tailoring of an individual service and/or specialized intervention plan.

This page intentionally left blank.

Appendix D: Impact Study Technical Appendix

This appendix details additional technical information related to the impact study analysis described in Chapter V.

Panel data regression models analyze outcomes (i.e., police incidents and arrests) for specific units (i.e., police divisions, patrol districts, and/or beats). Outcomes are measured at multiple time intervals (i.e., program years) and modeled as a function of receipt of program-funded services (i.e., presence, absence, or degree of BEST-funded services or the amount of units of service provided) and controlling for characteristics of each area or neighborhood. Given that BEST services are designed to reduce criminal justice system involvement and that criminal justice system activity is often highly localized, the study team asserted that the police beat—the smallest police unit—was the most appropriate geographical unit over which the effects of BEST could be observed.[36]

The following basic model was estimated:

$$(1)\ Y_{it} = \alpha_i + \beta_1 BEST_{it} + \beta_2 YEAR + e_{it}$$

where "i" identifies police beats; "t" identifies time periods (years); "Y" represents outcomes of interest (e.g., number of gang incidents); "BEST" is the intervention whose effect is being estimated (a dummy variable that equals one for beats that received BEST funding during a year); "YEAR" is a set of seven dummy variables that equal one when an observation was recorded in a program year and equal zero otherwise; "α_i" are beat-level fixed effects (n-1 dummy variables for n beats); and "e_{it}" is an error term. The coefficient of interest is "β_1," which represents the program's estimated impact, while "β_2" represents the average outcome for each year.

Known in the literature as a two-way fixed-effects model (Goodman-Bacon, 2018), this model is essentially a difference-in-differences model and has been a preferred choice in the literature for estimating the impact of interventions that are adopted at different times by different units (Wing, Simon, & Bello-Gomez, 2018), including evaluations of interventions aimed at reducing gang violence (Engel, Tillyer, & Corsaro, 2013). The inclusion of unit fixed-effects controls for any time-invariant (or slowly changing) characteristic of units (such as poverty level or population size) and time fixed-effects control for changes that occur for all units at the same time (such as economic booms and recessions and the enactment of statewide or federal policies).

[36] Beat-level analyses are quite frequent in the literature; see, for example, Papachristos, Meares, and Fagan (2007).

In addition to this basic model, several additional specifications were employed. Adding beat-specific time trends to the models allows BEST and non-BEST beats to follow different trends over time, a technique often employed in the literature to control for changes that occur in some units but not others (Angrist & Pischke, 2008). In addition, a possible challenge for this type of modeling is that it is not always clear whether the predictor (in our case, BEST service receipt) takes place before outcomes or the other way around. Although a Granger causality test was not possible because of the relatively short duration of the time series (eight years),[37] the study team estimated the likelihood of this problem (otherwise known as endogeneity) by adding both previous values of BEST (known as lags) and future values of BEST (known as leads) to the model. A significant coefficient for leads is often interpreted as a sign of endogeneity. The addition of lags also has a substantive interpretation, indicating whether the effect of the program is instantaneous or whether it is felt after a certain time has passed. Testing for lagged effects is a key strength of modeling cross-sectional time series data.

Finally, spatial autoregressive techniques were employed to assess whether the receipt of BEST services has spatial spillover effects—in other words, if BEST is associated with changes in criminal justice outcomes in areas other than those that receive BEST services. Using shapefiles provided by SJPD, SPR fit spatial autoregressive (SAR) models, also known as simultaneous autoregressive models, for the panel dataset developed for the project. SAR models extend linear regression by allowing outcomes in one area to be affected by outcomes, covariates, and regression errors from other areas.

Detailed Regression Findings, Simple Fixed-Effects Models

As mentioned in Chapter V, the study team began the impact analysis with a series of models that estimated the effect of receiving BEST services in each year on beat-level outcomes from the same year. The fixed-effects approach, which is necessary to obtain unbiased results, has the effect of removing variation between beats and only allows the study of changes within the same beat over time. However, as shown in Exhibit V-4, only about a third of the beats experienced a change in their BEST status over the evaluation period (in other words, they were either always served or never served by BEST). Given this lack of variation in beats' exposure to BEST services, these models do not effectively capture BEST's impacts; however, they are shown here for full transparency.

---

[37] The Granger test is regularly used to test whether, conditional on unit and year effects, past values of the explanatory variable (known as lags) predict values of the outcome variable while future values (known as leads) do not. However, the test requires more than eight measurements. In practice, many studies employing this methodology use significantly more years of data. For example, Autor (2003) uses 15 years of data, whereas Besley and Burgess (2004) use 34 years of data.

Exhibit D-1 below presents the results from these initial models.[38] The simplest two-way fixed-effects model, (1), finds a positive (although statistically insignificant) association between being served by BEST and the average number of gang incidents. Because very few beats experience change in their status (receiving or not receiving BEST services) over time, the positive coefficient can be interpreted as showing that BEST-served beats have on average higher crime incidence than beats not served by BEST, which is not surprising since, as shown in Chapter IV, BEST-served beats generally have a higher incidence of crime. Therefore, the coefficient should not be interpreted as showing that receiving BEST services leads to more crime. In fact, model (4), which include past values (lags) of the BEST predictor, shows the expected negative sign (although the coefficient is also statistically insignificant). This suggests that BEST may have a delayed effect on gang incidents, although the results are inconclusive. The results do not change with the inclusion of beat-level time trends (Model 2), and the lack of statistical significance on leads (Model 5) suggests that the analysis does not have a case of circular causality (BEST influences crime, which in turn influences the probability of a beat to receive subsequent BEST services).

Exhibit D-1: Fixed-Effects Regressions, Gang Incidents

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
BEST	0.5	0.6	0.2	0.0	0.4
First lag of predictor	-	-	0.6	0.9	0.6
Second lag of predictor	-	-	-	-0.6	-
First lead of predictor	-	-	-	-	-0.3
Beat fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Beat-level time trends	-	Included	-	-	-
Year fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Within R-square	0.189	0.432	0.165	0.143	0.190
Number of observations	696	696	609	522	522

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018; SJPD crime data.

Notes: All models estimated with clustered robust standard errors.

* statistical significance at 90%

[38] Based on the analysis of gang incidents shown in Exhibit V-1, and an understanding of how gang incident definitions have changed over time, the study team removed gang-related incidents from PY 2016-2017 and PY 2017-2018 gang incident data, restricting gang incidents in these two years to only gang-motivated incidents so that this outcome could be more consistently measured over time. As a sensitivity analysis, SPR ran the gang incident models without PY 2016-2017 and PY 2017-2018 in the last section of this Appendix.

The fixed-effects models using the number of units of service per beat as a predictor showed similar results (and are therefore not shown). Results from a similar set of models that use the number of youth arrests (i.e., those ages 24 and younger) as a dependent variable are presented next in Exhibit D-2. In this set of models, BEST appears to have a contemporaneous (Models 1 and 2) and a lagged dampening effect on youth arrests (Model 4), although, similar to the gang incident models, none of the coefficients is statistically significant.[39]

Exhibit D-2: Fixed-Effects Regressions, Youth Arrests

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
BEST	-6.1	-6.6	-4.2	5.7
First lag of predictor	-	-	-0.4	-1.7
Beat fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included
Beat-level time trends	-	Included	-	Included
Year fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included
Within R-square	0.519	0.812	0.541	0.863
Number of observations	522	522	435	435

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018; SJPD crime data.

Notes: All models estimated with clustered robust standard errors.

* statistical significance at 90%

The first set of models therefore suggest that BEST may have a lagged effect on gang incidents and a contemporaneous and lagged effect on youth arrests, but the results are inconclusive due to a lack of statistical significance.

Detailed Regression Findings, Cumulative Dosage Models

In Chapter V, the study team presented results from two-way fixed-effects models that examined the relationship between the number of cumulative UOS provided by BEST and two dependent variables: the number of gang incidents and the number of youth arrests. However, for reasons of space, the main report does not present the full results of the models. They are included here for reference in exhibits D-3 and D-4. The model coefficients reported here are identical to coefficients reported in Chapter V; the tables below contain additional information, such as the number of observations used in the analysis and the model fixed effects (within) R-square.

[39] Due to small sample sizes, the study team did not estimate models with two lagged predictors or with leads.

Exhibit D-3: Cumulative Effects of BEST on Gang Incidents

	No decay		10% yearly decay		20% yearly decay	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Cumulative dosage	-8.3*	-1.9	-9.3*	-3.5	-3.3	-3.9
Beat fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Beat-level time trends	-	Included	-	Included	-	Included
Year fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Within R-square	0.200	0.432	0.200	0.437	0.195	0.438
Number of observations	696	696	696	696	696	696

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018; SJPD crime data.

Notes: All models estimated with clustered robust standard errors.

* statistical significance at 90%

Exhibit D-4: Cumulative Effects of BEST on Youth Arrests

	No decay		10% yearly decay		20% yearly decay	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Cumulative dosage						
Beat fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Beat-level time trends	-	Included	-	Included	-	Included
Year fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Within R-square	0.545	0.811	0.530	0.811	0.518	0.811
Number of observations	696	696	696	696	696	696

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2017-2018; SJPD crime data.

Notes: All models are estimated with clustered robust standard errors.

* statistical significance at 90%

Sensitivity Analyses for Gang Incident Models

As explained in Chapter V, during PY 2016-2017, SJPD changed the definition of gang incidents to expand beyond incidents where crime was definitively motivated by or in the service of gang activity to crimes simply involving gang members. This change led to a substantial increase in the number of gang incidents recorded in PY 2016-2017 and PY 2017-2018. For the analyses presented in the main report, the study team chose to exclude the broader category of "gang-

related" incidents and restrict gang incidents to those marked as "gang motivated," with the goal of keeping the definition of gang incidents in these two years as consistent as possible with prior program years and to increase the comparability of this outcome over time. However, this decision may have introduced bias in the findings. To assess whether this was the case, sensitivity analyses were conducted by removing gang incident data for the last two program years (PY 2016-2017 and PY 2017-2018) completely and then rerunning the models on the smaller sample thus obtained.

Generally, the estimates from sensitivity models (shown in Exhibits D-5, D-6, and D-7) below are in line with the estimates from the analyses in Chapter V. This increases the confidence in the findings from the main analysis in Chapter V.

Exhibit D-5: Fixed-Effects Regressions, Gang Incidents

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)
BEST	0.9	0.8	0.4	0.5	0.5
First lag of predictor	-	-	0.9*	1.7*	0.9
Second lag of predictor	-	-	-	-0.5	-
First lead of predictor	-	-	-	-	-0.1
Beat fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Beat-level time trends	-	Included	-	-	-
Year fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Within R-square	0.217	0.517	0.206	0.201	206
Number of observations	522	522	435	348	435

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2015-2016; SJPD crime data.

Notes: All models estimated with clustered robust standard errors.

* statistical significance at 90%

Exhibit D-6: Cumulative Effects of BEST on Gang Incidents

	No decay		10% yearly decay		20% yearly decay	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Cumulative dosage	-0.7*	1.0	-0.8*	0.3	-0.8	-0.1
Beat fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Beat-level time trends	-	Included	-	Included	-	Included
Year fixed effects	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included	Included
Within R-square	0.244	0.517	0.236	0.515	0.225	0.515
Number of observations	522	522	522	522	522	522

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2015-2016; SJPD crime data.

Notes: All models estimated with clustered robust standard errors.

* statistical significance at 90%

Exhibit D-7: BEST's Spatial Spillover Effects, Gang Incidents

	(1) Beat Served by BEST	(2) Cumulative-No Loss Rate	(3) Cumulative-10% Yearly Loss Rate	(4) Cumulative-20% Yearly Loss Rate
Direct Effect in Same Beat	0.6	-0.6	-0.7*	-0.7*
Indirect Effect on Other Beats	-17.1	-3.2	-4.6*	-6.4
Total Effect	-16.5	-3.7	-5.3*	-7.1

Source: BEST grantee documents from PY 2010-2011 to PY 2015-2016; SJPD crime data.

Notes: Coefficients represent the predicted change in the average number of crime events associated with being served by BEST in a year (Column 1) or with a cumulative increase of 10,000 UOS (Columns 2-4).

* statistical significance at 90%