

Evaluation

Beginning in the 2015-16 program year, the City of San Pablo will support a mix of city-led and grantee-lead programs in each of the five strategic areas mentioned in the previous section. San Pablo will conduct a continual evaluation of the programs to monitor the use of public funds and to encourage continuous quality improvement. San Pablo has commissioned Public Profit to conduct an external evaluation of these programs for the 2015-2016 and 2016-2017 program cycles. The design for the 2015-2016 study is described below. Additional shifts to the evaluation design may be made based on input from the City of San Pablo and grantees.

2015-2016 Evaluation Plan

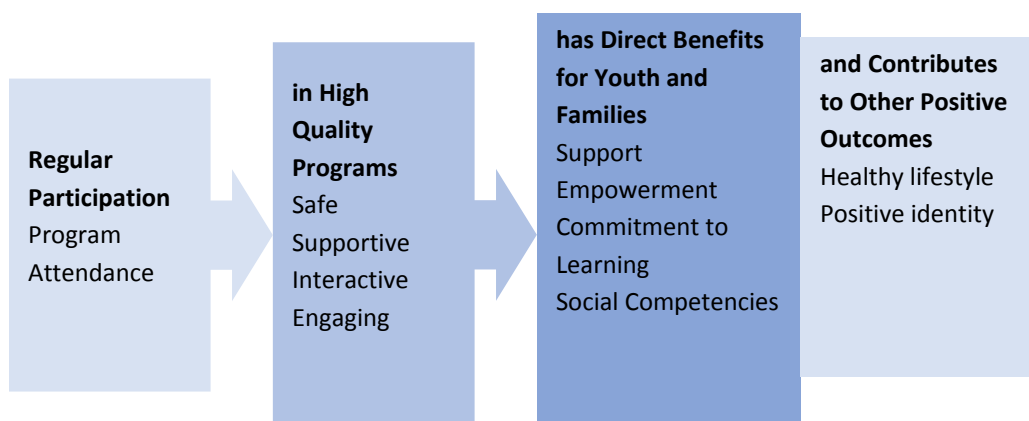
Programs included in the evaluation primarily provide services directly to youth and families (“Direct Services Programs”). In addition, City funds support Community Schools Coordinators at three schools. The evaluation will adopt slightly different approaches for these two program types. Evaluation reports will support programs’ continuous quality improvement and provide the public with information about the quality and benefits of Youth Services programs.

Evaluation Framework

Direct Services Programs

Research into the impact of youth development programs shows that regular participation in high quality programs benefits participating youth and their families. These benefits include outcomes for youth that are a direct result of the youth development program itself: perceived external assets for community support and youth empowerment, a deeper commitment to learning, and stronger social competencies.³⁹ These strengthened assets, in turn, contribute to other positive outcomes for youth, including a healthier lifestyle and positive identity (Figure 6).

FIGURE 6. THEORY OF ACTION FOR CITY OF SAN PABLO YOUTH SERVICES PROGRAMS



³⁹ The City of San Pablo identified four areas from the Search Institute’s 40 Developmental Assets framework: www.search-institute.org/developmental-assets/lists

Coordination of Community Schools

The City of San Pablo has designated grant funds to support Community School Coordinators at Helms Middle, Dover Elementary, and Lake Elementary. Since the Community School Coordinator position is relatively new at the schools, and their specific mix of services is deeply dependent on the context of their host schools, the evaluator will use a process evaluation approach in 2015-16, documenting each Coordinator's ability to establish systems and coordinate services.

Evaluation Questions

During the 2015-2016 program year, data collection and reporting will be guided by a set of five evaluation questions, derived from the Theory of Action.⁴⁰

1. To what extent do City of San Pablo Youth Services programs recruit and retain youth?
2. To what extent are City of San Pablo Youth Services programs providing a high quality experience for participants? Are the programs safe, supportive, interactive and engaging?
3. To what extent are City of San Pablo Youth Services programs benefitting youth?
4. To what extent have Community Schools Coordination projects made progress toward their system design and service coordination goals?
5. To what extent have Community Schools Coordination projects enhanced the quality and availability of Family Engagement and Wellness programs at their host schools?

Evaluation Methods and Timeline

During the 2015-2016 program year, Public Profit will conduct a mixed methods study design that combines program attendance; observations from site visits; stakeholder interviews; and youth surveys to explore the evaluation questions. The exact methods and outcome goals will vary by program.

Data collection will take place throughout the 2015-2016 school year and the final evaluation report will be released in September 2016.

⁴⁰ See Appendix for full set of questions and sub-questions.