



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY HEALTH AGENCY

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San Luis Obispo County Drug and Alcohol Services San Luis Obispo’s Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking (SLO STOP) Project Narrative

Abstract

San Luis Obispo County’s Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act Project (SLO STOP) provides the community with a comprehensive, science-based approach to reduce access to and acceptance of alcohol use amongst youth. The project centers on environmental strategies which improve local business practices, engage community members outside of traditional prevention groups, and build the capacity of communities to improve alcohol-related policies. The project also seeks to bolster parental engagement by providing education and skill building which reduce the “party” culture, while addressing risk factors which lead to teen alcohol use. SLO STOP will also engage coalition partners to empower youth and families in creating and supporting opportunities which promote healthy lifestyles.

San Luis Obispo (SLO) County has been a successful Drug Free Communities (DFC) Grantee since 2004. DFC funding, established the SLO County Prevention Alliance, a community coalition designed to promote activities and initiatives which reduce risk factors and increase community protective factors. The Prevention Alliance has been at the heart of several local successes in the battle to lessen the negative impact of alcohol and other drug (AOD) abuse. Despite these successes, SLO County’s wine-based economy, centralized university, campus cultures, and lax policies, including oversaturated alcohol licensing, contribute to higher-than-average binge drinking rates, elevated use, and an overall reduced perception of alcohol’s harm amongst the County’s young people.

In this proposal, SLO County Drug and Alcohol Services, which has served as the public partner for the Prevention Alliance, outlines a work plan which seeks to accomplish four main goals. 1.) SLO STOP will increase responsible sales and service of alcohol, and reduce the number of sales of alcohol to minors; 2.) Cities will adopt policies which discourage parents and other adults from providing alcohol to youth, reducing alcohol-related emergencies; 3.) Parents and caregivers of youth with elevated risk factors will increase capacity and skills which strengthen family and neighborhood rules around alcohol use and ultimately improve community norms, and; 4.) Youth will be empowered to actively participate in reducing alcohol advertising in retail outlets, neighborhoods, and community events.

Project strategies include engaging youth to train alcohol licensees and conduct compliance operations; media campaigns which educate community members on underage drinking issues; parent education which addresses skill building in families with high risk youth; community mobilization to affect social host liability laws; and youth coalition building to reduce alcohol marketing and normalization. SLO Stop activities will directly engage over 100 families, 40 youth, 30 parents, 30 prevention coalition members, 30 alcohol licensees, 12 youth prevention coalitions, and provide the sober truth on preventing underage drinking to more than 100,000 community members.