



COASTAL VALLEY ACADEMY CHALLENGE GRANT APPLICATION

Overview: The Coastal Valley Academy (CVA) is a co-ed probation camp program designed as an alternative to group homes for wards who are considered a high risk for reoffending.

Challenge: Prior to the CVA program, probation youth who needed structured treatment services and could not be safely maintained in their family homes were sent to group homes. Group homes proved to be both costly and ineffective in meeting the needs of high-risk probation youth. Oftentimes, youth would be placed great distances from their families providing barriers to visitation, family treatment, home passes and transition planning. Youth frequently absconded from group homes, putting their safety and the protection of the community at risk.

Solution: Probation re-purposed an existing unit at the Juvenile Hall to create a more home-like environment to provide comprehensive residential treatment and education services to youth who would have otherwise been sent to group homes. As a locked camp program, the CVA provides for enhanced safety of the youth and community over group care. Keeping the youth in San Luis Obispo County has enhanced family involvement and transition planning services, such as home passes and linkages to Wraparound services. Regular outings for pro-social activities such as hikes, community service or 5 and 10K fun runs, has provided for meaningful opportunities for community engagement. Partnerships with local organizations as well as national experts such as the University of Cincinnati – Corrections Institute established evidence informed group interventions as well as trauma focused individual and family counseling. On-site schooling is provided by the County Office of Education using a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports model in a separate classroom with a special education credentialed teacher and behavioral specialist.

Innovation: CVA is a unique program in California as it combines the homelike environment and intensive treatment aspects of group home care with the structure of a camp program. All probation

and external staff assigned to CVA are trained on the underlying evidence informed curriculum. The combination of interventions in the program and activities in the community assists youth with improving their reasoning and avoidance skills and provides them with positive pro-social replacement activities in order to reduce their risk of future delinquent behavior before returning them to the community. The success of CVA is directly related to the collaboration of the stakeholders within the San Luis Obispo County Juvenile Justice System. The Court, District Attorney and the Public Defender have all been supportive of CVA. These juvenile justice partners view CVA as the primary out of home placement for those youth who can not return home or go to a foster home. CVA in-custody and aftercare treatment services are provided in collaboration with a local community-based organization and County Mental Health. The primary funding comes from a cooperative agreement between and social services. General fund money previously in social services budget for probation group home placements was transferred to probation's budget. Other funding comes from juvenile probation state funding such as the Youthful Offender Block Grant and Juvenile Probation Camp Funds.

Results: In fiscal year, FY 2017-18, the CVA achieved the following results: 1) Reduced first time group home placements by 91%, exceeding the second-year goal of 75%; 2) 100% of youth who have participated in the program have received cognitive behavioral treatment and life skills development training; and 3) The total reduction in risk of recidivism, as measured by pre- and post- risk assessment scores on the Youth Level of Service-Case Management Inventory (YLS-CMI) was 44%.

Replicability: The program is easily replicated in any county which has an existing part of their juvenile hall or camp that can be converted into the group home type treatment program. The program can be funded using monies currently being expended on group homes that do not have favorable outcomes for wards of the juvenile court.

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