

# PropelNext In Action

## *Safe Passages*

Founded over two decades ago, Safe Passages in Alameda County, California is a multiservice agency that works to disrupt the cycle of poverty by engaging the highest-need youth and families to build and drive a continuum of services that supports student success and community development. The agency's services span ages from birth to young adulthood and include early childhood care, school-linked services, support for youth involved in the juvenile justice system, and career development.

"Youth do not live in isolation; they have many needs," said Alicia E. Perez, legislative and community

development director at Safe Passages. "Although one child is often the beneficiary of several different programs, funding is often program-specific with specific data collection and reporting requirements. We fund interventions in isolation, but there is no one single intervention for a child that experiences so much trauma in their life. That's not how impact works."

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Working across 14 community schools in 3 school districts, Safe Passages



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partners with school districts, cities, counties, and community providers serving the hardest to serve communities in Alameda County.

***“The goal is to pull together all the data to say ‘this is what’s really happening with this youth’ and present a holistic picture of the investment and outcomes.”***

PropelNext is challenging Safe Passages to rethink their theory of change to better refine their activities, target population, and desired outcomes. With the help of PropelNext, Safe Passages is learning how to better demonstrate effectiveness and codify efforts and outcomes in a way that is more accessible to funders and program evaluators.

Specifically, Safe Passages is working with PropelNext on their law and social justice life coaching model for low-income adjudicated youth and foster care youth ages 16-21 in high-needs communities in Oakland. The goal of the program is to re-engage students in learning through obtaining a GED, enrolling in college, or exploring different career pathways.

“We’re working with the California State Public Health Department to codify the life coach program as a best practice for mental health disparity reduction,” Perez said. “This is a target population that has experienced negative outcomes – suffering from growing up in poverty, exposure to racism, disfranchisement from the public education system, and subjected to the juvenile justice system. This effort is really both a mental health intervention model and life skills coaching model.”

While Safe Passages has long collected a significant amount of qualitative and quantitative data to evaluate their programs and comply with government funding requirements, the organization is developing a new evaluation matrix to employ across all its programs. This will help Safe Passages consolidate all its data sources to present a comprehensive picture of its outcomes and impact to funders, evaluators, and the community to deepen and scale their programming.

Perez said that goal is to “pull together all the data...to say, ‘this is what’s really happening with this youth,’ and present a holistic picture of the investment and outcomes.”

***PropelNext is a program of the Edna McConnell Clark Foundation that helps promising nonprofits convert their passion for serving disadvantaged youth into data-driven insights and practices that increase their impact on young people’s lives. This is a look into Safe Passages, a PropelNext grantee in their Northern California 2021 cohort, and the organization’s experience thus far in the program. The William & Flora Hewlett Foundation is the co-investor for Safe Passages.***