

Rape Prevention and Education Program

Making Changes in Communities (2021-2022)

Background: [The California Department of Public Health’s \(CDPH\) Rape Prevention and Education \(RPE\) Program](#) is making positive change toward sexual violence (SV) prevention across the State of California. The RPE Program is a part of a national sexual violence prevention program funded by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). During the 2021-2022 CDPH/RPE program funding year, CDPH supported 23 local agencies throughout the state to conduct SV prevention projects in their local communities using school-based and community mobilization approaches. School-based SV prevention projects used a comprehensive approach that included: implementation of a SV prevention curriculum that incorporated SV prevention content such as consent, active bystander behavior, healthy relationships, and gender equity; strategies and activities with the intent to increase youth leadership around SV prevention; addressing school policies and procedures related to SV; and school-wide activities to reach students and people within the larger community. Community mobilization SV prevention projects implemented [Close to Home](#), an approach that engages whole communities to design and lead solutions to end SV. To evaluate their efforts, RPE projects collected quantitative and qualitative data about their projects and from project participants. Two types of outcome data were collected by project facilitators: 1) participant-level outcome data (qualitative and quantitative) and 2) community-level outcome data (qualitative and quantitative). Additionally, process data were collected monthly from projects. **This brief report summarizes process and community outcome data from 23 agencies¹ during their third year of project implementation, from August 2021 to July 2022, in order to inform SV prevention practitioners.**

CDPH’s RPE Program in Action

RPE staff from local projects were asked to report on their activities on a monthly basis by selecting from a list of activities. The most common activities selected for both school-based and community mobilization projects involved distributing prevention-related content on social media and webpages or in a printed format. Tabling at a community event or meeting to recruit members also resulted in high levels of RPE project interaction that engaged community members in efforts in SV prevention.



CDPH RPE funded projects engaged in these reported activities within their schools and communities, resulting in nearly 480,722 interactions with community members or students via 5,056 activities/events. Interactions represent the summed total of the reach of RPE activities and can be considered the number of “touch points” with community members.

* Identifying information has been redacted to maintain anonymity

1 One of the 16 originally funded school-based RPE projects discontinued RPE implementation during the reporting period, and one school-based RPE project did not submit data due to implementation barriers. Additionally, one community mobilization project funded through a different funding mechanism is included in this report, as they utilized the RPE evaluation tools and submitted data during the 2021-2022 reporting period.

SCHOOL-BASED RPE PROJECTS: During the 2021-2022 reporting period, school-based RPE projects most frequently selected the following activities on their monthly reporting forms:

- Providing trainings or holding meetings with school staff to give information on SV prevention
- Providing one-time presentations in classrooms
- Sending emails/texts for media/marketing campaigns on SV prevention to engage the school community

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION RPE PROJECTS: Community mobilization RPE projects most frequently selected the following activities on their monthly reporting forms:

- Conducting art/storytelling activities with community members
- Sharing findings from community surveys
- Attending or holding meetings with coalitions or stakeholders to engage the community in SV prevention



RPE Community-Level Change

The CDPH RPE Program's goals are to affect change at the community and societal level, including changing policies, protocols, physical spaces, and community member discourse and action around sexual violence. RPE agencies reported progress toward community-level changes related to SV prevention in their focus communities via monthly reporting of their RPE implementation and community-level outcomes. The percentages shared below represent the number of RPE funded projects out of 23 (14 school based, 9 community mobilization) who reported the outcome during the reporting period.

Important community-level change was achieved during the 2021-22 reporting period. The majority of school-based (80%) and community mobilization (90%) RPE projects reported community leadership, action, or interest in SV prevention during the last reporting period. Over half of school based (57%) and community mobilization (56%) projects reported that community members initiated discussion or talked more openly about SV prevention. Additionally, school-based projects demonstrated that they made important progress towards policy and protocol change through engagement with school, districts, and local political bodies.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY/PROTOCOL CHANGE:

CDPH's RPE Program aims to engage schools and communities to adapt, develop, implement, or enforce policies or protocols related to sexual violence prevention. School-based RPE-funded project staff worked on a variety of policy topics, including sexual harassment and violence, school climate, dress code, and gender-inclusive bathrooms.



43% of projects (1 community mobilization and 9 school-based) reported changing a school/local policy or protocol that will help reduce SV in the community.

Examples of Activities that Educate about the Need to Change Policies/Protocols in Schools:

- Gathering and reviewing school policy documents on sexual harassment, school climate, dress code, and gender-inclusive bathrooms
- Supporting student survivors' and leaders' requests to school and districts for review of response to sexual violence
- Convening working groups with key stakeholders comprised of the RPE-funded project staff, schools (e.g., staff and students), and the district
- Establishing and utilizing Communication Plans between the school and the RPE agency to facilitate support for survivors
- Educating the school community, including administrators, staff, teachers, and students, about existing school policy and reporting procedures
- Organizing student and staff feedback in response to a proposed policy and protocol



“ Survivor student leaders demanded an ongoing forum to look at the policies surrounding school and district responses to sexual violence. RPE funded project staff took a lead role in sharing survivor perspective, expertise in Title IX from work with [California State University name]* and supporting students in their participation. ”

– RPE FACILITATOR, SCHOOL-BASED RPE PROJECT

Safety in Physical Spaces

RPE projects often engage community members or school administration to assess and improve the physical areas on school campuses or in the greater community to improve physical and emotional safety.

Examples:

- Undertaking community and school safety mapping
- Supporting discussions with students, parents, and school staff about safe and unsafe spaces on campus
- Locating new safe spaces to meet for RPE activities with youth and adults
- Taking action to improve community safety, for example, designing a sticker with information about the new mental health hotline 2-1-1 and asking local businesses to display it

26% of projects (3 community mobilization and 3 school-based) reported progress towards making physical spaces in the community safer to reduce vulnerability to SV.



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“ We conducted a mapping activity with students at [high school name], where they identified locations that were unhealthy or unsafe on campus, after a thoughtful discussion, we shared with teachers and they were able to reflect on how they can provide safe spaces on campus. ”

– RPE FACILITATOR, COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION RPE PROJECT

Community Leadership around SV Prevention

The CDPH RPE Program seeks to engage students, teachers, school staff, and the greater community to act to prevent sexual violence.

Examples:

- Schools/districts reaching out to RPE-funded agencies to request new or additional SV prevention programming (sometimes as a result of students demanding better services)
- Increasing engagement or new partnerships with school staff, Parent Teacher Associations or other entities, such as County Boards of Supervisors
- Successfully adding SV prevention into the District’s annual budget
- City engagement with SV prevention awareness (Sexual Assault Awareness Month and DV Awareness)
- Community engagement in SV prevention in response to a community event or RPE program activity action



83% of agencies (8 community mobilization and 11 school-based) reported community leadership, action, or interest around SV prevention.

48% of projects (4 community mobilization and 7 school-based) reported that community members initiated an action around SV prevention.

“ A community member, at the district level, reached out to get SV prevention into their schools amid a new [change.org](https://www.change.org) petition from the students demanding this among other things. We hope to provide this education in May, and formalize a schedule for next year to leave lasting change at the district. ”

– RPE FACILITATOR, SCHOOL-BASED RPE PROJECT

“ The mural project has opened up the door for us to partner or build relationship with other organizations of first responders such as California Highway Patrol (CHP) and [the county] Fire Department. So, I think we are just starting to make an impact. ”

– RPE FACILITATOR, COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION RPE PROJECT

Conclusion

RPE projects reported making important changes in their communities and schools during the 2021-2022 period that impacted policies, protocols, community leaders, community member engagement, and physical spaces. Such changes cast a much wider net than those that only impact individual program participants; they change systems, structures, and social norms that shape how communities function and address the risk and protective factors for SV.

