



CALIFORNIA

DUI Court in the Schools

► AT-A-GLANCE

► **Project Characteristics**
Actual DUI Trials in Schools

► **Program Areas**
Youth Programs
Alcohol and Other Drugs

► **Targeted Populations**
High School Students

► **Type of Jurisdiction**
County

► **Jurisdiction Size**
1,700,000

► **Funding**
157 Funds: \$267,871

► **Contact**
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Problem Identification

Santa Clara County's Public Health Department noticed a marked increase in crashes involving alcohol use among drivers under 21 years of age. In 2001, Santa Clara County reported 146 such cases. Since 1998, there has been a 12 percent increase. In 2002, 6,822 Driving Under the Influence (DUI) arrests were made countywide, and 530 of these were drivers under 21 years of age.

Santa Clara County's DUI problem is large and complex. Resources are limited. There is increased awareness that the criminal justice system cannot solve the problem alone. The rising numbers of alcohol-related crashes along with the increasing number of teenagers in the county indicates the need for innovative approaches to solve the problem. Although DUI prevention is a priority activity for law enforcement agencies, sufficient resources are not available to conduct a community education program year-round.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of *DUI Court in the Schools* is to provide an interactive, multi-faceted program that conveys a clear lesson about the serious consequences associated with using alcohol and other drugs, impaired driving, underage drinking, and illegal alcohol sales.

The project's objectives include:

- Develop a school-community linked education plan designed to increase understanding of and promote confidence in the justice system's role in reducing underage drinking and DUI;
- Facilitate live DUI trials on high school campuses throughout the county;
- Ensure that a school in each city has the opportunity to host an actual DUI trial; and
- Develop a marketing plan to increase news coverage and gain support for reducing underage drinking.

Strategies and Activities

The *DUI Court in the Schools* project implemented the following strategies and related activities to achieve its goals and objectives:

- Made presentations at the County Bar Association Criminal Law Committee monthly meetings and met with individual judges and attorneys to gain support and guidance on how to successfully conduct trials in the schools and to resolve security and liability issues.
- Identified suitable defendants and mock jury for the trial. Until the Public



Defender's Office informed defendants that their monetary fine might be lowered if they participate in the program, defendants had no incentive to participate. Defendants waive rights to a jury trial and accept a bench trial. Judges in prior cases viewed the program as providing a public service to the student and community and often reduced the defendant's monetary fine.

- Met with school and court system representatives at the beginning of the school year to improve communications and increase the likelihood of having multiple scheduling options for hosting a trial.
- Transferred actual DUI court cases and transported staff, including judge, court clerk and reporter, bailiff, prosecuting and defense attorneys, and defendant from the municipal courthouse to the campus auditorium or theater.
- Conducted media events and community awareness activities to publicize the project, such as coverage from local newspapers, community access stations, school newspapers, Santa Clara County's Traffic Safe Communities Network (TSCN) partners' newsletters, international, national, and local news stations.
- Solicited interest by sending outreach materials including a cover letter, survey, and newspaper clippings highlighting some of the actual DUI trials conducted in area high schools.

Results

The Santa Clara County Health Department in conjunction with the Superior Court of California, the Santa Clara County Sheriff's Department, the California Highway Patrol, and Police Departments throughout the county have conducted 14 actual DUI trials impacting over 3500 students. They overcame numerous obstacles such as judicial system staff turnover and school schedules that limit the dates that a DUI trial can be conducted at a school.

Over 3,000 surveys were collected from schools participating in the DUI trials. Preliminary analysis of 1,552 of the student surveys indicate increased awareness of laws pertaining to drinking and driving in youth. The pre-trial survey revealed that 80.9 percent of students knew that minors in California driving with a blood alcohol concentration of at least 0.01 percent would lose driving privileges for one year. The post trial survey indicated that 86.4 percent answered correctly; which is a 5.5 percent increase.

Before the trial, 88.7 percent of students knew that it is a crime for anyone under 21 to drink alcohol; this increased by 1.7 percent. Prior to the trial, 80.7 percent indicated that they would not get into a car with a driver who had been drinking. After the trial that number increased by 9.2 percent. The program evaluations demonstrate that the program increases student's knowledge of the consequences and reduces the likelihood of riding/driving while drunk.