

# LATINO SERVICE PROVIDERS | YOUTH PROMOTOR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



## DESCRIPTION OF PROGRAM

Latino Service Providers developed a Community-Defined Evidence Practice (CDEP) that is adapted from a *Promotores de Salud* model, the Spanish term for “Community Health Worker”. The heart of the program is the identification, recruitment, training, engagement, and compensation of bilingual-bicultural mental health Youth Promotores, ages 16 to 25 from Sonoma County. The program uses a youth development framework that is designed to support positive racial and ethnic identity development and improve the mental health and well-being of participating youth.

### LOCATION

Sonoma County, California



### CONTACT

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### MORE INFORMATION

[www.latinoserviceproviders.org](http://www.latinoserviceproviders.org)  
LSP: Youth Promotores  
@lspyouthpromotores

## SUSTAINABILITY



Sustaining our **long-term evaluation** remains a cornerstone of our program's identity, because we believe deeply in understanding the lasting impact of our work. Our initial longitudinal evaluation with alumni from our first six cohorts (2018–2023) revealed compelling evidence of that impact: 85% reported the internship influenced their educational paths, with two-thirds pursuing or completing four-year degrees; 88% credited the program with shaping their career goals, particularly in education and social services; and 93% reported lasting attitude shifts toward accessing mental health services. Alumni consistently described interconnected outcomes in which skill development, cultural connection, and self-confidence mutually reinforced one another, a testament to the holistic nature of what we have built together. Beyond evaluation, sustainability lives in our people. Our leadership capacity continues to grow as returning Youth Promotores step into peer-based **Leadership Roles**, cultivating empowerment from within and demonstrating what it looks like when young people are trusted with real responsibility. To sustain this work financially and structurally over the long term, we are also actively expanding our external funding landscape through **Fee-For-Service** offerings that leverage the deep expertise we have developed, targeted fundraising efforts, and intentional partnerships with new organizations who share our values and vision.

## EVALUATION DESIGN + METHODS



### Evaluation Design

The evaluation of the Youth Promotor Internship Program used a mixed-methods design. The California Health and Human Services Agency's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) determined that the evaluation was exempt and approved the exemption in 2017.

### Evaluation Approach

Quantitatively, an interrupted time series design used two pre/post YP surveys administered at the start and end of each cohort year. Qualitatively, grounded theory (via exit interviews) and Community-Based Participatory Research were combined to ensure cultural responsiveness.

### Participation Criteria

LSP established the following criteria for Youth Promotor participation: Bilingual + Bicultural in English and another language, Ages 16-25, live, work, or go to school in Sonoma County, and willing to commit for one year

### Data Collection

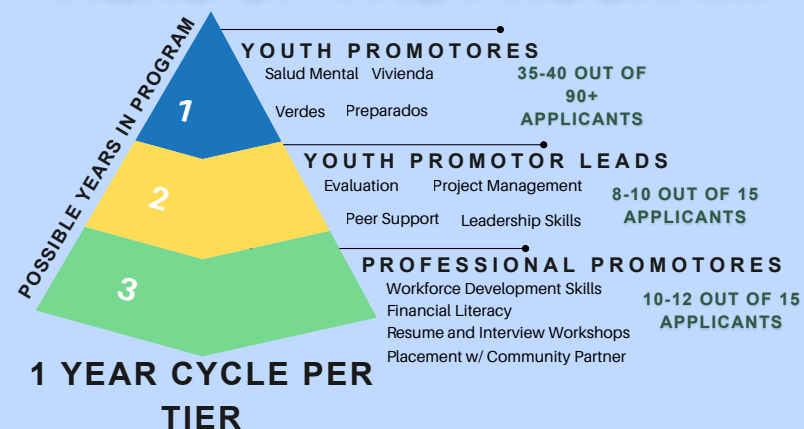
Survey Administration: Pre/post surveys (2018–2025) and an alumni survey (2024)  
Exit Interviews: Individual in-person interviews (2018–2021) and group focus interviews (2022–2025); audio recordings were stored on a password-protected computer, transcribed, and destroyed following transcription to ensure participant privacy.

### Statewide and Local Evaluation Measures

Statewide: Cultural Connectedness, Psychological Distress, and Program Satisfaction  
Local Evaluation Measures: Self-Efficacy, Leadership Confidence, Mental Health Knowledge, Barriers to Care, Willingness to Seek Services, Workforce Skills



## TIERS OF THE PROGRAM



### YOUTH PROMOTORES

Salud Mental Vivienda  
Verdes Preparados

35-40 OUT OF  
90+  
APPLICANTS

### YOUTH PROMOTOR LEADS

Evaluation Project Management  
Peer Support Leadership Skills

8-10 OUT OF 15  
APPLICANTS

### PROFESSIONAL PROMOTORES

Workforce Development Skills  
Financial Literacy  
Resume and Interview Workshops  
Placement w/ Community Partner

10-12 OUT OF 15  
APPLICANTS

## SCALABILITY

Our approach to scaling is both expansive and deliberate. From its inception, our program has grown far beyond its original focus on: **Mental Health Advocacy** and awareness to now encompass **Emergency Preparedness**, a necessity for all people living in California, **Environmental Education**, and **Civic Engagement** with a particular focus on housing and housing policy, reflecting the real issues our Youth Promotores encounter in their own communities. Central to this growth is our commitment to assembling a genuinely diverse cohort, drawing students from 13 different high schools, Santa Rosa Junior College, and Sonoma State, and intentionally recruiting across a wide spectrum of gender identities, abilities, belief systems, socioeconomic backgrounds, cultures, and neurodiversities. At the same time, we have made the conscious and values-driven decision to scale down in certain areas, not only in response to capacity realities but because we hold quality over quantity as a non-negotiable organizational pillar. On the clinical side, expanding **Early Intervention** and therapy utilization requires us to continue addressing structural barriers such as scheduling, transportation, and parental consent, while also growing our future therapist pool so that youth have genuine choice in matching based on gender, professional background, and therapeutic style.



## SYSTEMS CHANGE



Our program has always understood that serving young people well means working to change the systems that shape their lives. This commitment has led us to deepen our advocacy work and build relationships with partners we had not previously engaged, including taking our interns and our cause directly to the state capitol in Sacramento to advocate for the funding and programming our communities depend on. This kind of civic action is not peripheral to what we do, it is a living example of the leadership and empowerment we cultivate every day. Equally transformative is our third tier of interns, our **Pro Promotores** who are placed as partners at a range of agencies and organizations aligned with their academic or professional goals. These placements are designed to support real workforce development and, just as importantly, to shift the way community organizations and hiring teams see young people. By integrating our interns into professional spaces as capable contributors, not just volunteers or shadows. We are actively challenging the assumption that young people need to wait their turn, and instead creating pathways for them to begin building meaningful careers right now.

## RESULTS\*

### Cultural Connectedness

- 57% felt more connected to their culture by the end of the program

- YP described the program as a safe space where they felt seen, **accepted** and rooted in their Latino identity

### Psychological Wellness

- 60% reported a **decrease** in psychological distress

### Knowledge

- 92% reported their knowledge about mental health increased

- YP described how the knowledge led to shifts in attitudes, including personal self-awareness, reduced stigma, and increased compassion

- YP also gained practical crisis intervention knowledge

### Willingness to Seek Services

- 50% reported being **more willing** to seek mental health services for themselves

### Self-Efficacy & Skills

- 63% reported an **increase** in self-efficacy
- YP developed or **improved** an average of 4 workforce skills



## NEXT STEPS + KEY TAKEAWAYS

### THE THREE TIER MODEL PIPELINE

**Tier 1 | Safe Spaces, Cultural Connectedness & Validation** LSP's "come as you are" environment gave Youth Promotores a psychologically safe space to show up authentically while exploring their cultural identity, processing personal challenges, and connecting with peers who shared similar experiences around immigration, education, and family. For many, the program became a rare bridge to their Latinx roots and a "second family" that affirmed who they are. Latinx staff modeled this cultural pride while also serving as tangible role models for educational attainment: "It was just very surprising and inspiring seeing them succeed on this level and knowing that this is attainable for me...I know that I'm capable of what they're doing now because I can relate to them all on a personal level!" (YP Lead, female, age 19, Cohort 6). This foundation of belonging also meaningfully reduced stigma around mental health, while stigma-related concerns decreased significantly and willingness to seek help increased. Safe peer relationships allowed leadership competencies like communication and facilitation to develop organically.

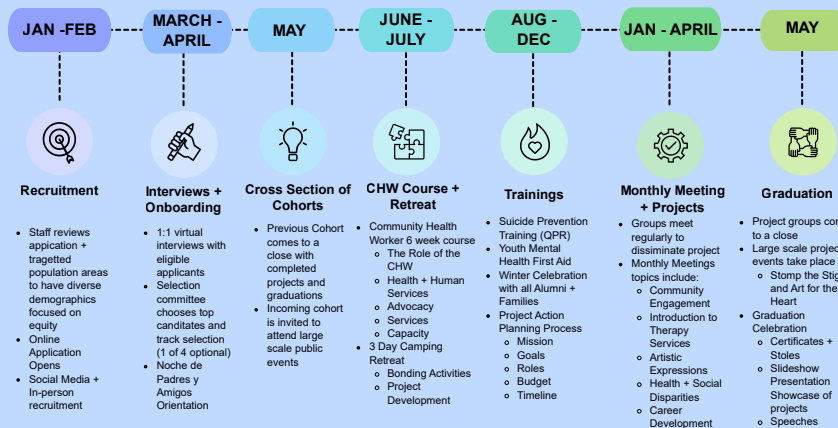
**Tier 2 | Leadership Development & Self-Efficacy** Built on that foundation of safety and cultural belonging, the YP Lead role formalized a pathway for youth to step into leadership. Self-efficacy scores increased and YP Leads showed particular gains in leadership confidence as the experience of supporting others deepened their own growth. Youth described tangible shifts in their ability to network professionally, overcome social anxiety, and advocate for their communities. One lead reflected: "Stepping out of your comfort zone...helps you to be more present...you're really paying attention to your YP and making sure they are being heard." (YP Lead, male, Cohort 7). Others discovered strengths they hadn't previously recognized in themselves to become young professionals.

**Tier 3 | Professional Development & Workforce Readiness** The Pro Promotor tier translates the confidence, cultural grounding, and leadership skills cultivated in earlier tiers into real-world professional experience. Participants are matched with partner agencies for 1 year setting skill development goals alongside agency preceptors while LSP staff actively support them in navigating personal obstacles so external stressors don't impede career growth. This structure ensures that workforce readiness is built not in isolation, but through the same ethic of care and cultural affirmation that defines the entire pipeline. One Pro Promotora captured this shift: "Once I started to work with my organization, they asked me 'What do you want to do? What is the thing that drives your joy and makes you passionate?' I was super taken aback because I've never been asked that question...to not be told what to do was new for me and I liked it a lot." (Pro Promotora, age 20)

**The Three Tier Model** works because it meets youth exactly where they are, building safety and belonging first, then growing leadership and confidence, and finally translating those skills into real professional opportunities. This is exactly why we will continue to actively seek funding to sustain and expand this program.



## IMPLEMENTATION + TIMELINE



### Recruitment

- Staff reviews application + targeted population areas to have diverse demographics focused on equity
- Online Application Opens
- Social Media + In-person recruitment



### Interviews + Onboarding

- 1:1 virtual interviews with eligible applicants
- Selection committee chooses top candidates and track selection (1 of 4 optional)
- Noche de Padres y Amigos Orientation



### Cross Section of Cohorts

- Previous Cohort comes to a close with completed projects and graduations
- Incoming cohort is invited to attend large scale public events



### CHW Course + Retreat

- Community Health Worker 6 week course
- The Role of the CHW
- Health + Human Services
- Advocacy
- Services
- Capacity
- 3 Day Camping Retreat
- Bonding Activities
- Project Development



### Trainings

- Suicide Prevention Training (OPR)
- Youth Mental Health First Aid
- Winter Celebration with all Alumni + Families
- Project Action Planning Process
- Mission
- Goals
- Rules
- Health + Social Disparities
- Career Development
- Timeline



### Monthly Meeting + Projects

- Groups meet regularly to disseminate project
- Monthly Meetings topics include:
  - Community Engagement
  - Introduction to Therapy Services
  - Artistic Expressions
  - Health + Social Disparities
  - Career Development



### Graduation

- Project groups come to a close
- Large scale project events take place
  - Stamp the Stigma and Art for the Heart
  - Graduation Celebration
  - Certificates + Stoles
  - Slideshow Presentation
  - Showcase of projects
  - Speeches

