



## **Oak Harbor School District, Island County Executive Summary of the Community-Level Progress Evaluation Reports**

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### **Executive Summary**

Oak Harbor School District is one of eighteen recipients of the Washington State Incentive Grant (SIG). SIG funds are allocated to communities to prevent the use, misuse and abuse of alcohol, tobacco, marijuana and other drugs by Washington State youth. Community grantees are expected to make their local prevention system more effective by establishing prevention partnerships, using a risk and protective factor framework for data driven needs assessments, and by implementing and monitoring science-based prevention programs.

### **Project Site**

Oak Harbor is the largest town on Whidbey Island, located in Puget Sound. Once a rural community, Oak Harbor is experiencing rapid growth and commercial development. SIG funding was awarded to the Island County/Stanwood Community Public Health and Safety Network, which turned over the lead agency position to Oak Harbor School District. The presence of the Whidbey Island Naval Air Station provides a large economic base and employment source. Sixty percent of Oak Harbor School District students come from families connected to the Naval Air Station.

### **Prevention History**

Prevention activities are not new to the community of Oak Harbor. Prior to SIG, collaboration efforts, such as Community Mobilization and the Island County Stanwood Community Public Health and Safety Network, provided community members and prevention providers an avenue in which to increase coordination and communication with each other. The school district's involvement in collaboration efforts has been limited. Partnerships between service providers, the schools, and the community are now improving. These collaborative efforts provided a setting for collaborative planning with prevention partners. The Oak Harbor community had already begun using data for planning, as well as for the evaluation of program outcomes, before SIG funding was received. The community's desire for more evaluation data was an integral factor in the application of SIG funding.

## **Progress toward SIG Community Level Objectives**

**Objective 1:** *To establish partnerships...to collaborate at the local level to prevent alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drug use, misuse, and abuse by youth.*

In and of itself, the SIG project, known as the Oak Harbor School District Student Assistance Program, is an important new prevention partnership. Its participants include the Oak Harbor School District #201, Island County/Stanwood Community Public Health and Safety Network, Partnership with Youth, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Island County.

**Objective 2:** *To use a risk and protective factor framework to develop a community prevention action plan...*

Before SIG funding was received, the Oak Harbor prevention community had already had some experience with the risk and protective framework. SIG helped to reinforce and increase the community's awareness of this framework, which was used in the selection of SIG-sponsored programs.

**Objective 3:** *To participate in joint community risk and protective factor and resource assessment...*

Some of Island County's SIG Advisory Board members participated in the spring 2001 SIG-sponsored collaborative needs assessment. Although there has been little coordination with regard to a resource assessment in the past, Island County recently decided to conduct countywide assessments of resources and programs. Prevention partners have plans to continue sharing data.

**Objective 4:** *To select and implement effective prevention actions...*

The SIG process encouraged the choice of programs shown through published research to be effective in different locales and with multiple populations. These are known as research-based programs. The programs Oak Harbor School District selected to address their prioritized risk and protective factors include the following:

- *Project ALERT*, a social resistance curriculum focusing on cigarettes, alcohol, and drugs, was part of the curriculum for all students in sixth grade.
- A variety of *support groups* were established for students in the middle schools, with topics ranging from substance abuse to divorce to self-care.
- *Big Brothers/Big Sisters* collaborated with the schools in establishing mentoring relationships with youth ages ten to fourteen.
- An *After Hours program* of after school activities was offered to youth in sixth to eighth grades. It takes place for two hours per day, three days a week.

**Objective 5:** To use common reporting tools...

One of the requirements for participating in the SIG project was to participate in the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior. Survey data provide cross-sectional substance abuse prevalence rates and measures of risk and protective factors among 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. This objective was fulfilled in two ways:

- Pre-test/post-test, standard questionnaires drawn from the Everest database were used with participants in the SIG-funded, science-based programs.
- The two middle schools in Oak Harbor participated for the first time in the Washington State Survey of Adolescent Health Behavior, an important measure of substance abuse prevalence and of risk and protective factors.

### **Conclusion**

A key achievement under the SIG project was to create a viable linkage between the school system and prevention activities occurring outside the system. The Oak Harbor SIG project has made progress toward achieving the community level objectives as established by the Governor's Substance Abuse Prevention Advisory Committee. During the last year of SIG community funding, Oak Harbor intends to develop methods to maintain some of the changes they have achieved in the system of prevention planning, funding, implementation, and monitoring they developed under SIG.

In this regard, respondents report that the sustainability workshop offered them was very helpful. They appreciated the efforts made by SIG to help communities maintain programs after SIG. The Oak Harbor SIG project is exploring options including the multi-site consortium idea, grant opportunities, and the possibility of becoming a pilot program for an intensive research project.



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