

The Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles

Summer Night Lights (SNL)

Los Angeles, California

Challenge

Many vulnerable communities in Los Angeles lack safe public spaces, especially when night falls. With few positive outlets around their homes, youth can be left at risk to gangs and criminal activity. Local opportunities for family-oriented activity and community engagement are often limited, exacerbating the risk of crime.

Innovation

In neighborhoods with a high risk of gang activity, Summer Night Lights (SNL) taps into the resources of the Mayor's Office of Public Safety's Gang Reduction and Youth Development (GRYD) team, the LA Police Department, and the LA Recreation and Parks Department to keep 32 city parks during summer evenings. At each site, programming in partnership with local nonprofit organizations and trained staff provides free family-oriented athletics, arts, learning, food, and health and wellness.

Overview

SNL is built on partnerships, and its unique funding model combines public- and private-sector resources. The Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles obtains one-half of the program's financial support from a wide range of philanthropic, private, and nonprofit partners. The program receives roughly equal matching support, staff time, and other in-kind public support from the City. Since 2008, SNL has provided free-of-charge programming to over 6 million community members, served over 3.5 million healthy meals, and created over 9,174 jobs including 2,220 youth hires. In 2016, over 690,500 people participated in SNL. In the face of a citywide uptick in crime, SNL sites were resilient. Of the 32 parks with full-time SNL programming, 26 saw a decrease or no change in gang-related crimes. Crime prevention and gang reduction, the hallmarks of GRYD, are not SNL's only benefits. By activating public parks through private and nonprofit partners, the program provides safe spaces, youth employment, education and learning, and active environments for communities to interact positively.

PUBLIC-SECTOR PARTNERS

City of Los Angeles, Los Angeles County, U.S. Department of Justice.

OTHER PARTNERS

Annenberg Foundation, Ahmanson Foundation, Ralph M. Parsons Foundation, Milken Family Foundation, Weingart Foundation, Blue Shield of California Foundation, Disney, Target, AT&T, Kaiser Permanente, Youth Policy Institute, Choose Health LA, Hope Worldwide.

