

ABSTRACT/ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission of the Central Seattle Drug Free Communities Coalition (CSDFCC) is to unite the community in an effort to create a safe community free of alcohol, drugs and violence.

Seattle Public Schools, the fiscal agent for the CSDFCC, received a federal Drug Free Communities (DFC) grant in 2008 for five years with the opportunity to apply for a five-year continuation grant. In 2011, King County Department of Community and Human Services' Mental Health, Chemical Abuse and Dependency Services Division selected the CSDFCC as a Prevention Redesign Initiative (PRI) site to provide intensified prevention efforts in this area, particularly at Washington Middle School and Garfield High School, part of Seattle Public Schools, as well as the surrounding neighborhood.

Why Focus on the Central Area?

For many years, Seattle's "Central Area" or "Central District" has been characterized by poverty, crime, violence, gang activity and substance abuse. Concern over a tragic event that occurs here is frequently mitigated by the norms and expectations that have become attached to it. Citizens tend not to express surprise at the low student academic achievement reported for schools in these neighborhoods or by reports of high rates of drug use. These are regarded by many as the norm for young people in the community. It should be noted that due to home renovations and other gentrification efforts in this neighborhood, aggregated socioeconomic statistics may be somewhat skewed. Contributing factors have been transitional issues due to soaring housing costs leading to gentrification and decreased community cohesiveness.

According to the 2010 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey, 45.9% of 12th graders at Garfield High School reported drinking alcohol in the past 30 days and 32.4% used marijuana or hashish. This is higher than the rates for Washington State with 39.9% of 12th graders who drank alcohol and 26.2% who used marijuana or hashish. The CSDFCC conducted a survey in 2010 that showed higher substance use, including 54% of Garfield High School seniors reporting drinking alcohol in the past 30 days.

Area to be Served

Central Seattle is an inner-city neighborhood and historically one of the most racially and ethnically diverse neighborhoods. It is located east of downtown Seattle within the central core of the city. For the DFC grant, the CSDFCC has a broad area with 28,328 residents located within the following boundaries: 12th Avenue on the West; East Thomas/East John on the North; 31st Avenue South on the East; and South Jackson Street on the South.

The focus for the PRI is the neighborhood containing Washington Middle School and Garfield High School, in particular, the Central Area/Squire Park.