

Section 2

2B. Van Go, Inc. provides prevention strategies to at-risk teens and young adults (ages 14-21) through our after school and summer JAMS and The Arts Train programs.

Teens are referred to Van Go by community partners who identify youth based on risk factors, including poverty, court involvement, foster care, mental health issues, truancy, and drug/alcohol abuse. Van Go interviews and hires youth to create works of art that are purchased or commissioned by the public; this income supports program sustainability. Many art pieces, such as murals and benches, are displayed publicly to foster self-esteem by providing successful experiences and affirming recognition to youth. The program provides extensive life skill lessons and social work support, provided by 2 part-time staff social workers, social work interns, and community volunteers.

In addition to teaching important job skills such as task completion, punctuality, responsibility, and teamwork Van Go uses *Pathways to Self-Discovery and Change: Criminal Conduct and Substance Abuse Treatment for Adolescents* to address risk factors associated with substance abuse. This curriculum was specifically designed to have long-term effects on at-risk youths' decisions about alcohol and drug use. *Pathways* is the evidence-based program used by the Kansas State Juvenile Justice Authority and is a cognitive-behavioral curriculum that includes illustrated, narrative stories of youth who struggle with multiple elements of risk (e.g., family, school, mental health, crime, substance abuse, negative peer associates). It uses modeling, role-play and practice of cognitive-behavioral skills to improve communication, deal with cravings and urges, and develop a sense of empathy. Additionally, personal responsibility to others, overcoming prejudice and negative thinking, managing feelings, and developing a sense of personal identity are covered.

The promising approach used at Van Go is the Communities That Care model. This model includes the risk/protective factors that are measured on the CTC survey administered to Lawrence students in grades 6,8,10, and 12. Van Go incorporates three steps described by CTC as being essential to program success:

- 1) Provide opportunities for involvement:** Participating youth are involved in the planning and creation of original artwork as they work with professional teaching artists to create public works of art.
- 2) Enhance the development of cognitive and social skills:** All participants learn, practice, and are evaluated on effective and respectful communication with their peers and staff (i.e., not interrupting others, expressing frustrations appropriately). They also receive tutoring and individual help to make sure academic goals are being met.
- 3) Recognize participants for skillful performance:** All Van Go projects culminate with a public show of the work the participants have created.

2C. Kansas Communities That Care 2013 data indicated disturbing information among 10th graders (the grade with the highest response rate and the average grade level of kids

at Van Go). Especially disturbing is the fact that 1/3 of sophomores reported drinking alcohol at least once within the past 30 days.

*When asked, "If you wanted to get marijuana, how easy would it be for you to get some?" 53% of Lawrence youth responded, "Very Easy" (state average: 34%). This is a 5% increase from 2012 data.

*30% reported drinking beer, wine, or hard liquor at least once in the past 30 days (state average: 29%).

*14% reported being drunk or high at school in the last year (state average: 11%).

Van Go lessens the burden of government by providing essential prevention services that teach some of the city's most vulnerable youth strategies to make positive choices.

2D. Process Outcome: 100 at-risk teens and young adults, ages 14-21, will receive leadership development, skill-building, and employment training in 2015.

Behavioral Outcome: In 2015, 92% of the participants will show an improvement in their pre/post Workplace Evaluation scores or Individual Life Plans.

Impact Outcome: 100% of youth exiting programming at Van Go will make a successful transition into the workplace, prepared for independent living.

Outcome Evaluation: Van Go uses a pre/post Employee Work Evaluation form to measure growth in JAMS. An Individual Life Plan is created by The Arts Train participants and social worker to set goals for successful independent living. They meet regularly to review goals and assess achievement.

Van Go has shown progress towards achieving our previously targeted outcomes. All 2014 goals are on track to be met.

2E. Van Go has long-standing partners with whom we collaborate to identify youth most in need of services. Every participant in the JAMS program must be referred to Van Go by one of our partners, who are listed below. These agencies are integral to programming and refer the kids they know can benefit from participation at Van Go:

1. Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center - WRAP social workers refer students to Van Go. Van Go also works with youth in the Therapeutic classroom. *(81% of youth working at Van Go have a mental health diagnosis)*
2. Douglas County Youth Services – DCYS staff and juvenile court personnel refer youth to the JAMS program. *(20% of youth working at Van Go are court-involved)*
3. The Lawrence/Douglas County Housing Authority – Because many of our low-income youth live in public housing, the Housing Authority sponsors Summer JAMS apprentice-artists' salaries for their residents.

4. USD #497 - School counselors and social workers refer and recruit students, and relay grades, attendance and discipline problems so a coordinated effort can be made on behalf of each child. JAMS participants can earn high school credit for their participation in an 8-week session.

2F. Van Go has a Board of Directors of highly respected community leaders who help with program development, evaluation, and fundraising. Staff members include a full-time Executive Director, Program Director, two part-time MSWs, a contracted CPA, part-time development/marketing director and grant writer. Art staff includes part-time art instructors in painting, metal and woodworking. Van Go is a long-time recipient of Alcohol Tax Funds and has demonstrated its ability to effectively manage funds and meet objectives.

2G. Van Go requests \$44,000 from the alcohol tax fund, which is a return to the amount we received 2009-2012. The organization has proven its capacity to effectively use alcohol tax funds in the past. Van Go anticipates making an annual request for Alcohol Tax funds, as the unique and effective prevention services we provide to at-risk teens are critically important to our community. Other funds for this program come from annual fundraisers, foundation support, product sales/commissions, business support, and individual contributions. Additionally, Van Go is the largest recipient in Kansas of the Department of Labor's Workforce Investment Act grant funding, which is anticipated to bring \$241,000 to Lawrence for staff and youth wages in 2015.

Van Go leverages this funding by using it as a portion of matching funds that are part of grant applications, specifically the NEA. Additional creative support also includes:

Social Work Interns: 2 students in KU's graduate social work program are assigned each year to Van Go. They work alongside our staff social worker, gaining valuable experience and providing essential support for the staff and youth.

AmeriCorps Volunteer: Van Go utilizes 1 AmeriCorps volunteer to provide direct assistance to our youth.

Community Volunteers: Van Go has always utilized a core team of volunteers that allow us to keep our kid to adult ratio low. In 2013 200 program volunteers 2,550 hours. We anticipate similar numbers in 2014 and 2015.

Personnel: \$37,000

Executive Director (\$25,000): A portion of the salary full-time executive director, Lynne Green, who oversees operations. (Existing)

Social Worker (\$12,000): A portion of the salary of our social worker, who administers evaluations, administers the Pathways prevention curriculum, and supervises two K.U. social work interns. (Existing)

Fringe Benefits \$7,000

FICA, Health Insurance: for existing personnel listed above.

Travel: 0

Office Space: 0

Supplies, Office & Other: 0

Equipment: 0

Van Go has not yet completed its 2015 budget, but the Board treasurer and Finance Director anticipate it will be similar to 2014. Please see our attached budget for specific information.