NEWS

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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
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County a national leader with 17 achievement awards

The County of San Bernardino has once again distinguished itself among the nation's counties, winning 17 Achievement Awards for 2013 from the National Association of Counties.

Counties from 25 states were recognized nationally with only nine California counties receiving top honors. San Bernardino County won 15 awards last year and 27 awards in 2011. This year, Los Angeles County won 26 awards and San Diego County claimed 24 awards. Riverside County received two.

Today, the Board of Supervisors recognized and honored the people and departments responsible for the 2013 winning programs and services.

"These awards reflect our County's commitment to providing the best service possible for our residents and businesses," San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Chair Janice Rutherford said. "I applaud all of our award winners for their innovative thinking and their desire to enhance how the County does business."

The NACo Achievement Awards Program recognizes counties for improving the services they deliver to the public. The awards focus on innovation despite the economic downturn and the use of technology. The following are San Bernardino County's 2013 winning programs:

SUBSIDIZED WORK EXPERIENCE AT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
The Transitional Assistance Department and the Board of Supervisors partnered to provide work experience for recipients of Transitional Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Participants worked in Board of Supervisors' offices, developed administrative skills and knowledge of local government operations. Local elected officials also got the opportunity to work with and know the constituents served by local government assistance programs. Eighty percent of the participants obtained unsubsidized employment immediately following completion of the program, 75 percent exited TANF completely.

PRESCHOOL REFERRAL PROJECT

Children and Family Services and the Preschool Services Department partnered to help prepare children in foster care, ages 3 to 5, succeed academically and socially as they transition into school and into adulthood. Participation in early childhood education programs by foster children has increased over 200 percent with 181 children enrolled in the first half of fiscal year 2012-13. There has been an increase in children's developmental progress in areas related to school readiness.

PERMANENCY READINESS SERVICES PROGRAM

Children and Family Services developed Permanency Readiness Services Program to help foster children search for relatives and build lifelong connections to a loving adult or family member. Fourteen children were served from January to November 2012 and priority was given to those children who did not have a meaningful relationship with an adult or were close to aging out of foster care without a connection to family.

DISTRICT TRAINING MENTOR PROGRAM

The Transitional Assistance Department designed the District Training Mentor Program to help eligibility workers learn about implementing new federal and state mandates without disrupting the time they needed to provide timely benefits to customers. TAD employees with exemplary work performance were trained to go back and train employees in their district offices on new mandates, cutting down on travel, costs and out-of-office time. Since inception, the program allowed trainers to train 7,471 staff in 339 sessions.

DEATH MATCH REVIEW

In-Home Support Services provides personal care services for frail and elderly individuals in their homes. When an IHSS recipient dies, wages through IHSS are no longer paid to the care provider. The deaths of some IHSS recipients are not always reported promptly, resulting in thousands of dollars in overpaid wages. The Death Match Review program has minimized those overpayments by obtaining a monthly report of all recorded deaths directly from the County's Vital Statistics Office and cross-referencing the list with IHSS records.

CALFRESH IMPROVEMENT CONSORTIUM

The Transitional Assistance Department developed the CalFresh Improvement Consortium to increase the participation of low-income households who are eligible for food assistance. The department trained members of 133 community and faith-based organizations to help eligible households with the application process and to educate them about the program. In 2012, families who applied with the assistance of community and faith-based organizations increased by 50 percent and the number of participating households climbed six percent.

SB 678 PROGRAM

The Probation Department developed the SB 678 Program to reduce the number of probationers being sentenced to state prison on technical violations or new law violations as mandated under Senate Bill 678. Probationers in jeopardy of returning to state prison are placed into the program which provides counseling, job search, anger management and life skills development. Incentives along with intermediate sanctions are applied depending on the progress of the probationers. As a result, probationers under the program have a 1.1 percent recidivism rate compared to the County's overall 9 percent recidivism rate.

ONLINE FOOD WORKER TRAINING AND TESTING

The Department of Public Health Division of Environmental Health Services developed on online program allowing food industry workers to have access to food worker training and testing. The online program is available in five languages and can be accessed at any time. Since debuting the online training, there has been a 55 percent increase in food worker card compliance from 2010-11 to 2011-12.

LOCAL ASSISTANCE FOR MATERNAL HEALTH

The Department of Public Health developed the Local Assistance for Maternal Health program to decrease the high rate of maternal morbidity and mortality in the County by reducing the number of elective labor inductions performed. The program attained the goal of reducing the numbers of elective labor inductions from 11 percent in 2009 to 2.7 percent in 2012 among 13 collaborating hospitals that participated in the program.

IT DISASTER RECOVERY RESPONSE IMPROVEMENT

The Information Services Department moved the County information systems from a contracted off-site recovery-based environment to a new remote site – located on the opposite side of the San Andreas Fault. The new site provides primed and ready systems and infrastructure that reduces the County's operational readiness timeline from 24 hours to two hours. The County is now less reliant on specialized contracted resources for its information systems during a disaster.

NICHOLSON PARK FAMILY LEARNING AND COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER

The Preschool Services Department and the City of San Bernardino collaborated on re-opening the Nicholson Park Family Resource Center, a 5,000-square-foot parks and recreation building that serves children and families. The center had been closed for two years because of budget cuts.

NEUROVASCULAR STROKE RECEIVING CENTERS

Inland Counties Emergency Medical Agency developed a program to identify stroke patients using a special set of criteria and then rapidly take them to designated Neurovascular Stroke Receiving Centers for medical care. Stroke patients have improved outcomes if identified and receive clot-busting treatment early. ICEMA staff worked closely with hospital physicians and emergency services providers and the community to develop a system to treat stroke patients quicker and more efficiently.

VINTAGE KENDALL – SENIOR APARTMENTS HOUSING PROJECT

The Department of Behavioral Health worked with developers to provide permanent supportive housing to adults ages 55 and older with serious mental illness that are homeless or at significant risk of becoming homeless. The senior apartments have 178 units in the City of San Bernardino. Twenty one-bedroom units will be designated for the Mental Health Services Act Housing Program for eligible older adults with serious mental illness and the remaining 158 units will be designated as affordable housing for low-income seniors.

PREVENTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS PROGRAM

The Department of Behavioral Health developed a program to address the mental health needs of the County's diverse populations, including African-Americans, Latinos, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning communities. The program connects these diverse populations to culturally significant, community-based prevention and behavioral health services without fear of discrimination or stigma.

DBH COMMUNITY CRISIS RESPONSE TEAM COLLABORATION WITH SBPD

The Department of Behavioral Health partnered with the San Bernardino Police Department to implement a community crisis response team to help people experiencing a psychiatric emergency. In 2011, law enforcement was burdened with calls related to mental health emergencies. With the development of the partnership in 2012, the Community Crisis Response Team assisted officers with appropriate clinical assessment, psychiatric bed search and transportation of nonviolent patients to treatment. This partnership helped to divert mental health patients from the emergency departments in the county, lowering costs. The officers now spend less time on psychiatric calls and can get back to their responsibilities on the street.

INTERAGENCY YOUTH RESILIENCY TEAM MENTORING PROGRAM

The Department of Behavioral Health in collaboration with Children and Family Services, the Probation Department, County schools and local child service agencies, partnered to connect foster-care youth with supportive adults to increase the chances of self-sufficiency. The IYRT program has provided services to 159 youth mentees and 77 resource providers in the County and has employed 40 mentors who were either former foster and/or probation youth, or who are former caregivers of such youth.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT AND PREPARATION PROGRAM 2012

The Workforce Development Department worked with the Department of Behavioral Health to administer a youth training program to assist 314 youth in foster care, wards of the court or probationers, in entering the workforce. More than 95 participants were hired into unsubsidized employment by the employer they were placed at for work experience as a result of the program. Seventy-eight young people enrolled in college at the end of the program.