

NEWS

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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
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State organization honors county with 5 awards

SAN BERNARDINO – County programs aimed at reducing truancy, preventing the spread of West Nile Virus, providing preschool services to foster children, improving customer service and shortening the time to obtain search warrants were honored today as among the best in the state.

California State Association of Counties Executive Director Matt Cate appeared at today's Board of Supervisors meeting to deliver five 2013 CSAC Challenge Awards to the Public Defender's Office, Environmental Health, Transitional Assistance, Children and Family Services, Preschool Services, and Information Services.

"These awards reflect the resourcefulness of County employees and their dedication to developing more efficient and effective ways to serve and protect our residents," San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors Chair Janice Rutherford said. "I commend the staff members who earned this year's CSAC Challenge Awards, and I challenge all of our employees to continue offering their ideas about how the County can improve customer service and better use its resources."

The annual CSAC awards are considered a highly competitive recognition program that honors the best and most innovative among California's 58 counties. This year, 18 counties were honored with awards after a panel of judges evaluated 220 entries. The CSAC Challenge Awards provide meaningful examples of how County employees are committed to achieving the Countywide Vision and creating a county in which those who reside and invest can prosper and achieve well-being.

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The following are descriptions of each CSAC Challenge Award:

Making Attendance a Priority (MAP) is a collaborative, grant-funded program designed by the Public Defender's Office to reduce truancy in the City of San Bernardino. MAP assigns a social services practitioner to visit families of truant students in their homes on a weekly basis to address issues leading to the child's truancy. From 2008-13, MAP has served more than 1,800 children. In a recent sampling of 43 students, 32 of them attended 70 percent more classes than before they were identified by the school district for the program. MAP has also increased revenue to the San Bernardino City Unified School District at an average of \$21,000 per year because of the increase in attendance.

West Nile Virus Aerial Surveillance Collaboration is a joint venture between Environmental Health's Mosquito Vector Control Program and the Aviation Division of the Sheriff's Department. The program utilizes aerial surveillance to identify and reduce mosquito breeding by targeting unmaintained swimming pools in residential neighborhoods. Addresses of green pools identified during surveillance were given to mosquito vector control to track down the owner responsible for maintaining the pools to reduce mosquito breeding. It is estimated that the Mosquito Vector Control Program potentially prevented the production of 990 million mosquitos per week, greatly reducing the potential prevalence of West Nile Virus.

The Transitional Assistance Department Customer Service Center was set up to help people seeking benefits, promote operational efficiency, maximize productivity and prepare for implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The number of applications received for Medi-Cal and other social service programs and ongoing case management responsibilities are expected to rise with implementation of the ACA. TAD built a technologically savvy business model to help people get signed up for care. The USDA Food and Nutrition Services directed other counties to visit the TAD Customer Service Center to learn from the County's experience. In 2012, more than 1 million calls were received and customers surveyed gave high ratings for excellent or good quality service.

The Preschool Referral Project, developed by the departments of Children and Family Services and Preschool Services, offers foster children age 3 to 5 enhanced preschool services resulting in increased placement stability, school readiness and school performance. As a result of the referral project, participation in early childhood education programs for foster children increased by 200 percent resulting in 118 foster children participating the program. All children in the program showed improvement in language, self-regulation, mathematical and social development. The results are encouraging for children who have been abused, witnessed abuse and suffered the trauma of being removed from their parents.

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The Superior Court On-Call Warrants system was designed by the Information Services Department to help judges review, sign, and deliver search warrants with a digital and mobile system accessed anytime and anywhere. Prior to development of the electronic system, a series of sometimes inconvenient phone calls and faxes between law enforcement and on-call judges had to be made causing delays in the approval process. Now judges can review, annotate, and approve warrants anytime using a mobile web-based application. Average wait time is about 15 minutes.