



NEWS RELEASE

County Administrative Office

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CONTACT:
Felisa Cardona
Deputy Public Information Officer
(909) 387-5429
Felisa.Cardona@cao.sbcounty.gov

County wins 4 state awards for innovative programs and services



Teaching incarcerated youth about the judicial system, outreach to the community by law enforcement, helping families break barriers to self-sufficiency and providing tax preparation assistance to residents are four County programs recognized today by the California State Association of Counties (CSAC).

Every year, CSAC honors innovation and best practices in county government. This year, CSAC received a record 279 entries from 41 counties in California. San Bernardino County won three CSAC Awards in 2015 and 2014, five awards in 2013, three awards in 2012, two awards in 2011 and one award in 2010.

"These prestigious awards highlight the creativity and ingenuity of our County departments to improve the lives of our residents," said James Ramos, chairman of the Board of Supervisors. "Congratulations to our employees for this much-deserved recognition of their work."

The County's recognition from CSAC continues a record of achievement following 45 awards received from the National Association of Counties (NACo) in July. NACo's 2016 Achievement Awards recognized County departments that offered services from pet adoption campaigns to providing housing support to low-income families.

In today's announcement, CSAC recognized the San Bernardino County Public Defender's Office with a Challenge Award for the Gateway Mock Trial Competition where two teams of youth incarcerated in Juvenile Hall are coached by attorneys to try a fictional case and learn the judicial system along with other skills to build confidence. The competition is the first of its kind in the state of California.

The San Bernardino County Sheriff's Department won a CSAC Merit Award for the Community Liaison Unit, which holds meetings and conducts outreach to minority communities, religious communities and other agencies to seek input and exchange information about their law enforcement concerns.

The San Bernardino County Transitional Assistance Department won a CSAC Merit Award for its Family Stabilization Intensive Case Management Collaboration. The program helps families who have barriers to participating in welfare-to-work activities by addressing needs such as lack of housing, car repairs and tattoo removal. The Department of Behavioral Health, Arrowhead Regional Medical Center and other community-based organizations work together on this initiative.

The Transitional Assistance Department won a second CSAC Merit Award for its Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, which provides low-income families with free tax preparation and job skills training. Due to the success of the County's VITA program, the IRS and the State of California visited the County to gain a best-practice model to implement in other counties throughout the state.

CSAC will present this year's awards to the winning departments at an upcoming Board of Supervisors meeting.

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