

NEWS

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SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY
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County honored with 19 national achievement awards

Programs and services created by the County of San Bernardino received a record nineteen 2010 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties. The Board of Supervisors recognized and honored the people and departments responsible for the programs and services during Tuesday's Board of Supervisors meeting.

The awards include a prestigious "Best in Category" award for the San Bernardino County Probation Department's GRACE program for adolescent female probationers. Only 16 programs in the country, and only three from California, received such honors this year.

"Our county consistently wins several of these awards, and this year is no exception," said Board of Supervisors Chairman Gary Ovitt. "Our county has every reason to be proud of the fine work county staff accomplishes in service to our residents."

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

San Bernardino County Probation Department's GRACE Program: The Gender Responsive Adolescent Caseload Enrichment program provides specialized services to adolescent female probationers with a history of trauma, substance abuse, or runaway behaviors. Probation officers incorporated a number of innovative ways to provide meaningful community service and educational opportunities for the girls. The girls completing the program have blossomed into young women with a sense of self-worth, pursuing their individual goals whether it be furthering their education, obtaining employment or becoming good parents.

Department of Aging and Adult Services' Senior Art Program: This program provides an avenue for artistically inclined seniors to create artwork for display in Department of Aging & Adult Services offices. The Senior Art program has a positive impact on both the physical and mental well-being of the participating seniors, allowing them to share their creative talents in the community and leading hopefully to a reduction in the need for some medical intervention and long-term care.

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Arrowhead Regional Medical Center's Injury & Illness Prevention Program: Launched in 2009, this unique program uses 10 safety training modules to promote a proactive culture in the hospital focusing on loss prevention practices, early hazard mitigation and healthy lifestyles. The program rewards positive behaviors with incentives and had a goal of reducing work-related injuries by 50 percent in the first fiscal year.

Department of Behavioral Health's Assisting and Guiding Consumers to Self-Sufficiency: This program provides a Benefits Orientation Team to supply the emotional and logistical support consumers need to identify and obtain benefits and links them to potential medical benefits, steady income, housing and possible employment. The team has also trained key county and contracted partners in this approach for accessing benefits and resources for consumers.

Department of Behavioral Health's Improving the Social, Developmental, Cognitive, Emotional and Behavioral Functioning of Children (Ages 0-5): Known locally as SART, this is a collaborative effort of the Department of Behavioral Health, First 5 of San Bernardino, the Children's Network, Children & Family Services, the Department of Public Health, and community agencies. This program brings a broad array of services to young children who have experienced trauma. Services include needs screening, individual and family therapy, occupational therapy, sensory processing, speech and language therapy, and evaluations with a public health nurse, neuropsychologist, and pediatrician.

Department of Behavioral Health's License Exam Prep Program: Known as LEEP, this program provides clinical licensing test study materials to pre-licensed staff, including online classes, seminars and books. This collaboration between Behavioral Health and Workforce Development allows each department to utilize related funding in support of the participants' success and helps pre-licensed staff to pass clinical therapist exams enabling Behavioral Health to make more direct consumer service staff hours available.

Department of Behavioral Health's CWIC ("Quick") 24-Hour Crisis Walk-In Centers for Urgent Behavioral Health: The Crisis Walk-In Centers provide urgent mental health services to persons of all ages who are experiencing a mental health crisis. Crisis intervention, case management, medication evaluations, referrals and crisis stabilization are some of the services offered at these locations. Three centers are strategically located in the county, in Victorville, the Morongo Basin and Rialto.

Department of Behavioral Health's Law Enforcement Performs Social Work Electronically: The Crisis Intervention Team Information Technology System provides secure electronic collaboration between law enforcement and Behavioral Health to track outcomes of mental health crisis calls and provide clinical follow-up services to those in need.

Children & Family Services' Transitional Conferences: Transitional Conferences were developed to connect youths with supportive adults to increase their success at transitioning from the foster care system to adult self-sufficiency. These conferences are formalized social worker-facilitated meetings that link foster care youths with many supportive adults, including their CFS social workers, facilitators, caregivers and other community members, to develop plans that will maximize the youths' abilities to make life-long connections with significant adults. The conferences focus on the youths' goals and how the youths, in collaboration with their support systems, will accomplish those goals and remain self-sufficient.

Children & Family Services' 211 Child Abuse Prevention Reporting: In partnership with the Inland Empire United Way (IEUW) / 211 San Bernardino and through a First 5 grant, San Bernardino County Children's Network worked with CFS and developed the 211 Child Abuse Prevention Reporting Program to raise public awareness of child abuse prevention and reporting. The campaign linked the IEUW/211 San Bernardino phone system with the local child abuse hotline (San Bernardino County Child and Adult Abuse Hotline) to facilitate reporting of known or suspected child abuse and communicated, through various media outlets, the importance and ethical responsibility tied to reporting child abuse. This project helps to expedite direct connection with existing services, enhances the level of resident participation, enhances the cost-effectiveness of existing county government programs by providing opportunities for early intervention, and improves the response of child welfare agencies to cases entering the system.

Facilities Management Department's Rain Sensor Program: The primary objective of this program is to conserve water by not irrigating during rain events. In 2009, Facilities Management installed rain sensors on all irrigation controllers. The rain sensors save water and labor by automatically shutting down and restarting irrigation systems during rain events. Labor intensive hours are saved by not having to manually turn irrigation systems off and on during and after rain events at 41 county-owned facilities, preserving thousands of gallons of water annually.

Human Resources Department's Steps to Success: Steps to Success is an online wellness program for employees, retirees and their dependents to manage fitness, weight, diet, and stress. The program introduces a strong element of fun that inspires employees to get involved and remain committed. Steps to Success allows the county to provide health education through integrated tools that help participants lose weight, eat healthy, and become more physically fit. This program translates into better health plan utilization for the county and more affordable health plan offerings. In the long term it will benefit the community by raising awareness of options available to attain healthier lifestyles.

Department of Aging and Adult Services' Public Guardian Multi-Disciplinary Team: A division of Aging and Adult Services, the Public Guardian created a specialized Multi-Disciplinary Team to meet the needs of the vulnerable clients it serves. The purpose of this unique team approach is to ensure that every effort is made to ascertain that the probate conservatorship action is appropriate. Team participants include professionals from a wide range of agencies, which have responsibility for, and expertise with, dependent adults and seniors that are showing diminished capacity. The team process allows these knowledgeable partners to strategize service availability to prevent or delay conservatorship, eliminate duplication of services, and monitor safety of the at-risk individual.

Department of Public Health's Customizing Our Systematic Approach to Communicate to Residents During Significant Unplanned Events: County residents live in many diverse regions, from remote desert to rural farming areas, from mountain communities to densely populated urban areas. This diversity subjects the county to various emergencies and disseminating information in an effective, efficient and timely manner is a real challenge. During recent emergencies the department created unique approaches to communicate with county residents and to properly react to unplanned significant events or disasters. Through collaboration with Caltrans, use of internal resources, and coordination with other government agencies, the department created avenues to disseminate critical information to the residents in a remarkably short time and more readily protect public health for county residents.

Transitional Assistance Department's Infant Needs Program: The Transitional Assistance Department and Children's Fund collaborated to initiate the Infant Needs Project. A gap in services was identified by TAD staff accepting applications for assistance from families with infants who could not provide, or obtain through community resources, basic need items. The Infant Needs Project was developed to provide basic items, including formula, bottles, diapers and wipes, to ensure the health and safety of infants in remote county areas. Needed items are purchased by the Children's Fund and distributed to TAD remote offices. Through this unique public-private partnership, the project is 100 percent donation-funded.

Transitional Assistance Department's Tax Preparation Training and Work Experience Program: The Department created a program that recruited California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Work Experience clients to complete basic tax returns for low-income individuals. All participants were paid through Welfare-to-Work subsidized employment for their work in the program. This activity assisted clients in meeting their monthly Work Participation Rate while providing them an opportunity to practice valuable work experience. Participants were provided formal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) training, the job skills necessary to obtain unsubsidized employment, and the opportunity to build self-esteem. This program enabled the county to provide tax preparation services to a large number of low-income families, which benefited the families and stimulated the local economy.

Department of Veteran's Affairs' Veteran's & Military Community Collaborative: County Veterans Affairs and Behavioral Health, working with the Loma Linda VA Healthcare System, formed a Veteran and Military Community Collaborative. The collaborative was created to better inform veterans and service members of benefits they have earned. It also improves access to behavioral and medical healthcare, readjustment counseling services, monetary benefits and other state and local programs. At the same time, it educates the community regarding the special needs and contributions of this group of most-deserving citizens.

Workforce Development Department's Subsidized Training & Employment: The Program was developed in partnership between the Workforce Development Department and the county's Transitional Assistance Department. This program places people who are receiving public assistance into on-the-job-training positions with local employers and provides wage reimbursement to employers during the training. This gives job seekers an opportunity to learn new skills and to remove themselves from the public assistance rolls, and employers benefit by reducing hiring and training costs. The Workforce Development Department has placed more than 400 people into these subsidized jobs with funding coming from the Transitional Assistance Department through the CalWORKs program. More than \$5 million has been reimbursed to employers for their hiring and training of people on public assistance.

Workforce Development Department's Business Survival Workshops: Workforce Development partnered with public and private entities to assist small businesses throughout the county. The workshops provide services and resources in the areas of sales/marketing, cost reduction, and financing. Five workshops were conducted and 340 businesses received services that helped them avert layoffs and even grow during these severe economic times.