



**MEMORANDUM
OFFICE OF THE
COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICER
COUNTY OF PLACER**

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors

FROM: Holly Heinzen, Chief Assistant CEO

DATE: July 8, 2014

SUBJECT: **Human Services: National Association of Counties 2014 Achievement Award Winner**

ACTION REQUESTED:

Recognize Human Services for receiving a National Association of Counties 2014 Achievement Award.

BACKGROUND:

This item comes to bring to the board's attention a 2014 Achievement Award bestowed on Human Services by the National Association of Counties. The award honors the division for the creation of an innovative Human Service Center that has improved performance, processes and services to the community.

The initiative allowed Human Services to successfully meet the increased demand for public-assistance services created by the Great Recession. In 2010, the board authorized Human Services to set a plan in motion that maximized the use of technology, streamlined business processes and took other steps to improve services to the public. In the following year, the division created a Human Service Center with three key components: a call center; task-based workload management and client self-service, and lobby management.

Human Services was the first call center of its kind in California to serve all human service assistance programs and handle both applications and on-going beneficiaries. It responds to more than 10,000 calls monthly and consistently exceeds call center performance standards used by such private-sector enterprises as Amazon, Zappos, and the San Francisco Giants ticket office.

A detailed description of the Human Service Center is attached. One detail needs to be highlighted here: the efforts of the Human Services Division ensure every day that more than 42,000 Placer County adults and children have places to call home, nutritious food on their tables and access to health care.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

MEMORANDUM
PLACER COUNTY HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Human Services Division

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors
FROM: Jeffrey S. Brown, M.P.H., M.S.W., Director of Health and Human Services
Cheryl S. Davis, Director of Human Services
DATE: July 8, 2014
SUBJECT: Human Services: National Association of Counties 2014 Achievement Award Winner

ACTION REQUESTED:

1. Recognizing Human Services for Receiving a National Association of Counties 2014 Achievement Award

BACKGROUND:

On June 12, 2014, Human Services received the following notification:

“The National Association of Counties (NACo) is pleased to grant Placer County a 2014 Achievement Award for its program titled **“HUMAN SERVICES CENTER: Improving Performance, Processes and Service to Our Community”** in the category of Human Services. Congratulations to everyone involved, who were able to help develop this innovative program! Your hard work will yield positive results for Placer County.”

During the Great Recession, Placer County like many counties in California and across the nation faced the “Perfect Storm” trying to meet the increased demand for public assistance programs with decreased staff and resources while fielding competition from the private sector. In 2010, your Board authorized Human Services to set a plan in motion to maximize technology, streamline business processes and improve public service in order to be the highest quality, best producing, most efficient and cost effective Human Services that is competitive with private sector.

On August 11, 2011, Human Services implemented the Human Service Center which included three significant business changes: 1) Call Center; 2) Task Based Workload Management/ Client Self Service; and 3) Lobby Management.

1. Placer County Human Services was the first human service call center in California to serve all assistance programs and both applications and on-going beneficiaries and answers over 10,000 calls monthly. Human Services implemented private sector call center standards for performance used by Amazon, Zappos and the San Francisco Giants ticket office and has consistently exceeded them as noted in the table below.

MEASURE	GOAL	AVERAGE ACTUAL FY 13/14 YTD
Average Speed to Answer	< 60 seconds	27 second
Grade of Service	>80% calls answered in 60 seconds or less	89%
Abandon Rate	<5%	1%

2. Human Services implemented Task Based Workload Management and increased Client Self Service.
 - Implemented on-line application capability, consistently achieving 96% to 98% timeliness ratings.

- Reworked business processes to move to same day CalFresh application processing.
 - Established a general email box for client inquiries.
 - Moved to task-based approach for benefits applications and maintenance from an 80 year ago case based approach
 - Moved to document imaging, replacing stacks of paper case files.
3. Human Services deployed a staff person as a lobby “greeter” similar to Wal-Mart to welcome visitors and provide immediate assistance including:
- Taking paperwork to be dropped off; directing to “drop off” box in lobby and outside building
 - Providing customer with forms they misplaced
 - Diverting customer to use the lobby direct phone lines to the Call Center
 - Directing customer to the lobby PC to apply on line for assistance and/or go online to print out needed verification
 - Assisting customers check in at the automated kiosk

Comparing a pre-Service Center public survey and a post-Service Center public survey of approximately 5,000 respondents each time found improvement on all measures.

MEASURE	PRE-SERVICE CENTER	POST SERVICE CENTER
Had to call only one time to reach staff	64%	91%
Staff was courteous	84%	96%
Overall handling of issue was good	78%	93%

During the past year, Human Services has assisted 76,811 visitors, processed 46,850 applications, completed 422,291 tasks, scanned and imaged over 4 million documents and answered 159,892 calls. However, what we really do every day is ensure that over 42,000 Placer County adults and children have a place to call home, nutritious food on their table and access to health care. Here is what a few of those individuals say about Human Services staff.

A single mom of 3 children and applied for benefits, after her husband had committed suicide. She explained that she was fearful about having to apply for services and assumed our office would be full of grumpy, harsh eligibility workers. She explained it was a very devastating time in her life and she found herself trying to handle all of the things her husband normally did & adjust to be suddenly being a single mom. She had always had great insurance for herself & her children, and never thought she would need to seek assistance. She said from the moment she applied, she has had nothing but surprisingly pleasant experiences with every single person she had contact with. She states we have gone above & beyond to assist her with her paperwork and every time she calls our Service Center, the staff is extremely friendly and willing to assist.

Another client stated she “is so pleased with how helpful and friendly the staff is here. She states when she applied for benefits she never expected for our staff to go out of their way to help her, and walk her through the process of applying the way our staff does. She said that the federal government could even learn from us and the way our office deals with clients.”

“I just wanted to take a moment and thank you for the help you assisted with and the kindness you showed our family during a very trying time in our lives. I also want you to know the good news that today I accepted a fantastic Job which will start the first of August! You were/are truly kind, empathetic and helpful. We are better for having known you.”

“My name is Bob S. I just wanted to call you and let you know that I have got a daughter with chronic neurological disease. When I went to Human Services I expected to run into a lot of people with bad attitudes and not really very helpful. And actually I just want you to know I ran

into the opposite. I was very impressed with the way your people work. They were happy and they were making suggestions to me on things that I can do to help my daughter.

FISCAL IMPACT: None.