

Attachment: Description of 2021-22 STARS Awards

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE

Specialized Enrollment and Advocacy Liaison (S.E.A.L.) - County Health - Behavioral Health and Recovery Services (BHRS)

Description: The Specialized Enrollment and Advocacy Liaison (S.E.A.L.) program supports BHRS clients in mental health treatment seeking enrollment, appeal and post-entitlement assistance with Title II/Title XVI Social Security benefits. The BHRS S.E.A.L. team is comprised of four members who lend part-time support to S.E.A.L. efforts and is an extension of the original S.E.A.L. team created in 2011. It is the only county-staffed team of its kind in California supporting claimants who have been diagnosed with mental health diseases, or co-occurring mental health and substance use or other chronic medical illnesses. The goal of the program is to give the most vulnerable population in San Mateo County more financial stability and access to rehabilitation services leading to greater self-sufficiency. The program promotes significant improvements of known socioeconomic determinants of health outcomes as well as promotes ongoing collaborations between various County departments and a crucial federal agency with a significant presence in San Mateo County. The S.E.A.L. team built a valuable collaboration with local Social Security Field Offices, which has resulted in better ways to communicate with clients, identifying workflow inefficiencies, and finding solutions to common eligibility problems.

Results: The S.E.A.L. program receives around 200-250 referrals annually, of which about 30-50 are supported at various stages of their Social Security claim. The program expanded in 2022 to include the representation of clients at the Administrative Law Judge hearing level, which has helped to achieve an almost 100% approval rate for first-time applicants. This significantly reduced the need for staff to refer clients out to Social Security lawyers, saving individual clients \$6,000 on average in representation fees that clients can instead use to secure stable housing, pursue higher education or job placement. The S.E.A.L. program effectively assists clients in obtaining access to Social Security benefits, which has had a positive impact on their health outcomes and their ability to recover from the severity of their illness faster and in a much more care coordinated way. Individuals can gain access to monetary monthly benefits starting at \$650 and up to approximately \$2,000, with an average monthly benefit award of approximately \$1,500. Additionally, individuals can receive retroactive benefits of up to \$15,000-\$30,000, allowing recipients to pay down credit card, medical and other debt or use it for needs like rent or vehicle repair, providing a more stable and secure environment that helps improve health outcomes by stabilizing the individual's living conditions.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Regionally Integrated Climate Action Planning Suite (RICAPS) - Office of Sustainability

Description: The goal of the RICAPS program is to assist the 21 jurisdictions in San Mateo County in developing and implementing climate action plans through monthly working group meetings, technical support, tools, and reports. RICAPS facilitates a monthly working group meeting where experts present best practices and working group members learn from each other, establish pilots, and implement new initiatives. The RICAPS program provides tools and reports, including a climate action plan template, Forecasting Tool, and GHG Community Inventories reports. They provide technical support, centralized tools, and individual assistance, creating a cost-effective way to help cities develop their climate action strategy when they otherwise would not have the technical expertise or financial resources to do so.

Results: The RICAPS program has directly enabled cities to develop climate action plans and implement measures to reduce carbon emissions and use energy, water, and land more efficiently through the resources they provide. RICAPS tracks their progress to reduce greenhouse gas emissions countywide and meet statewide GHG reduction goals: 15% below 2005 levels by 2020, and at least 50% below 2005 levels by 2030, on the way to carbon neutrality. The program provides a framework to help jurisdictions learn about climate action solutions from each other and work collaboratively on initiatives. Facilitating collaboration between the jurisdictions creates more consistent approaches across the county and supports communities in finding “co-created” solutions.

GREEN

Agricultural Pesticide Disposal Event - Agriculture/Weights and Measures

Description: The Agriculture/Weights & Measures Department wanted to provide an opportunity for agricultural operations to dispose of their unwanted, outdated, banned pesticides without charge. This was a need identified by our Biologist/Standards Specialists during their annual inspection of pesticide storage for businesses throughout the County. Due to the high cost of pesticides and their disposal, operations often hold onto pesticides they no longer use. The longer legacy pesticides are stored, the higher probability of the product falling out of compliance and contaminating people and the environment. This project allowed farmers and businesses to dispose of their pesticides legally, safely and appropriately at no cost to the operation; mitigating a potential hazard to human health and the environment. San Mateo County farmers, farm families, fieldworkers, employees of companies who regularly handle pesticides, residents, and the environment benefited from safely and appropriately removing these unwanted, outdated or banned pesticides from the County.

Results: The San Mateo County Department of Agriculture/Weights and Measures hosted the Agricultural Pesticide Disposal Event on June 28th, 2022 and collected 28,135

pounds of unwanted, outdated, and banned pesticides in 75 drums and 10 cubic yard boxes. 26 San Mateo County businesses participated in the event. It was crucial to provide amnesty when collecting these banned pesticides to encourage operations to bring these products forward and get them out of the environment without fear of fines. The benefits of having these pesticides removed from the County include bringing the companies into compliance, preventing any future human or environmental exposure to these outdated pesticides, and fostering trust between the regulated community, residents, and their government.

DIVERSITY, EQUITY and INCLUSION

Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Team – County Health

Description: The Government Alliance on Race and Equity is a collective of staff from San Mateo County Health (SMCH) Divisions dedicated to the implementation of health equity efforts that support the SMCH Racial Equity Plan, activities that advance racial/health equity outcomes, and helping to build an organizational culture that promotes inclusion and belonging. The GARE Team began its work to address system inequities in 2017 with a goal to ensure staff are informed, engaged, and empowered to foster equity among coworkers and for clients. GARE's framework includes normalization of conversations about race, organizing to advance commitments, and implementing systemic actions to achieve equity.

Results: Three programs were implemented to decrease institutional racism, increase safe spaces for dialogue, and incorporate a racial equity lens into all that SMCH does: Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP); Racial, Equity, and Health (REH) training; and the 21-Day racial equity challenge. REAP (established 2017/updated 2022) implementation included holding three racial equity forums and four Community Town Halls to obtain feedback and understand priorities; conducting qualitative and quantitative surveys and poll analysis; and facilitating two SMCH staff forums. The impact of this work has included gaining an increased understanding of racial/equity barriers to reducing structural/historical inequities. The 2018 baseline survey was completed by 867 SMCH staff. Respondents reported a stronger sense of competence/comfort in working with individuals from different races, a basic understanding of equity concepts, and a sense of progress on racial equity issues. The REH trainings began in 2018 to establish a shared foundation of understanding about how race, equity, and health intersect and opportunities to build knowledge, understanding, capacity, and skill to sustain a workforce engaged and empowered to further racial equity. Since implementation, 951 SMCH staff have been trained. The 21-Day challenge was developed to expand staff's knowledge and engagement in Diversity, Equity, Belonging, and Inclusion (DEBI) work. There have been 4 cohorts with 36 participants completing the challenge. The impact of the challenge includes continued learning post-REH training, support to the workforce in building new positive habits that can impact SMCH work and system, support for ongoing conversations about race/equity at work and allows for continued learning about the experiences and needs of SMCH workforce.