



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: City Job Training and Employment Opportunities Partnership for Homeless People in Bakersfield

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: City of Bakersfield

Jurisdiction population(s): 363,000

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: 01 Year: 2009

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Alan Tandy

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Bakersfield

Name: Chris Huot

Title: Assistant City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Bakersfield

Name: Steven Teglia

Title: Assistant City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Bakersfield

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Christopher Gerry

Title: Administrative Analyst Jurisdiction: City of Bakersfield

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NOMINATION OF THE CITY OF BAKERSFIELD
FOR THE INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION'S
2015 COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Introduction

The City of Bakersfield (City) is nominating its partnership with the Bakersfield Homeless Center for the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA's) 2015 Community Partnership Award; specifically, for creating employment opportunities for homeless individuals and their family members in order to transition them into a more self-sustainable environment. This partnership has currently resulted in successfully eradicating homelessness for over 250 individuals and their family members since 2009. In addition, this partnership is consistent with ICMA's core belief and strategy to build sustainable communities by developing a recognized body of knowledge and expertise that focuses on balancing environmental stewardship, economic development, social equity, and financial and organizational viability.

What is the Problem?

Bakersfield, California, located in the Central Valley, is the 52nd largest city in the United States with a population of over 363,000 residents. As a City that prides itself on oil and agriculture, we face many of the same urban issues as larger jurisdictions, even though we have a small-town feel. Based on the 2009 Kern County Point-In-Time Homeless Count (commencing the partnership), the County had accounted for 1,499 homeless people, in which an estimated 87%

were living in Bakersfield. Of these people, 48% were living without shelter and 52% were living in emergency or transitional shelters. In addition, this population included 13% children and 12% veterans. Although this problem exists throughout the country, our region has a unique sentiment toward homelessness. In many ways, homeless people made this region what it is today. John Steinbeck's novel, *The Grapes of Wrath*, depicts the plight of homeless Dust Bowl migrants in the 1930's, who settled here and changed Kern County's cultural landscape through music, religion, and values. In essence, our livelihood and culture is partially founded on the poor overcoming all obstacles to provide a better life for themselves and family members.

Who is the Bakersfield Homeless Center?

In order to mitigate homelessness in Bakersfield, the City created an innovative partnership with the Bakersfield Homeless Center (Center). Before discussing this partnership in detail, one must first understand the Center's purpose. The Center provides support and resources to homeless individuals and their family members (clients) in crisis while helping them achieve their highest level of self-sufficiency. Assistance includes, but is not limited to, providing a year-around emergency shelter, food, clothing, and supportive services in Bakersfield. For almost 25 years, the Center has provided countless meals, warm beds, jobs, and housing placements. Also, the Center works collaboratively with numerous service providers to deliver a comprehensive set of resources to their clients. Although the Center provides a myriad of services, it does not solely

provide an important element to lift clients out of homelessness; that is, job training skills and employment opportunities.

What is the Partnership?

Since January 2009 the City and Center have worked collaboratively on a partnership that provides employment opportunities to clients throughout Bakersfield. To explain, the City contracts with the Bakersfield Homeless Center for different labor services at a reasonable cost (i.e., provides hourly wages to the clients). For example, the City employs clients to undertake activities that prevent litter and reduce, reuse, recycle, and properly manage waste materials. Some clients work in the City's Solid Waste Division where they sort through green waste to promote environmental sustainability. Other clients may work to remove litter throughout Bakersfield's neighborhoods, streets, and freeways. In addition, this partnership employs clients at the Bakersfield Animal Care Center. Clients here work in various capacities, which include caring for the animals needing adoption and properly maintaining the kennels. In order to promote governmental efficiency, City staff oversees and coordinates the clients' workloads to provide excellent public service to our residents. At any given time, approximately 40 clients are employed by the City through this partnership.

In regards to program costs, the City funds this partnership creativity through grant funds and donations. The types of grants and donations are typically from state agencies (e.g., California Department of Transportation, Kern Council of Governments) and private businesses (e.g., McDonalds, Pacific

Gas and Electric, Marriot). The City actively pursues and receives about \$400,000 to \$600,000 annually in grant funds and donations. Also, this partnership receives various types of in-kind contributions. For example, the California Department of Transportation provides some oversight, safety training, and debris hauling; the City coordinates most of the program logistics; and multiple nonprofit organizations refer clients to the Center for employment opportunities.

How successful is the Partnership?

Since January 2009 the City has employed over 110 clients to sort green waste, pick up litter, and work in the animal care center. As a result of those jobs, over 250 clients and their family members have found housing and subsequently moved out of the Center. At this moment, 26 of the 40 clients whom the City employs have found their own housing and moved out of the Center. In addition, the partnership is having a profound impact on the environment. Last year alone almost 100,000 pounds of trash was removed from the neighborhoods, streets, and freeways of Bakersfield. This partnership will continue to develop in order to reduce homelessness, remove trash and debris, and increase governmental efficiencies through reduced labor costs.

As previously mentioned, 1,499 homeless people were living in Kern County when this partnership began in 2009. We are proud to announce there are now only 1,002 homeless people living in Kern County; that is a 33% or 497 person reduction. Based on these statistics, we believe that this partnership has contributed in reducing the amount of homelessness in Kern County.

What Lessons were Learned?

We have learned through this partnership that the local business community truly cares about reducing homelessness in Bakersfield. As previously stated, a substantial portion of funding for this partnership has been strictly provided by local businesses. Many of the businesses donate annually since they have witnessed the partnership's positive impacts in Bakersfield. Not only has the business community been supportive of this partnership, but the local media has provided an abundance of positive coverage as well.

Also, this partnership helps dismiss the stigma that homeless people are not interested in employment. Our experience is proof that homeless people not only want to work to better themselves, but also to support their families who are usually homeless as well. The partnership solidifies the idea that homelessness is not necessarily related to motivation, but instead perhaps the lack of job training and/or employment opportunities.

Finally, we have learned through this partnership that grants and donations are much easier to obtain when providing a community service that fits within the cultural fabric of the community. As previously mentioned, Bakersfield residents have historically overcome obstacles to provide a better life for themselves and family members. This partnership not only reinforces this cultural sediment, but also promotes civic pride through visible community improvements. For these aforementioned reasons, please strongly consider our nomination for this award.