

## County of San Diego: 2020 CSAC Challenge Awards Executive Summary

### **TITLE OF THIS ENTRY: COVID-19 Education and Outreach through Sector Engagement**

**OVERVIEW:** By leveraging the *Live Well San Diego* sector framework, the County ensured that timely and accurate information was disseminated to communities during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**CHALLENGE:** On March 13, 2020, the County of San Diego activated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. A component of the EOC is the Education and Outreach Branch, which ensures that timely and accurate information goes out to residents and stakeholders in the region. With 3.3 million people in San Diego County, it was essential to ensure a varied and robust approach to this effort, while activating immediately.

**SOLUTION:** To ensure the response was successful, we built on the existing structure of the County's *Live Well San Diego* vision, a collective impact strategy that relies on the contributions of the nearly 500 officially recognized partners and stakeholders aligned to a common agenda. This framework allowed for a successful model of engagement to be put in place that rapidly disseminated sector-specific information, ensured the public had a venue for asking questions, and provided a bidirectional feedback loop to influence decision-making related to frequently changing health orders and guidance. The four *Live Well San Diego* partner "sectors" – Cities and Government, Business and Media, Community and Faith-based Organizations, Schools and Education – were initially convened, and then quickly expanded to additional sectors and sub-sectors to meet the COVID-19-related needs of community stakeholders including: Long-Term Care, Military and Veterans, Healthcare, Homeless, Youth, Rural Communities, Older Adults & Disability Providers, and Laboratories. Virtual communication strategies were implemented by the sectors including: sector-specific webpages on the County's [www.coronavirus-sd.com](http://www.coronavirus-sd.com) website, ever-growing email lists with weekly "e-blasts" of timely information and key updates, sector-specific email addresses for submitting questions for specific and direct responses, and regularly scheduled "telebriefings" or on-line meetings using the Zoom platform to accommodate hundreds of participants at a time. The Education and Outreach Branch also worked closely with the Health Education and Training section of the Branch to train team members, develop appropriate educational and training materials, and coordinate culturally-competent translation of information. County Public Health physicians served as medical subject matter experts (SMEs) assigned to each sector to lend expertise and guidance as teams responded to questions via email or real-time during the telebriefings.

**INNOVATION:** Through this sector structure, COVID-19 information reached thousands of sector stakeholders each week. On live, weekly, sector-specific telebriefings, viewers had access to sector leads who were experts in their field, SMEs, and key community leaders. Typical telebriefings include a Public Health/COVID-19 update by the SME, a brief presentation by guest speakers, and answers to questions that are submitted ahead of time or in real time via the

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“chat” feature. Initially, a County-specific COVID-19 website was created to provide timely and updated information to the community, but as the need for information grew, each sector created a webpage with sector-specific information. Since information was changing frequently, the webpages required constant updating, and included a wealth of COVID-19 information including frequently asked questions and new resources that were being created. We learned early on that information and updates contained in the traditional channels of communication, such as live video telebriefings and email blasts (e-blasts), were not always reaching vulnerable populations in the most effective ways. Through an environmental scan, the following vulnerable populations were identified for further focused outreach: refugees/immigrants, military/veterans, youth, older adults, and disabled persons. Sector leadership worked with SMEs to develop strategies to address those needs.

**RESULTS:** The sectors conducted an average of 13 telebriefings each week since March 13, 2020, with an average of 1,342 viewers per week. The sectors also disseminated an average of 18 weekly e-blasts to an average of 13,339 recipients around San Diego County, as well as conducting an average of 10 COVID-19 presentations per week, to an average of 433 participants. A key outcome of the sector work has been the new partnerships and collaborations that have developed in each sector. New stakeholders, organizations and community leaders from every sector connected to the County weekly through telebriefings, e-blasts, and direct questions to their sector. Another notable outcome was the tools that were developed to support vulnerable communities during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as development of: "how to" technology videos to help people stay connected from home; a universal screening tool for homeless outreach workers to assess if homeless individuals need medical referrals; and a Pediatric Provider Toolkit to promote well-child visits during the pandemic.

**REPLICABILITY:** Counties can replicate this framework by building upon a collective impact model that leverages community stakeholder partnerships from various sectors in the region. It is also essential to provide support and subject matter experts to each sector to maintain accurate and timely communication. In addition to managing the sector leads, the Education and Outreach Branch managed a small “Core Team” dedicated to supporting the sector teams as well as having a constant pulse on sector activities and challenges so that thoughtful course-correction could be made swiftly.

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**OPTIONAL SUBMISSION:** *(If your project involved the development of a video, graphic design or PowerPoint)*