

CSAC 2017 Challenge Award Nomination
Executive Summary:
All-Hands Training Day

Overview: Humboldt County reserved a full work day to bring all employees together and provide mandated and elective training, and had the training sessions take place on what was traditionally a county holiday for minimal impact on the public.

Challenge: The problem resides in the fact that although each year volumes of employees attend trainings offered through our annual training schedule, they are still unable to meet all of the mandatory training requirements.

Departments and their employees find it difficult to attend trainings during normal business hours due to demanding work schedules and responsibilities, staffing/coverage issues and scheduling issues in general. There are also additional costs in staff time and for facilitators to hold training sessions locally multiple times a year. This method of training is time-intensive and expensive, especially for a rural county like Humboldt. The expense grows each time we bring in a trainer to conduct the day-long sessions. We wanted to cut costs and free up staff time. Additionally, through written feedback from prior training experiences, we knew that employees attend trainings not only for the subject matter, but they also crave variation and interaction with employees outside their departments. Our challenge was to provide an efficient way for employees to maximize their training experience and to ensure there was appropriate space and time for mandatory trainings, and do it in a way that interested employees so they would increase their knowledge and skills while breaking down silos between departments.

Innovative Solution: Our solution was to set aside a full day of work and get employees from all departments to a few locations and get them trained, in person, on these subjects. We secured three separate, large venues in Eureka, the county seat, where we held the following training sessions:

- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Ethics
- Discrimination/Sexual Harassment
- Workplace Safety
- Defensive Driving
- Active Shooter (Elective)
- Continuity of Operations/Continuity of Government (Elective)

In addition, the county had recently finished labor negotiations and agreed to trade Columbus Day for a new county holiday. Since the public was used to county offices being closed on Columbus Day, we chose that date to keep county offices closed to the public and hold our All-Hands Training Day, thereby minimizing impact to citizens who normally receive our services. Essential services continued operating as normal.

Weeks before the training began, we notified the public of office closures and neighborhoods letting them know they could expect increased traffic due to the location of venues. In advance, employees used the county's intranet to sign up online for the sessions that interested them. All-Hands Training Day began with a half-hour orientation in a large auditorium where employees signed in, received agendas, flyers on employee programs, entered drawings, and even took group photos in front of a banner with the county seal. After orientation, more than 400 employees stayed at the facility for ADA training, while the rest dispersed to various locations and attended their scheduled trainings. The day finished with a closing message at the same facility where orientation occurred, and announcing prize winners.

Originality: As much as possible, we tried not to reinvent the wheel with this project. So we researched what other counties had done in this space. While we found departments that had done something similar, we did not find anyone who did this on a county-wide level.

Cost Effectiveness: It is not uncommon for a normal training session to have 10-15 employees. We increased participation tenfold through this process. In addition, we saved money by renting venues and hiring facilitators for an entire day compared to only a few hours. Cost for venues was our largest expense. We rented three city facilities, along with audio and visual equipment from the local film commission. One session was offered online, so employees could attend from their desks without interruption. Much of the equipment was simply borrowed from county departments. In total, we saved money on the amount of rent we would have paid normally and facilitator travel expenses, and exponentially increased attendance.

Results: In total, 832 of our more than 2,000 employees attended at least one training session. This satisfies requirements to have employees attend mandatory training and takes a huge burden off scheduling, coordinating and paying for dozens of trainings throughout the year. Plans are already in place to carry out a Second Annual All-Hands Training Day in the upcoming fiscal year and expand it. Below is a bit of feedback that summed up the experience:

"...I was sure I was part of the Sheriff's Office and after October 10, 2016 I know I am part of something bigger. I am one of among 2,000 great, wonderful hard-working County Employees. You hear the names but don't know who they are. Now we know who the person is that we talk to on the phone. My observation – "to see every County employee come together for training and see how we all interacted was genius."

– A Sheriff's Office employee

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