

County of San Diego: 2020 CSAC Challenge Awards Executive Summary

TITLE OF THIS ENTRY *(seven words maximum)* Love Your Heart - Heart Health Awareness

OVERVIEW: *(Provide a brief, 25-word summary of your program or project.)* Love Your Heart is an annual heart health campaign that leverages partnerships and the power of “knowing your numbers” to improve the health of communities.

CHALLENGE: *(Describe the challenge your county faced, and the process used to address it. Explain the unique or critical factors that led to this project.)* The *Live Well San Diego* vision began ten years ago with the goal of improving wellness for all 3.3 million residents living in San Diego County. Developed in 2010, the vision was a response to a startling statistic that found that throughout the nation and locally, three behaviors (poor nutrition, lack of physical activity and tobacco use) were contributing to four diseases (heart disease/stroke, cancer, type-2 diabetes and respiratory conditions) that resulted in over 50% of the deaths. In San Diego County specifically, these diseases were responsible for 57% of all deaths in 2007. A factor that made the issue of addressing heart disease particularly challenging was the fact that many people were unaware that they had elevated blood pressure that placed them at increased risk. A clear, coordinated campaign across the region was needed to help San Diegans, “Know Your Numbers” so they could become more familiar with, and recognize changes in their blood pressure.

SOLUTION: *(Describe the innovative steps taken by the county to solve the problem or overcome the challenge.)* The Love Your Heart campaign was launched on Valentine’s Day 2012, as an annual event to address the negative impacts of heart disease in the region. Using a data-driven approach, the County acts as the lead in engaging hundreds of organizations in this effort each year with a special focus on communities that are disproportionately affected by hypertension. These partnerships include both traditional health-related organizations such as hospitals and clinics, as well as other innovative partnerships such as those with schools, businesses, and places of worship throughout the region. Partnering organizations and businesses provide volunteers to check blood pressures, collect data, and help promote the availability of blood pressure sites in a variety of locations and settings to ensure broad accessibility.

INNOVATION: *(Describe how this program is unique among California Counties. Show how your solution demonstrates creativity, uniqueness and an innovative spirit.)* The cornerstone of the Love Your Heart campaign’s innovation is in its cross-sector collaboration and size. While it started in San Diego, the concept has expanded to various communities, states and into neighboring Mexico (*Ama tu Corazón*). The binational “beyond borders” approach has allowed for creative partnerships and provides a truly unique collaborative experience. The entire community, from first responders and medical organizations to local media, schools, clergy, and businesses, engage to help individuals identify their heart health risk factors and reduce preventable deaths in our region. On-line site and

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volunteer registration, electronic tools for submitting blood pressure data, and an interactive map for residents to identify Love Your Heart sites are technical tools that have been implemented to support the ever-growing campaign.

RESULTS: *(Describe the results of the program/project. Discuss how the program or project has positively impacted the community, improved delivery of services to the public, or improved administration of a program internally.)*

In the first year (2012), 1,000 screenings were provided at a handful of sites in San Diego County. Since that year, the annual campaign has grown to include organizations from across the U.S. and Mexico to provide free blood pressure screenings to the public on or near Valentine's Day. In 2020, there were more than 56,000 blood pressure readings completed across 542 sites in the United States and Mexico, through the help of hundreds of volunteers. Of these, more than 5,441 hypertensive cases were identified and referred to urgent or emergency care, as appropriate. Since 2012, over 262,820 blood pressure checks have been conducted on Valentine's Day. Through the Love Your Heart campaign and other partner efforts in the community, analyses have shown that San Diego County's total number of heart attacks decreased by 22 percent between 2011 and 2016, compared to an 8 percent decrease in the rest of California during the same time period. In addition, San Diego County's percentage of death's associated with preventable health threats like heart disease decreased from 57% in 2007 to 50% in 2020.

REPLICABILITY: *(Describe how your program can potentially be replicated by other California Counties. Can your program be promoted as a best practice that can be utilized by others?)* Love Your Heart is already being implemented by other jurisdictions to great success beyond our San Diego and Mexico communities, including Arizona, Michigan, New Mexico, and Massachusetts. California reported various screenings outside of San Diego County with partner sites in Los Angeles, Long Beach, Anaheim, Santa Ana, and Riverside Counties and could easily be replicated by other California Counties.

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