

2016 CSAC Challenge Awards

Executive Summary

TITLE: Access Brings Innovation, Enhancements to Call Center

OVERVIEW:

The County's Access Customer Service Call Center implemented a specialized Community Based Organization line to better assist our most vulnerable residents and improve wait times.

PROBLEM OR CHALLENGE:

The Access Customer Service Call Center was designed to support the Family Resource Centers in delivering public assistance benefits such as Medi-Cal, CalFresh, and CalWORKs to the residents of San Diego County. San Diego County residents and community-based organizations voiced concerns with the customer service provided by the Access Call Center. Concerns included the amount of time it took for an agent to answer calls and, sometimes, the inability to connect quickly with an agent. When Access first went live, the department was not equipped to handle the vast number of incoming calls. This resulted in long wait times and frustrated callers. Considering the time-sensitive deadlines for eligibility cases, Access developed strategies to provide services in a more timely and efficient manner. These enhancements support the County's vision of Live Well San Diego through improved technology, communication, and customer service. Additionally, with the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the number of Medi-Cal recipients in San Diego County more than doubled to over 740,000. This impacted Access with increased call volumes.

SOLUTION:

Access implemented the Access CBO (Community-Based Organization) line which is a separate and distinct line developed to strengthen partnerships with community organizations, improve wait times and provide customized support to some of the more vulnerable populations in San Diego County. Eligible community-based organizations are issued a unique PIN that their organization can use to contact the Access Center. The CBO line was implemented in March of 2013, initially assisting 13 organizations. Experienced agents are assigned to the CBO team, which requires people who can handle multiple cases in a timely and efficient manner. Community advocates rely heavily on the Access CBO Line because it enables them to experience shorter wait times, quickly connect with a County staff member, and inquire about multiple cases at the same time. Organizations interested must apply for CBO line access and meet specific criteria (they need to be a recognized non-profit organization, be based out of San Diego County, and provide assistance to customers in obtaining or maintaining public assistance benefits). This

is the only County information phone line in the State of California that was specifically developed for community partners.

ORIGINALITY:

San Diego County is the only county in the State of California that has a separate Community Based Organization line.

BUDGET/COST/SAVINGS:

The operating and capital costs incurred in developing and implementing the enhancements mentioned above was minimal to the department. The technology changes were primarily completed through service requests within the scope of our contracted services that incurred no additional costs to the department.

RESULTS:

Customers calling the CBO line are satisfied with the customized service they receive. Access receives ongoing positive feedback from various community based organizations and the benefits to the line. Additionally, Access has been able to strengthen and expand its relationship with existing community partners. CBO partners that have received access to the CBO line has grown to 61 different organizations across San Diego County with close to 158 sites being serviced. Over 20 Access CBO line staff answer over 5,000 calls a month, totaling over 56,000 calls a year. Monthly average wait times for CBO line maintain at under 4 minutes. Since 2014, Access has coordinated 18 site visit tours from different community based organizations and government entities interested in touring Access and learning best practices. These visits were initiated by the growing relationships and partnership Access has developed with the community.

Access customers calling the main call center line also benefit by experiencing reductions in wait times as the separate CBO line diverts more complex, time consuming calls where oftentimes callers are calling about multiple cases. Access improved its average wait time from 14:58 minutes in December 2014 to 6:45 minutes in December 2015, a decrease of 52% compared to December 2013 where the average wait time was 21:00 minutes. These improvements can, in part, be attributed to the implementation of the CBO line as well as other process improvements and overall operation growth.

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