



2025 CSAC Challenge Awards  
Youth Emergency Preparedness Program in Rural California

**OVERVIEW:** Yuba County OES' youth preparedness program, "We're Not Scared, We're Prepared," addresses disaster vulnerability by empowering young students with curriculum that builds resilience and readiness.

**CHALLENGE:** Yuba County is no stranger to disasters including wildfires, flooding, and severe weather incidents. While OES has long connected with adults and parents in the community about preparedness, it had not yet found a way to connect with kids. With some complacency in signing up for emergency alerts, packing a go-bag, and creating a plan, OES sought to bridge the gap in families by connecting with school-age children.

**SOLUTION:** Yuba County OES developed the "We're Not Scared, We're Prepared" program to introduce every first-grade student in the County to the basics of emergency preparedness. Through an interactive presentation, OES staff teach students the difference between an emergency and a natural disaster, demonstrate how to pack a go-bag, and help them process the emotions that may arise in a crisis. Research shows that children who learn about preparedness not only share this knowledge with their families but also experience less anxiety when faced with real emergencies.

**INNOVATION:** Created by an OES staff member with more than a decade of experience in education, this program curriculum utilizes kinesthetic learning and California Transformative Social and Emotional Learning Competencies (SELs) to teach practical life skills. By meeting students at their developmental level, using age-appropriate language, and introducing our mascot, Yuba the Owl, the

program makes family and emergency preparedness more engaging and comprehensible. The curriculum also complements OES' bi-annual community outreach event, the Be Prepared Fair, which connects residents with preparedness resources, information, and first-responder interactions. The program's success stems from the strong partnership between local schools and the County, fostering community cohesion around youth preparedness.

**RESULTS:** In its first school year of implementation – 2024-25 – “We’re Not Scared, We’re Prepared” reached over 1,200 students at 19 of the 20 County schools and distributed over 1,000 emergency go-bags. Pre- and post-presentation “tests” showed an increase of 95% in emergency preparedness knowledge. Anecdotally, teachers have praised the program for its student engagement and practical application. One teacher shared that the day after their presentation, during an earthquake warning, one student (who was absent the day before) became frightened. The student was comforted by classmates telling them, “we’re not scared, we’re prepared!”

**REPLICABILITY:** “We’re Not Scared, We’re Prepared” is curriculum that can be implemented in other communities across the country—rural or urban. Recent years have shown that no community is immune to disasters, and impressionable children are often the most affected. By teaching children practical preparedness skills and process the emotions tied to emergencies, agencies can foster more resilient and unified communities.

**PROGRAM CONTACT:** OES Manager Oscar Marin | 915 8<sup>th</sup> St, Suite 117, Marysville CA 95901 | [omarin@yuba.gov](mailto:omarin@yuba.gov) | (530) 749-7520

**ADDITIONAL MATERIALS:** [Program information](#) | [Program presentation](#)