

National Association of County Human Services Administrators

Directors' Leadership Award



Nominee:	Robert B. Suver
Title:	Director
County and State:	Clark County, Ohio
Address:	PO Box 967A, 1345 Lagonda Avenue Springfield, OH 45501-1037
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Achievements:

Innovative, Fiscally Responsible, Committed, and Visionary Leadership are just a few words that describe the work of Clark County Department of Job and Family Services director, Robert Suver. For the past 34 years, Bob has served Clark County as Chief Fiscal Officer, Assistant Director, and since 1994, Director. The Department serves over 30,000 county residents in the areas of Workforce Development, Child Support Enforcement, Children & Elderly Protective Services, Medicaid, Food Stamps, Disability Assistance, Public Assistance, and Emergency Services resulting in the flow of over \$250 million dollars throughout Clark County annually.

Over the years, a multitude of program changes, federal/state requirements, and legislative changes have occurred. But the constant throughout Bob's tenure has been his providing the citizens and, in particular, the children of Clark County with services and programs that go beyond just meeting the need. He developed a realignment of Out-of-Home Placement resources for children resulting in a cost savings of \$2.4 million.

Programs that the Nominee was Instrumental in Promoting or Adopting:

From the inception of welfare reform, Bob has proactively worked to prepare staff for the way "business" continually changes. Clark County DJFS has a long history of partnerships within the community which significantly increased since 1997 in response to the TANF population needs. However, even though Clark County citizens can benefit from traditional welfare and children services programs, Bob believes that true change can be realized when problems are addressed from a preventative perspective. He notes that innovative programs focusing on prevention, opening opportunities, and dialogue will do

more to move citizens from poverty to self-sufficiency than traditional "Welfare" programs. Bob was instrumental in implementing a \$1.5 million Federal Healthy Marriage Waiver Grant that prompted the creation of the "Parents as Partners" program, the first of its kind nationally. He was key in putting into practice "Bridges Out of Poverty" and the "Circles" model concepts that are currently combating poverty throughout the community, and he is responsible for funding and supporting the nationally recognized at-risk youth program "Project Jericho," which was nationally recognized by NACo in 2005. In 2000, the "Strengthening Families" program was introduced to the community. The program is based on the principles and concepts of the Seven Habits of Highly Effective Families and Teens. Over 7,000 middle school students have been taught the Seven Habits of Highly Effective Teens, and Bob has personally been in the classrooms teaching these principles.

Although he is a staunch advocate for programs that will strengthen the community, he is keenly aware of fiscal implications, and the fact that he is a steward of taxpayers' money. Bob initiated and negotiated an innovative ground-breaking collaboration with a major local Foundation through which foundation funds are used as local match for federal funds requested by the Department, allowing for greater leveraging of funds amounting to \$2.4 million. Through Bob's leadership, Clark County DJFS was able to offer an early retirement program that has provided the county a net cost savings of \$2.6 million to date.

Bob's focus on Clark County is immeasurable, but he also understands the critical need to work on the state and federal level, which impacts change on the local level. In 2005, Bob was selected as the Ohio Job and Family Services Director of the year. He is the immediate past president and a current board member of the National Association of County Human Services Administrators, and he is currently serving on the board of directors for NACo.

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Directors' Leadership Award



Nominee:	Frank Mecca
Title:	Executive Director CWDA
County and State:	California
Address:	925 L , Suite 350, Sacramento, Ca
Phone:	916-443-1749
Achievements: <p>Frank J. Mecca, M.P.A., is currently the Executive Director of the County Welfare Director's Association of California (CWDA). Prior to joining CWDA in 1991, he served as a fiscal and policy analyst for the Legislative Analyst's Office, where he had oversight responsibility for most child welfare programs, including Child Welfare Services, Foster Care and Adoptions. Frank was the initial President of the current NACHSA organization as well as one of the founding fathers in advocating for incorporation and a dues structure for additional support in advocacy for human services issues at the national level.</p>	
Programs that the Nominee was Instrumental in Promoting or Adopting: <p>Frank is recognized amongst the California State legislature, the State Department of Social Services, the California State Association of Counties, philanthropic organizations and client advocacy groups as one of the premier advocates for county human services. Under his leadership, CWDA as an organization is recognized for its leadership of TANF, Child Welfare, Adult Protective Services to name a few. He and his staff have had tremendous success in both sponsoring bills through the California State legislature as well as providing critical support and consultation on legislation at both the state and national level.</p>	

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Innovations in Human Services Award



WHEELS TO WORK

Service Shop at Morrow County Job and Family Services

Morrow County, Ohio, is a small rural county of approximately 34,322 residents. As our agency dealt with the challenges facing our clients in becoming self-sufficient, some interesting data began to emerge.

- **Nearly 80% of the population is dispersed outside of the villages or towns.** The largest community of Mt Gilead has a population of 3,290 and the next largest is Cardington with a population of 1,849. The vast majority of our citizens live down country roads.
- Morrow County has the highest percentage of out of county commuters in the State of Ohio. The lack of retail or industrial jobs forces **67% of our working population to drive outside the county to work.**
- **We have no public transportation.** A transportation collaborative, MCTC, provides rides to medical appointments and/or employment, but the costs are prohibitive for many who do not qualify for payment by contracted agencies.
- **Morrow County's aging population is one of the fastest growing in the State.** Services for the elderly need to increase quickly to keep up with this growth and transportation is high on the list of needs.

Job and Family Services took the first steps to collaborate with other agencies and develop a transportation program to address the needs identified in the data. A needs assessment conducted countywide in 2000 had clearly shown transportation as a problem area in Morrow County.

Our agency was already providing vehicle repairs through PRC, (Prevention, Retention, and Contingency Program) to assist working families maintain employment. However the yearly \$500 limit at local garages was not sufficient to keep older vehicles safely on the road. An in-house service shop could provide more extensive repairs if labor was provided by staff mechanics and considered administrative costs, allowing all \$500 towards parts for each client's vehicle.

The idea for an in-house service shop, *Wheels to Work*, was endorsed by the county commissioners, who agreed to assist with space if the shop would also provide repairs for

county vehicles. A supervisor and mechanic were hired in the summer of 2006 as our vision started to become a reality.

During the first nine months of operation, 97 client vehicles were repaired at a cost of \$177.94 each towards the PRC limit for parts. This compares to the previous average of \$353.03 per vehicle. Follow up with the clients showed that about 90% of them were able to maintain employment with the support from the service shop.

Wheels to Work quickly grew into a full service shop with three full time mechanics and three youth trainees. The purchase of two lifts, tire balancer and changer, wheel alignment system, a/c recovery system, and pipe bender allowed the mechanics to tackle more extensive jobs.

EXPANSION

Since Morrow County Job and Family Services is a quadruple combined agency, we wanted to branch out into each program area. This would assist with financial sustainability as well as expand the number of residents who benefit from the shop. Populations who may not be eligible for PRC but may receive services are:

- Food Stamp clients who work or are seeking work
- Child Support obligors who are working
- Child Welfare parents who need transportation to keep their family intact
- Older adults who need transportation to get to the doctor or grocery (these are repaired by youth trainees who are supervised by certified mechanics)

Several agencies in Morrow County struggle with funding issues. The services of the shop, including routine maintenance and repairs, are offered to them at a reduced rate through an MOU. In addition to servicing the 14 vehicles in the JFS fleet, we also have agreements with the following:

- Morrow County Commissioners and County Dog Warden
- Morrow County Veterans Services
- Seniors on Center
- Morrow County Transportation Collaborative
- Morrow County Sheriff's Department
- Morrow County Courts
- Village of Edison Maintenance and Police Department
- Cardington Village Maintenance and Police Department
- Mental Health Board/Alcohol and Drug Programs

A bulk fuel tank has also been installed at ***Wheels to Work***. The agencies mentioned above are able to purchase fuel at a reduced rate. The computerized system tracks purchases for billing and indicates if a certain vehicle may need maintenance for better fuel efficiency. This has been a tremendous savings for each department and created a sense of cooperation and collaboration.

The shop is also a WEP (Work Experience Program) site. Unemployed clients on cash assistance are placed in activities to assist them become job ready. Short term training can be accomplished in oil or tire changing, customer service, or office skills. Clients also receive

coaching on soft skills, including coming to work on time and when scheduled, and following instructions. Job seeking skills are a part of the training.

FUTURE PLANS

Wheels to Work is constantly looking for new ways to serve our community. Several counties have visited the shop in hopes of creating a similar program.

Our next phase, *Wheels to Work +*, is a car buying program. Working families who qualify will be able to purchase a newer model used car with a warranty for any repairs through the shop. This will take away any worry about car problems and allow families the opportunity to become truly self sufficient.

Morrow County's *Wheels to Work* service shop has taken an innovative approach towards meeting the transportation needs of our residents.

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Innovations in Human Services Award



Working Towards Ending Homelessness in San Francisco

The Homeless Quagmire

“San Francisco has the worst, most visible expression of homelessness in our country,” according to Phillip Mangano, the Director of the Federal Interagency Council on Homelessness. In 2004, San Francisco was estimated to have 3,000 chronically homeless persons. New York City, nine times larger, had just 2,700. While extreme, San Francisco’s problem is not unique in that all major cities struggle with people living on its streets.

San Francisco’s homeless policies can be traced to the 1989 earthquake, which displaced thousands and aggravated an already short supply of affordable housing. Using federal McKinney Fund dollars, the city opened emergency shelters, believing that homeless persons just needed temporary support to get back on their feet. Over time, the nature of homelessness changed and the streets of San Francisco were flooded with destitute, chronically homeless persons, many of whom suffered from mental illness and/or substance abuse.

In subsequent years, San Francisco’s policies on homelessness vacillated between punitive measures against vagrancy and supportive approaches that relied on cash assistance. Police only seemed to chase homeless persons into new neighborhoods. Meanwhile, other communities were slashing benefits, and San Francisco’s \$400 per month cash assistance program (compared to \$24 per month offered by the largest neighboring county) attracted new homeless persons. At best, the cash offered by San Francisco provided for a relatively well-subsidized street life; at worst, it facilitated a lifestyle of dependency and substance abuse. In no instance was it enough to cover the cost of housing in an expensive city.

The city operated emergency shelters, but many people preferred to remain outside. Only 14% of homeless applicants for the County’s General Assistance Program who were referred to shelter ever showed up there. The city provided millions of dollars for treatment services for homeless persons, but the services’ efficacy was continually undermined by the chaos and trauma of life on the streets. The city spent an average of \$13,000 per year for each homeless person, but seemed to only be perpetuating misery and destitution. During one twelve-month period, the number of people who died homeless in San Francisco was 169.

Responding to the Need

The San Francisco Human Services Agency (SF-HSA) had long seen the need to reform its cash assistance program for the homeless and significantly expand permanent supportive housing, but lacked the political support and funding to launch a major new initiative. The idea of merging these notions into one strategy caught the attention of then County Supervisor (now Mayor) Gavin Newsom, who went on to author the *Care Not Cash* (CNC) ballot initiative, Proposition N.

In November 2002, 59% of San Francisco voters approved the CNC initiative, under which cash aid for homeless General Assistance recipients would be lowered to \$59, and savings from the decreased benefit would be redirected to provide permanent supportive housing for them in lieu of the larger cash grant.

Planning Process

SF-HSA began its planning process immediately following the passage of the CNC ballot initiative. Several working groups were formed within and across SF-HSA’s internal departments to prepare for CNC. The agency

negotiated twenty-year master leases with single room occupancy hotels in return for the hotels being renovated into clean, decent, permanent supportive housing. SF-HSA contracted with non-profits to manage the buildings and provide on-site supportive services, case management and money management assistance. Mental health, substance abuse, and medical treatment services were also contracted through non-profits and the County Public Health Department to help stabilize clients placed in housing.

Given the history and controversial nature of homeless policy in San Francisco, community input and education was essential. The agency worked hard to overcome resistance to change, even in the face of a broken status quo, especially within San Francisco's active and vocal homeless advocacy community. SF-HSA convened two advisory committees, one for homeless service providers and one for the general public. SF-HSA Executive Director Trent Rhorer and other management representatives delivered regular CNC updates and solicited feedback at forums throughout the city related to homeless issues. In addition, a series of public meetings were held specifically for homeless clients to explain how CNC would work on a practical level and answer questions. After delays due to court challenges, SF-HSA eventually launched the program in May 2004.

Key Program Components

The two primary components of the CNC initiative are described below:

Housing First. San Francisco was the first major city to fully embrace the concept of "housing first." At the time, this contradicted the federal strategy on homelessness, which envisioned a "continuum of care" in which outreach workers engage homeless persons in treatment, stabilize them in shelters and transitional housing, and then move them into permanent housing. CNC houses people up-front and then provides them with supportive services, thereby increasing the efficacy of the services and preventing future reoccurrences of homelessness.

Intensive On-Site Supportive Services. Each hotel has an on-site case management team to provide access to support services and money management assistance. This team also makes referrals to a highly skilled Behavioral Health Roving Team funded by CNC. The Roving Team employs a range of interventions to help stabilize residents, including mental health and substance abuse services, vocational and entitlements assistance, and skills groups. Medical and psychiatric assessments take place on-site and are used in the development and implementation of treatment plans to promote the overall well being of the clients and enhance housing stability. Persons housed through CNC also have special access to a Public Health clinic, specializing in this population.

Program Goals

The primary goal of CNC is to reduce homelessness and improve the health and welfare of homeless indigent adults receiving cash assistance through permanent housing opportunities and enhanced services. To achieve this goal, SF-HSA sought to decrease the number of homeless General Assistance clients, and expand affordable housing units and services for this population.

Program Results

CNC provides generous support, but tilts incentives away from street life. CNC produced the following dramatic results between May 2004 and the present:

- ❖ The annual amount spent on cash aid to homeless persons dropped from around \$11 million to approximately \$500,000. Now 96% of SF-HSA's spending on General Assistance for homeless persons goes not to cash aid, but to housing and supportive services.
- ❖ The number of new General Assistance applicants who declared themselves to be homeless dropped by 93%. The number of homeless persons receiving General Assistance declined by 77%.
- ❖ 2,119 homeless persons exited homelessness and entered permanent housing. The housing retention rate for persons housed by CNC is over 96%.

The Ongoing Benefits and Legacy of Care Not Cash

In an independent study of CNC, persons housed by the program reported improved physical and mental health. Having housing allowed them to take advantage of support services. In focus groups, case managers reported that after years of neglecting their health, the newly housed, especially seniors, began to utilize health services.

Formerly homeless persons stated that the stability of being housed allowed them to enroll in community college, seek employment, obtain disability benefits, and make plans. Being housed gave them more control over their lives, and they reported greater feelings of self-efficacy and a sense of optimism about the future.

CNC has not solved San Francisco's homeless problem. In particular, the city is still working to expand programs to house homeless persons who do not receive local cash assistance but survive through SSI or the underground economy. However, San Francisco now has a coherent strategy to end homelessness, not just manage it. The success of CNC has also helped alter the national debate on homeless policy. The housing retention rates and positive client impacts achieved by CNC prove that a "housing first" model can be successful. While other cities continue to emphasize emergency shelters, San Francisco is looking for ways to create more permanent supportive housing and make shelters obsolete.