Health Department Celebrates Accreditation Achievement

Health Department staff is celebrating the end of an extraordinary journey: the five-year process to achieve accreditation.

The Department has achieved national accreditation through the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) and is now one of only 226 state and local health departments in the nation which have earned this certification. Only 11 of the 226 are in California incidentally.
What does being accredited mean? It means the department has gone through a rigorous process of evaluation and documentation to meet 12 national standards for local health departments.

“We are very pleased to be recognized for achieving national standards and proud of our staff who work so hard to assure that Monterey County residents have access to quality health services and safe environments,” says Elsa Jimenez, Monterey County Director of Health. “We make every possible effort to engage community members; the Accreditation Board acknowledged this and our responsiveness to community needs.”

The process to become accredited is not for the faint of heart. A dedicated staff member steered the process, from pre-application to application then document submission. More than 300 measures in the 12 national standards had to be documented and that process included uploading more than 500 documents. Once all the documents were uploaded, there was a two-day site visit from a peer team to verify the work, ask questions and talk to staff.

Along the way, specific reports were required including a Community Health Assessment and a Community Health Improvement Plan. These reports required the Department and community partners to come together and look not only at the health of residents as a whole, but how to improve it.

While the initial work is over, there is no resting on those laurels. Accreditation is only for five years and requires yearly reports. The re-accreditation process will begin soon, and while it won’t be as lengthy a process as the initial work, the Department will still have to demonstrate it continues to meet all standards.

Congratulations!

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Job Fair Makes Connections for Young Job Seekers

The Workforce Development Board team hit some home runs with its first Youth Job Fair.
The event was held on May 30th at the Oldemeyer Center in Seaside and was designed for those ages 16 and older who are looking for summer jobs. If numbers are any indication, this fair was a hit!

35 employers and service providers - from pizza to Pebble Beach - set up information tables and chatted up young job seekers. And there were a lot of them -125 in all. Workforce Development staff was on hand to assist participants. When job seekers arrived, they were given job hunting and interview tips.

“This was a fun and very productive event and we’d like to do again,” says Korey Woo, Lead Business Services Specialist.

The good news from the job fair is that it delivered immediate results. Some of those who attended had job interviews right on the spot and eight potential hires were reported.

For those who may not be familiar with the Workforce Development Board, it brings together private and public partners to help locals with job training and placement. You may have heard of some of its programs, such as the America’s Job Center, which has three locations throughout the county.

Making a connection at the job fair (top left). The Workforce Development team (top right). Job Fair in full swing (above).
Library Card Ownership on the Rise

If you like rewards cards, be sure to sign up for one of the best: the Monterey County Free Library card.

The county library system has been seeing an increase in cardholders over the last few years and this year, the percentage of cardholders in areas it serves hit 71%, which is an extraordinary accomplishment.

Library Director Jayanti Addleman explains it’s more common for city libraries to have higher rates of cardholders, but the County rate is challenging that. The Monterey County Free Libraries’ service area population is 231,727 and includes rural areas and communities which don’t have their own libraries (like Salinas, Monterey and Carmel). That means there are 164,614 locals who carry a County library card.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>2014-2015</th>
<th>2016-2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service area population</td>
<td>223,295</td>
<td>231,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of registered card holders</td>
<td>145,720</td>
<td>164,614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent of population that are card holders</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Materials budget</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>$300,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of items borrowed</td>
<td>501,274</td>
<td>542,515</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value of items borrowed</td>
<td>$7,519,110</td>
<td>$8,137,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library visits</td>
<td>573,444</td>
<td>768,556</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual use of computers (not including Wi-Fi or remote access)</td>
<td>170,287</td>
<td>154,627</td>
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Here are some interesting statistics about how locals use the library. An interesting side note to one statistic: although use of library computers has gone down a little overall, Wi-Fi usage (where people bring in their own devices) has gone up.

How has the library built up such a strong following? Look at its website and you’ll find core library services plus innovative and interesting options such as renting a telescope, poetry contests and summer reading activities. Listening also plays a major role.

“When we did our last strategic plan, we did a huge community outreach and listened to a wide variety of community stakeholders,” says Addleman. “We regularly listen to what our clients are saying and look at usage statistics, demographics and current trends but we also use professional judgement. We do try to anticipate community needs and also pay attention to the vulnerable populations.”

Don’t have a card? Get your own at any branch or apply online.