

Trinity County

Commission Priorities

Located in the far northern region of California, Trinity is classified as a “frontier” county. For the residents who live here, the mountainous terrain and harsh weather conditions often cause barriers to needed services. Trinity is also one of the poorest counties in California when ranked by household income. Poverty, geographic isolation, and limited services make it difficult for families to promote the health and well-being of young children.

To meet the needs of children and families, First 5 Trinity revised its strategic plan in October 2006. The County Commission outlined four major goals: (1) every birth is a healthy birth; (2) every child is a healthy child; (3) every child will be ready to learn; and (4) the County Commission will promote a system that is consumer oriented and easily accessible. Funding strategies revolve around these four goals, and the County Commission requires all grantees to focus on at least one goal of the strategic plan. During fiscal year 2005-06, the County Commission awarded 13 competitive grants, funded 7 School Readiness preschool sites, and participated in the CARES program.

Primary Activities and Programs

Welcome Baby Home Visiting Program supports early childhood health and positive parenting. The Home Visiting Program, offered to all families with newborns, strengthens families by increasing access to parent support and education. By promoting positive parenting skills, home visitors lay the foundation for children to grow up healthy and ready for school. During fiscal year 2005-06, the Home Visiting Program served 46 children and provided 199 home visits. The program also involves children and families in conflict resolution activities offered at local preschools.

The Children’s Garden program enhances child health through interactive experiences and nutrition information. This program sponsors garden activities in local communities. The program aims to strengthen families by providing young children and their families with interactive experiences, health and nutrition information, and fresh fruits and vegetables. Children and families participate in hands-on gardening experiences that are coordinated with opportunities for structured learning. After participating in the program, many families started their own gardens. During 2005-06, 97 children and their families participated in the program.

Hayfork Pool provides a very successful water safety program for children ages 4 months to pre-kindergarten. The mission of the program is to provide water safety education and swimming lessons for Hayfork and its surrounding areas. Because of the area’s lakes, rivers, and streams, it is very important for children in Trinity County to learn water safety. The program served 72 children, with a total of 578 service contacts. In addition, 44 parents participated with their child in the water safety program. By the end of the program, the children were able to increase their swimming skills, and their

knowledge of what to do in an emergency, and to decrease their anxiety and fear of water.

Promoting Equitable Access and Outcomes

Geographically isolated families historically have been the most underserved in Trinity County. The County Commission encourages grantees to reach these families by requiring organizations to collaborate on outreach efforts. One underserved group is Native American families, who make up 4% of the county's total population, and up to 20% of the enrollment in rural schools. To better serve this population, First 5 Trinity located one of its School Readiness Program preschools on Native American land.

Program Highlights

Improving Neonatal Pediatric Emergency Care Program provides specialized pediatric equipment and techniques to promote positive health outcomes. This program is based in the emergency room of Mountain Community Medical Services Hospital (MCMSH), a non-profit, rural hospital. First 5 funding provided lifesaving pediatric specialty equipment that the hospital's neonatal care program previously lacked. These purchases included Broselow Kits, which have 5 child-sized endotracheal tubes, and provide IV access and airway management protection, as well as the ability to monitor blood pressure oxygen saturation and heart rate in one unit. The hospital also now has specialized monitoring equipment for newborns, infants and children, and a Quick-Temp thermometer. As a result of having this specialized equipment, hospital staff can use child-specific life and limb saving techniques during emergency situations.

Trinity County School Readiness Program. Trinity County's School Readiness (SR) Program provides school readiness activities for children and access to needed resources for families. In 2005-06, the program added a seventh SR site. Each site offers three 12-week sessions that meet 2 to 3 times a week. SR programs include a curriculum and developmentally appropriate activities that prepare children for kindergarten, health screenings, and daily nutritious meals. The Kindergarten Backpack project supplies children with books, paper, crayons, pencils, and other items to encourage practicing pre-literacy activities at home. Resources for families include health and safety education, infant CPR/First Aid training, communication with local schools, kindergarten orientations, and family literacy events. Monthly parent book clubs create opportunities for families to connect, alleviating some of the geographic isolation that they experience. The SR Program reaches historically underserved families in several ways. One site serves the community surrounding the Burnt Ranch Indian Hall, while others provide books in English and Spanish. For families living in some geographically remote locations, transportation is provided..

Continued Teaching of the 6 Pillars...Character Really Does Count! Program teaches good character to preschoolers. This program, housed in the Weaverville Parent Nursery School, provides early childhood education for children ages 3-5 in the Weaverville area of Trinity County. The program is based on the model CHARACTER COUNTS!, which was developed by the Josephson Institute of Ethics. Daily activities introduce and reinforce school readiness and social skills. During activities, teachers emphasize the 6 Pillars of Character (trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness,

caring, and citizenship) and provide opportunities for children to practice using these traits. The program also encourages families' participation through written materials for parents and children to share at home, opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom, and monthly workshops and parent meetings.

—This County Commission profile was prepared by First 5 Trinity.