

Quality and Productivity Commission
28th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
"Los Angeles County: Ahead of the Curve"

2014 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: SAFETY IN NUMBERS

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: JULY 1, 2012 – JUNE 30, 2013
 (Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before June 30, 2013)

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. Summarize the problem, solution, and benefits of the project in a clear and direct manner.

1 The Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles' (HACoLA) Risk Management Unit
 2 faced several challenges while minimizing the exposure to injury faced by maintenance
 3 staff as they worked tirelessly to ensure that the agency's 3,237 public and affordable
 4 housing units remained a safe place for residents to live. Maintenance work is a high-
 5 risk activity with hazards resulting from the very nature of daily responsibilities.
 6 HACoLA's maintenance team is one of the most vulnerable of all groups of employees
 7 prone to work-related injuries and illnesses on the job. This group often carries out
 8 many tasks in a single day, and may work at a single site, or be responsible for the
 9 maintenance of many sites. Their work can be repetitive and physically demanding,
 10 requiring frequent bending, lifting, pushing, pulling, and working with power tools. The
 11 solution to minimizing exposure to injury was to implement an extensive injury
 12 prevention program focused on strict safety practices, including mandatory bi-weekly
 13 safety meetings with an emphasis on making safety the number one priority. As a
 14 result, the 44-person public housing maintenance team worked over 91,000 hours
 15 without a lost time injury and zero total temporary disability in Fiscal Year 2012-13.

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES 700 West Main Street Alhambra CA 91810		TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-262-4510
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Becky Yee, Assistant Director Risk Management Department		TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-586-1858 EMAIL Becky.Yee@lacdc.org
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE (PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME) Elisa Vasquez 	DATE 7/10/14	TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-586-1762 EMAIL Elisa.Vasquez@lacdc.org
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Sean Rogan 	DATE 7/11/14	TELEPHONE NUMBER 626-586-1500

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project.

CHALLENGE - Building maintenance is a workplace activity that affects the health and safety not only of those directly involved in it, but of occupants and visitors as well. If safe work procedures and practices are not followed and the work is not done properly, maintenance activities can cause harm to employees and others. HACoLA's maintenance staff routinely encounter a variety of potentially dangerous situations, such as gas leaks, sewage spills, electrical issues, and fire risks, all of which have to be abated within a one-hour response time in emergency situations.

The maintenance team consists of 44 skilled workers, responsible for maintaining 3,237 units of public and affordable housing over 69 sites. Concern for the ongoing safety of residents and the public at large dictates that the team abate all emergencies within a one-hour window, in addition to performing the routine maintenance responsibilities throughout the sites. The competence of the maintenance crew in carrying out their duties is vital to safety. Accidents may occur if staff try to do tasks they are not trained for, or experienced in.

Exposure to a wide variety of chemical, physical, biological, and psychosocial hazards places employees at risk of:

- Developing musculoskeletal disorders, that result from bending in awkward positions;
- Working in unfavorable environmental conditions such as excessive heat and cold while performing highly physical activities and strenuous movements like bending, kneeling, reaching, pushing, and pulling;
- Exposure to mold, lead, and asbestos;
- Exposure to chemical agents (greases, solvents, corrosives);
- Exposure to biological hazards (hepatitis, blood borne pathogens, and fungi);
- Accidents (including back strain, falls, and misuse of machinery); and
- Psychosocial risk factors (time pressure, weekend and on-call work, working with non-colleagues such as contractors, limited supervision, and communication issues when working with special needs populations).

The maintenance team must follow multiple training requirements: from the use of personal protective equipment, asbestos, lead awareness, and blood borne pathogens training, to task- and hazard-specific trainings. Because members of the maintenance team tend to travel throughout the day and often work on their own, some have limited access to onsite coaching, supervision, and guidance. The result is that they often take personal responsibility for their actions.

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SOLUTION - To ensure that all maintenance workers have the skills to carry out all tasks and are educated about the occupational hazards and safe work procedures, Since Fiscal Year 2010-11, HACoLA implemented an extensive training program designed to address the unique safety needs of its' maintenance staff. In order to reduce work-related injuries and improve workplace safety for the maintenance workers, the Risk Management Unit (RMU) implemented the following plan:

- HACoLA's management improved safety performance by modeling safety behavior and authorizing additional resources for maintenance accident prevention and training. Managers actively participated in safety meetings and all trainings and provided direction and support to staff. The Risk Manager participated in walking tours of the housing sites to identify hazards or unsafe practices, holding maintenance crew accountable for accident prevention activities.
- HACoLA's safety program focused on employee involvement and recognition. The maintenance team actively participated in the safety and health management process, including decision-making and problem-solving. Awards were given to the maintenance team for demonstrating exceptional dedication and leadership to improve workplace safety.
- RMU was given responsibility and authority to coordinate the agency's overall safety and health approach for accident/illness prevention. RMU conducted new hire orientation and coordinated safety trainings. They identified the specific training needs of the maintenance crew and saw to it that new hire orientation and training needs/requirements were addressed.
- RMU, in conjunction with HACoLA's Housing Management developed a written safety policy, signed by the Executive Director expressing the agency's values and commitment to workplace safety and health guidance for employees. Both general and job-specific safe work practices were identified and published.
- RMU compiled occupational accident and illness-related information in order to look for trends and causes, and identify further preventative measures.

Having full-time risk management staff is not a prerequisite to injury prevention; employee commitment is. The maintenance crew holds bi-weekly tailgate/safety meetings and repeat/reinforce safety topics regularly. HACoLA's Housing Management Director supports and encourages continuing safety education through training courses, workshops, and conferences.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN (DETAIL IS REQUIRED FOR COUNTY DEPARTMENTS):

RESULTS - HACoLA is extremely proud to have had one of the most successful years in agency history in preventing accidents and injuries. In FY 2012-13, the public housing maintenance staff worked over 91,000 hours without a lost time injury. This accomplishment is even more impressive considering the maintenance staff oversee some of the most hazardous work in the housing industry including: heavy demolition, deep utility installation, and environmental remediation. Tight schedules, large resource commitments, and highly-complex projects add to the challenges of creating a safe work environment.

As a further testament to the fine job the maintenance team does, HACoLA has not received an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) safety violation in over 14 years.

Many have asked how these employees managed to achieve such a record despite their frequent exposure to hand tools, heavy machinery, and even climbing ladders. The maintenance team recognizes the risky conditions they work under and use HACoLA's thorough system of risk management procedures, safety trainings, and protective equipment to create a safe environment for themselves and their fellow teammates. HACoLA's team of maintenance employees is committed to keeping their safety streak going. The reality is, without participation from each and every one, HACoLA's safety program would not have reached the level of success it did, and together, they are well on their way to the next milestone.

HACoLA's maintenance worker, Avery Schott, stated, "I have to say since working for HACoLA, I am appreciative of the fact that this agency takes safety seriously. Every meeting or training I attend is influenced with working safely on the job. Being exposed to the daily lifting, climbing, ladders, using grinders, demolishing construction, and driving to various sites, increases the probability of injuries. However, one reason why we have a successful safety program and record is because we work with tenure maintenance workers who are well seasoned and keenly aware of safety exposures. They are the first to remind us to be careful, use our personal protective equipment, use the buddy system, as for assistance when needed and don't rush through jobs in order to get them done quickly – but to get them done correctly."

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFIT): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation.

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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\$	\$	\$	\$	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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This application outlines an enhancement to the safety policies and procedures used by HACoLA's maintenance employees. Therefore, it is being submitted as a service enhancement project.

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FOR COLLABORATING DEPARTMENTS ONLY

(For single department submissions, do not include this page)

DEPARTMENT NO. 2 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
DEPARTMENT NO. 3 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
DEPARTMENT NO. 4 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
DEPARTMENT NO. 5 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE
DEPARTMENT NO. 6 NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS	
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER’S NAME AND SIGNATURE	DEPARTMENT HEAD’S NAME AND SIGNATURE