



SIERRA HEALTH FOUNDATION
An Endowment for Northern California



**KFBK 1530 Afternoon News interview with
Sierra Health Foundation Senior Program Officer
Diane Littlefield
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KFBK: Despite the economic downturn and the unprecedented budget challenges, Sacramento residents want to help young people succeed by providing more programs and services, and – here's the good part – they're willing to pay for it. This according to the Sierra Health Foundation public opinion poll released today. Here with more is ... Senior Program Officer for Sierra Health Foundation, Diane Littlefield. Thanks for joining us on KFBK.

Diane: Thank you for having me.

KFBK: This is Diane Littlefield. So, Diane, what kind of programs are we talking about?

Diane: Sierra Health Foundation provides grants to the community to promote health and well-being in Northern California. Over the last few years, we've been funding organizations and communities to organize themselves to change communities in a way that will support young people, and young people have been at the forefront of this. Part of the programs are to provide youth with the skills, leadership opportunities and community service opportunities, where they can contribute in defining what are the issues that they face as young people in the community, and what are some of the solutions, and they want to be a part of that solution. So what our grants and programs provide is an opportunity to participate, and right now we're active in nine communities in the capital region.

KFBK: So, Diane, I want to know – this little ray of sunshine you mentioned here – that people in Sacramento not only want to help the young people, but they want to pay for it or are willing to pay for it. How do you know about that?

Diane: Well, we conducted this poll. At this time in our grant making, it was really important for us to understand what's the public perception about youth issues. Here we are providing grants, and there are a lot of community groups that have been working hard over the last few years to make a difference in their community, but we needed to know what's the public perception, where do youth issues rank in relation to other social issues. So we conducted this poll to understand that better. Also, what are the kinds of approaches that they favor, and what specific programs and services does the public think would be most important to support.

So in our survey, we learned that 44 percent of them – obviously no surprise – said that the fiscal and economic climate was the number one concern. But when they were presented with six key issues, they ranked providing quality education and supporting young people as very important. They also ranked – obviously – public safety and fire protection as important; however, they said that they felt the agencies are doing an excellent or good job in this arena.

However, providing a quality education and providing positive alternatives for young people, although they ranked it as very, very important, they didn't feel that the agencies were doing as good of a job.

For example, while they rated quality of education as the top issue, only 33 percent used excellent or good to describe how well our school districts are doing in providing a quality education, and then only one in four felt that public agencies and groups are doing an excellent or good job in providing positive alternatives. We felt that this is an area that had an opportunity to provide some resources or some attention to address.

KFBK: Well that's obviously why people want to support it. Diane, I'm so sorry, but we have run out of time. Thank you so much for joining us. Some good news that people are willing to pay for these programs. That's Diane Littlefield on News Talk 1530 KFBK.