

# Tulare County Office of Education

*Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools*

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## **For Immediate Release**

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**Tulare County Office of Education Announces:**

## **Successful Fresno County M.O.V.E. Program May Close**

Due to budget concerns, Fresno County supervisors voted today to eliminate the employment relocation category from their funding priorities. One of the programs affected by these budget cuts was M.O.V.E. (More Opportunity for Viable Employment) – a relocation program operated by the Tulare County Office of Education’s Services for Education and Employment department.

Since 1998, M.O.V.E. has relocated over 2,000 adults and their families from Tulare, Kings, Fresno and Madera Counties. The Tulare County Office of Education was granted a contract with Fresno County Department of Employment & Temporary Assistance in March, 2001, and has relocated over 400 Fresno County Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (T.A.N.F.) recipients and their families. M.O.V.E.’s success rate in Fresno County is 93% -- the highest of the four counties served. Families can be moved for an average of \$1,800, which results in improved self-sufficiency and considerable savings to local governments as these families are no longer receiving cash assistance, food stamps, medical/dental services, childcare and transportation.

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One of the Fresno County families served was Sandra and Roger Brown of Kerman. In October 2002, the Browns and their three children were barely making ends meet on \$424 per month in T.A.N.F., \$248 in food stamps and part-time work here and there. Due to gaps in their work history, they had difficulty getting permanent jobs. The Browns wanted to find permanent jobs that earned decent wages so that they could live without public assistance.

The M.O.V.E. program helped make their dreams come true. In the fall of 2002, a meat packing company from Ottumwa, Iowa, came to Fresno to hire 100 workers with a starting wage of \$10.25 per hour. M.O.V.E. set up interviews for them and they both received job offers. They were on their way to Iowa the first week of November 2002.

Now, two years later, both are still working at the plant making \$11.60 per hour – nearly \$4,000 per month of total income plus overtime. After just six months in Ottumwa, they purchased a 3,000 square foot, 4-bedroom home for \$35,000. In five short years, the home will be paid off completely. “The M.O.V.E. program has had tremendous success securing jobs for adults in other areas of the country where the demand for workers was high,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak. “Many families report they are able to now provide their children with adequate housing and health insurance for the first time.”

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Karen Davidson, the Regional M.O.V.E. Coordinator with the Tulare County Office of Education, is in search of new funding sources. “It’s disappointing that these cuts come at this time.” says Davidson, “as I am working with a hotel/casino in Louisiana that needs assistance in filling 2,000 positions in February and a new meat processing company who will be here in January to hire 50 production workers for their plant in Kansas.”

For more information on the M.O.V.E. Program, contact Karen Davidson at 730-2737.

# TCOE #

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