

PRESS RELEASE



Virginia Counties Recognized for Model Programs



RICHMOND (August 5, 2020)—The Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) is pleased to announce the 21 recipients of the 2020 Achievement Awards, which recognize excellence in local government programs. VACo received 76 submissions.

Winning entries focused on addressing issues of inclusion, belonging, and reconciliation that challenge counties today.

[Winning Achievement Award Submissions](#)

[Winning Program Descriptions](#)

“I want to thank all who participated in the 18th year of the Achievement Awards,” VACo Executive Director **Dean Lynch** said. “During these uncertain times, it’s good to know there’s this constant – counties will continue to find innovative ways to overcome complex challenges. I think it’s important to stop and recognize good work when we see it. The Achievement Awards allow us to appreciate those who help make our lives better.”

Tedd Povar, retired Associate Director of the Virginia Institute of Government; **Dr. Sheryl Bailey**, Visiting Professor of Practice at Virginia Tech and former Chesterfield County Deputy County Administrator; and **Larry Land**, retired VACo Director of Policy Development, served as judges for this year’s statewide competitive awards program.

Prince William County and its **Human Rights Student Leadership Council Program** won this year’s **Best Achievement Award**.

“Prince William County’s entry is the type of powerful program that really makes a difference,” Dr. Bailey said. “The program was started to assist high school students better understand local, state and federal government policies through the lens of human and civil rights. It has created a connection between students and their community, and has proven to positively impact their overall success in school as well as teaching them how to be productive citizens.”

The judges also selected a Best Small County Achievement Award (50,000 or less population) and a Best Large County Achievement Award. **Dinwiddie County** and its **Faith-Based Initiative** captured the **Best Small County Achievement Award** while **Chesterfield County** and its **Access On Demand** earned the **Best Large County Achievement Award**.

“I scored both programs very highly because of their innovative approaches to solving a problem,” Land said. “Both winning programs were established with fiscal responsibility in mind and can be replicated by other counties. I encourage all county administrators, staff and elected officials to review Dinwiddie’s and Chesterfield’s submissions as well as the other 74 entries. The VACo Achievement Awards may be a statewide competition but at its heart – the program is about sharing ideas and solutions.”

Povar, who has served as judge since the Achievement Awards inception in 2003, said this year’s batch of 76 entries were some of the best he’s seen. “I continue to be inspired by the good work done by Virginia’s counties,” Povar said. “Year after year counties prove that the Achievement Awards are a treasure trove of ideas and innovation.”

Chesterfield County tops the all-time Achievement Awards list with 35. Chesterfield County has won an award in each of the 18-year history of the program. **Henrico County** is second on the list with 30 Achievement Awards while **Loudoun County** is third with 24. **Fairfax County** and **Prince William County** are tied in fourth with 21 awards.

The VACo Achievement Awards is a competitive program open to local government members of the association.

[Winning Achievement Award Submissions](#)

[Winning Program Descriptions](#)

[Achievement Awards Website](#)

[2020 Achievement Awards Entries](#)

[Past Winners](#)

[Past Judges](#)

VACo exists to support county officials and to effectively represent, promote and protect the interests of counties to better serve the people of Virginia.

CONTACT

Gage Harter | 804.343.2502 | gharter@vaco.org

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

1207 East Main Street | Richmond, Va. 23219 | www.vaco.org