



GENERAL OVERVIEW

The VACO Achievement Awards is a free competitive awards program open to local government members of the association. This annual competition recognizes local government programs that exemplify innovation, that can be replicated in other localities, and that partner and collaborate with local governments, private enterprises, or state and federal governments. We encourage all County departments to apply! Entry deadline is July 1, 2021.

ELIGIBILITY

All local government members of the Virginia Association of Counties may participate. There is no limit to the number of applications a County may submit.

All applications must comply with the following standards:

1. The program must have become operational before January 1, 2021, and currently operational.
2. Local government officials and/or staff must have played a significant role in developing and implementing the program, with only limited assistance from outside experts and/or consultants.
3. All steps in the application must be completed.
4. Awards will be given to departments or units, not individuals.
5. Programs that have received a previous VACO Achievement Award are ineligible.
6. The program must meet one or more of the criteria outlined below and must be signed by the county administrator or deputy/assistant county administrator, or department director.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

The nominated program must meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. Offer an innovative solution to a problem, situation or delivery of services.
2. Promote intergovernmental cooperation and/or cooperation with local, state and federal entities and/or a private enterprise in addressing a problem or situation.
3. Provide a model that other local governments may learn from or implement in their own localities.
4. Programs may be based on programs from another public or private entity but must represent innovative approaches or customization by the local government.

MORE INFORMATION

[Visit the VACO website](#) to view past Achievement Awards winners and all the entries from the 2020 competition.

Contact Gage Harter, VACO Director of Communications, at 804.343.2502 or gharter@vaco.org. Additional application forms are also available at www.vaco.org.



PROGRAM CATEGORIES

(Program categories are used as a guide and are not considered in judging)

1. Communications
2. Community & Economic Development
3. Criminal Justice & Public Safety
4. Customer Service
5. Environmental
6. Health & Human Services
7. Information Technology
8. Organizational Development
9. Parks & Recreation
10. Regional Collaboration
11. Transportation

RULES OF ENTRY

1. All entries must be submitted in electronic format ~ PDF or WORD document. Email the electronic entry to gcharter@vaco.org. **Please include application form (Page 3).**
2. Entries must be typed and double-spaced. **Limit entries to 12 pages.** State the problem, challenge or situation faced by the locality and how the program fulfilled the awards criteria (innovation, partnering or collaboration and a model for other localities). Tell how the program was carried out, including financing and staffing, and the program's results.
3. Include an executive summary of the program (no more than one page double-spaced) that can be used as a quick reference guide for judges.
4. **Include a brief overview of the program (2-3 paragraphs)** that could be used for press releases, brochures, etc.

JUDGING

Entries will be judged by a three-member panel selected for its expertise in County government. One entry will be selected as "Best Achievement" and will be honored as the top program for the given year. Best Small County and Best Large County programs will also be recognized.

AWARD PRESENTATION

The VACO Team will attend Board of Supervisors meetings to present award plaques. Winning Counties also will be recognized at VACO's Annual Conference held on November 13-16, 2021. The winning entries will be featured in a booklet that will be distributed during VACO's Annual Conference, and winners will receive a special ribbon to be worn on their nametags. Winners will be recognized on the VACO website and in a news release sent to statewide media.

DEADLINE

All entries must be dated no later than July 1, 2021, and emailed to Gage Harter at gcharter@vaco.org.

If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2021.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: _____

Program Title: _____

Program Category: _____

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: _____

Title: _____

Department: _____

Telephone: _____ Website: _____

Email: _____

SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____