

ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS



SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: Tuesday, April 7, 2026.** Please include this submission form as the first page of your electronic entry. Contact [Gage Harter](#) with any questions.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Arlington County

Program Title: Internal Coaching Program

Program Category: Education

CONTACT INFORMATION

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: Mark J. Schwartz

Title: County Manager

Signature: _____

Signed by:

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Virginia Association of Counties – April 2026

Achievement Awards Submission

Arlington County Internal Coaching Program

Challenge or situation faced

When it comes to career development most organizations rely on online training, training sessions facilitated by external vendors, or simply leave it up to the individual. But we found that everyone has their own aspirations and their own unique challenges that group trainings simply don't address.

An innovative solution to a problem

Arlington County is redefining employee development.

Instead of relying solely on traditional training models, we created a personalized, one-on-one coaching program designed to meet employees exactly where they are in their growth journey. Our goal was simple but ambitious: make high-quality professional development accessible to all 4,000+ County employees, regardless of role, level, or department.

To make this possible, we also invested in developing our own internal HR talent. Staff members interested in becoming certified coaches received training and hands-on experience, allowing us to build a sustainable, scalable coaching model from within.

This approach not only expands development opportunities for employees — it strengthens our organizational culture, deepens internal expertise, and reinforces our commitment to continuous learning.

How the program works

Arlington County built its coaching program by developing internal talent and creating an accessible, employee-driven intake process. We began by identifying HR staff who demonstrated both the desire and the aptitude to become professional coaches. These individuals were enrolled in a formal coaching certification program, where they completed training and earned recognition as certified professional coaches. This pathway also positions them to pursue the International Coaching Federation (ICF) credential, as they continue logging coaching hours through the program.

To deliver coaching services to employees, we established a simple and inclusive intake process. Employees can either contact Human Resources directly or schedule a brief introductory session through our Coaching SharePoint site. The program manager oversees all incoming requests, matches employees with coaches, and ensures the coaching experience aligns with professional standards and organizational goals.

This approach allowed us to scale personalized development opportunities to all 4,000+ County employees while simultaneously strengthening the skills and career pathways of our HR team.

Results

Even in its early stages, the internal coaching program is already delivering meaningful results. Over FY26, our certified internal coaches provided nearly 200 hours of one-on-one coaching to County employees. These sessions supported employee development, strengthened engagement, and expanded access to personalized growth opportunities across the organization.

Beyond the developmental impact, the program is also generating clear financial value. With external coaching services typically costing over \$300 per hour, providing these services internally represents an estimated annual savings of approximately \$60,000. This allows us to reinvest in our workforce while building long-term coaching capacity inside the County.

Executive summary

In today's workplace, self-development is essential to retaining talented employees. Access to executive-level coaching has become a premium benefit—one that is often out of reach for local government organizations due to cost and limited availability.

Recognizing this challenge, the Human Resources Department created a dedicated cohort of internal coaches to support the growth and development of employees across Arlington County. While many organizations reserve coaching exclusively for executives or the C-Suite, Arlington chose a different path. We understand the importance of investing in employees at every level, and we have built an internal coaching network that makes high-quality coaching accessible to all.

Our internal coaches have completed or are actively pursuing rigorous coaching certifications. They have taken on this responsibility in addition to their regular roles, demonstrating extraordinary commitment to the development and retention of the County's workforce. Many of them meet with employees outside of standard operating hours to ensure coaching is convenient and accessible. Over the course of FY26 our coaches provided close to 200 hours of coaching. In addition to team member development and engagement, with external coaches charging over \$300/hour our internal coaching program saves the county \$60,000 annually.

The coaching program offers support in key areas, including:

- Performance
- Communication
- Mindfulness
- Relationship building
- Resiliency

The team includes a program manager and ten internal coaches serving our organization, bringing diverse backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives to their work.

Employees can learn more and connect with a coach through our internal Coaching website where they can browse the coaches bio's as well as learn more about the benefits of coaching.