



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2010 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 12, 2010

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- Community Health and Safety
- Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: COG Chief Administrative Officers Committee

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Washington DC Metropolitan Region

Jurisdiction population(s): 5,000,000 (approximate)

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2009, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: January Year: 2009

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in San José, California, October 2010. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Anthony Griffin

Title: County Executive Jurisdiction: Fairfax County, VA

Name: David Robertson

Title: Executive Director Jurisdiction: MWCOG

Name: _____

Title: _____ Jurisdiction: _____

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: David Robertson
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2010 ICMA Excellence Award Nomination: Community Partnership Award

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Chief Administrative Officers Committee

The Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) Committee of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) plays a critical role in improving the quality of life for residents of the National Capital Region. The CAOs Committee strengthens the capacity of cities and counties in the region to respond to challenges and leverages opportunities through intergovernmental collaboration. It is a model of success in the National Capital Region and an example of innovative, multi-jurisdictional problem-solving and action for other cities, counties and regions. Many of the emerging public policy challenges facing ICMA members in the United States and in other counties will increasingly require intergovernmental approaches and tools that are at the heart of the work and outcomes of the CAOs Committee.

Background and History

COG is a regional organization of 21 local governments in the National Capital Region, including the District of Columbia, Suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia and was founded in 1957. COG develops regional responses to issues such as the environment, affordable housing, economic development, human services, growth, public safety, and transportation, mirroring most if not all of the issues in which ICMA members are engaged. COG provides a forum for consensus building and policy-making, implements intergovernmental policies, plans, and programs, and serves as an expert information resource.

Like many regional councils and metropolitan planning organizations in the United States, COG members are local city and county elected officials. COG also established a key leadership role for area city and county managers through the CAOs Committee that has strengthened the region overall, enhanced COG's capacity to examine and address a wide-range

of intergovernmental issues, and in turn supports the needs of city and county managers and their communities.

The CAOs Committee is comprised of the city and county managers from each COG member local government. It meets monthly to share best practices and enhance decision-making in all major areas of local government activity, particularly intergovernmental and multi-jurisdictional matters. With several hundred years of collective public service, the CAOs Committee members play an irreplaceable role in developing and advancing regional policy and program initiatives, and in coordinating the region's response and recovery during emergencies.

Program Need: Platform for Intergovernmental Problem Solving

The need for information sharing and collaborative problem-solving among city and county managers is not unique to the CAOs Committee and is central to the purpose of ICMA itself. The CAOs Committee has, however, been extremely successful in guiding and focusing COG's intergovernmental planning and programs to yield measurable benefits and outcomes --- for the region as a whole and individual cities and counties. To accomplish this, the CAOs Committee is organized around four central goals: 1) peer networking; 2) identification and implementation of best practices; 3) supporting local and regional decision-making; and 4) strengthening regional emergency preparedness and response.

Results and Outcomes: Local Decisions in a Regional Context

Peer Networking: The CAOs Committee provides a forum for area city and county managers to meet monthly and support each other as professional managers consistent with the value that members gain from peers nationally and internationally through ICMA. For example, in 2009 the CAOs Committee has sponsored a series of roundtable discussions among managers and area public school superintendents during the past two years to discuss how their respective

communities are approaching employee compensation and benefit issues in the face of the current economic crisis affecting all jurisdictions in the National Capital Region. In the absence of the CAOs Committee, there would be few opportunities for city and county managers to share this information in a neutral peer environment.

Best Practices: The CAOs Committee provides a platform to share best practices and implement strategies for successful public management at the local and/or regional levels. Through COG and with the input, guidance and support of the CAOs Committee, the National Capital Region has established several successful best practices. For example, The CAOs Committee has championed COG's Regional Executive Development Program (REDP), now in its eighth year. REDP invites city and county managers to nominate mid-level managers to participate in a year-long executive leadership and development program administered by COG and its instructional partner, the George Washington University Center for Excellence in Public Leadership. Approximately 20 mid-level managers were accepted in the 2009-2010 program, which strengthens leadership and management capabilities, provides greater opportunities to explore regional perspectives across multiple jurisdictions and among different local government agencies and departments, and awards graduates with a Certified Public Manager designation recognized by the National Certified Public Manager Consortium. Area city and county managers are also part of the instructional program, with a different speaker each month providing leadership and management lessons learned and perspectives on the many roles of public managers. Program modules include topics such as leading people and change, strategic planning, and budget and finance, resulting in a growing cadre of public manager professionals better able to tackle the complex challenges likely to face the next generation of city and county managers.

Local and Regional Decision-Making: COG has often looked to the CAOs Committee to support and implement collaborative, multi-jurisdictional decision-making that is now looked to as the model for many public policy issues in regions of all sizes. For example, in 2000 COG adopted a regional water supply and drought plan, in part in response to drought conditions the previous year in which local government response, even in adjacent communities differed, despite common use of the same water source and distribution system. The CAOs Committee was charged by COG with lead responsibility for plan oversight and response. The CAOs Committee received regular staff reports on water supply in 2009 and oversaw regional coordination and local and regional response based on plan categories of normal, watch, warning and emergency water supply conditions.

Emergency Preparedness and Response: COG has long led a multi-jurisdictional focus and regional program on public safety and emergency response, involving the CAOs Committee and supported by subcommittees of police, fire, public health, and emergency management officials, among others. Following the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the CAOs Committee has significantly expanded the scope of its leadership and involvement in emergency preparedness and response centered on the federal Urban Areas Security Initiative grant. Through the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the National Capital Region, like many other metropolitan areas, is eligible for federal funding to strengthen regional emergency preparedness and response capacity. In the National Capital Region, these funds are administered regionally by the Mayor of the District of Columbia and the Governors of Maryland and Virginia. The Mayor and two Governors approved a governance model that looks to the CAOs Committee for input, and along with state emergency management officials, in setting priorities and approving regional projects for UASI funding. The CAOs Committee,

supported by subcommittees of first-responders and subject matter experts and COG staff, reviewed and approved approximately \$45 million in project funding in 2009, including improvements to inter-operable communications equipment, additional and mass sheltering kits for deployment in emergencies. The CAOs Committee also established the Regional Incident Communication and Coordination System (RICCS) that provides timely notice to city and county managers of local or regional incidents or emergencies and that in turn may trigger a regional conference call among managers and other state and federal officials. RICCS has been widely used in a range of regional incidents and emergencies including the 2002 sniper attacks, Hurricane Isabel in 2003 and the recent February 2010 snow storms.

Program Implementation and Costs

The CAOs Committee meets in-person monthly and as necessary as a group or subgroup by conference call, and is chaired by Fairfax County Executive (and ICMA member) Anthony Griffin. Collectively, local governments contribute (with the recommendation of city and county managers) approximately \$3 million of COG's \$27.5 million fiscal year budget, the balance comprised of federal, state and foundation grants. The cost for the operation and support of the CAOs Committee is a fraction of the total COG budget, less than \$200,000.

Lesson Learned

City and county managers are integral to the success of communities, large and small, and the National Capital Region has some of the best managers in the country. While many communities in other regions are active in regional governance organizations such as COG, the CAOs Committee is an outstanding model of community partnership that adheres to the principles of public leadership and management and merits recognition by ICMA.