

2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program
Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form
(All programs nominated must have been fully operational for a minimum of 12 months, prior to January 31, 2015)

Deadline for Nominations: March 3, 2015

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
- X Community Partnership
- Community Sustainability
- Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: City of Medford, Oregon, partnership with the University of Oregon Sustainable Cities Initiative: Sustainable City Year Program

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Medford, Oregon

Jurisdiction population(s): 76,650

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 for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: January Year: 2014

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: P. Eric Swanson

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Medford

Name: Glenda Wilson

Title: Asst. to the City Manager/City Recorder Jurisdiction: City of Medford

SECTION 2: Information about the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: James E. Huber
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Problem Assessment – the challenge or need that prompted the City to develop the program: The City of Medford seeks an Excellence Award in the category of Community Partnership. Our nomination involves a partnership with the University of Oregon (UofO) and the Rogue Valley Transit District (RVTD). It resulted from the City's participation in the University of Oregon's Sustainable Cities Initiative, more specifically referred to as the Sustainable City Year Program (SCYP).

In the latter part of 2012, the Medford City Council adopted its 2012-18 Strategic Plan. The Plan contained four major themes and fifteen goals, each followed by objectives and specific actions assigned to one or more departments. The challenge to implement the Strategic Plan prompted the City Manager to seek involvement with the UofO because such a partnership would provide resources that otherwise may be cost prohibitive or simply not available. The City viewed partnering with the UofO and RVTD as a creative and cost-effective means of "jumpstarting" implementation of the Plan.

SCYP is a one-year partnership between the UofO and a city, county or special district in Oregon. Partners propose a list of sustainability projects and issues that are tackled over the course of an academic year by faculty and students from multiple disciplines at the university. The City of Medford was selected as the partner city in March of 2013.

Program implementation and costs: From the Strategic Plan, Medford submitted a total of twenty-three projects for consideration. The four listed below meet the deadline requirement and are included in this nomination.

Four Visions for Jackson County Health Site Redevelopment Plan, cost of \$30,063. The study identified recommendations for redeveloping underutilized employment and housing sites in areas that already had public infrastructure. It focused on an eight-acre site that was about to become vacant as the County moved its operations into new facilities.

Public Engagement with Diverse Communities in Medford, cost of \$5,479. The purpose was to explore additional and more effective ways for the Police Department to connect and engage with the area's growing minority population. Project leaders attended the Medford Multi-Cultural Fair in 2013 and hosted hands-on activities to elicit opinions about various challenges and barriers faced by minorities.

Rogue Valley Transit District Public Relations Campaign, cost of \$13,500. The purpose was to research best practices of current transportation programs, study RVTD's practices and survey the community on its familiarity about service, funding and a possible levy increase.

Emergency Preparedness Plan – Research, cost of \$14,983. The purpose was to elicit information from community members regarding awareness of emergency preparedness and the ability to respond in a crisis.

Tangible results or measurable outcomes of the program: A 69 page report entitled Four Visions for Jackson County Health Site Redevelopment Plan identified changes needed in the Land Development Code to enable and encourage redevelopment. The City has shared the report with the County and a private citizen who is seeking a site to relocate a business.

As a result of the Public Engagement Project, the Police Department increased its involvement and citizen interaction with Latinos at the Fall 2014 Multi-Cultural Fair by hosting a station and staffing it all day with Spanish speaking employees and officers. In December 2014, it created a large monthly spread and now submits monthly articles on topics such as Oregon law, DMV law and crime prevention matters in our local “Caminos” Latino magazine. Police conducted an additional, follow-up survey to help determine its level of trust with the Latino community.

For the RVTD PR Campaign, SCYP created a strategic plan to adequately communicate RVTD’s need for funding to sustain transit operations. The plan identified key audiences, key messaging themes, a timeline and a budget in advance of RVTD’s levy on the November 2014 ballot. RVTD has implemented many of the strategies and its marketing program has adopted the ideas into its everyday work.

The Emergency Preparedness Plan – Research provided a strategic view of the status of emergency planning in January of 2014 and

recommendations for early steps forward. This valuable insight would have taken the newly-hired emergency program manager approximately a year to acquire. As a result, the City has increased emergency preparedness outreach to the business community; identified such outreach as a strategic objective; provided materials, live presentations, media broadcasts and the first CERT basic training course; and, committed to adding social media to our messaging strategy.

Lessons learned during the planning, implementation and analysis of the program: Examples of specific lessons include the following: -People either do not know or do not pay attention to RVTD's routes and accessibility. -As businesses begin to introduce emergency preparedness to their employees, there are gaps in the knowledge necessary for such preparedness. -Currently underutilized, social media is a powerful tool in communicating the message of emergency preparedness to the community. -Community members desire greater safety, particularly in parks and in west-side neighborhoods. -Medford Police needs to continue their efforts of earning the trust of the local Latino community.

Examples of more general lessons include the following: The partnerships would not have occurred had the Council not adopted the 6-year Strategic Plan. The strategic planning effort yielded additional and greater benefits than those originally contemplated.

Strategic planning and thinking require organizations to be open to non-traditional approaches of problem solving. Instead of turning to the typical sources of staff resources and professional consultants, Medford collaborated with university professors and college students to propose their solutions. Being open and taking this kind of risk yielded excellent results.

City government has a legitimate role in providing education, whether the “students” are the city’s citizens or not. What a city does on a daily basis provides a dynamic, living learning environment with countless numbers of case-studies to explore. Further, many staff members turned out to be great educators to the students who were involved in the partnership.

City Hall was alive with an exhilarating energy on the days when students and professors visited. Cities looking to inspire and energize their staffs, as well as to personally showcase their city to students from around the nation and the world, should consider working more closely with non-traditional partners such as a university.

The City has much in common with its partners. Universities educate their students to be productive, contributing members of society. Cities strive to create great places where people can live, work and raise families. Transit districts provide part of the infrastructure that helps address people’s transportation needs. No one entity can do it alone and meaningful partnerships contribute to our individual and mutual success.