



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

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

Name of program being nominated: City of Rock Hill- Enhancing Strategic Planning through Stakeholder Outreach

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: City of Rock Hill, South Carolina

Jurisdiction population(s): 69,103

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: 10 Year: 2012

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: David B. Vehaun

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Rock Hill, SC

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Jurisdiction: \_\_\_\_\_

## **SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact**

Name of contact: Lisa M. Brown

Title: Strategy and Performance Manager Jurisdiction: City of Rock Hill, SC

Street address: 155 Johnston St.

City: Rock Hill State/Province: SC

Zip/Postal Code: 29730 Country: US

Telephone: 803-326-3814 Fax: 803-329-7007

E-mail: Lisa.brown@cityofrockhill.com

## City of Rock Hill- Enhancing Strategic Planning through Stakeholder Outreach

- **Problem assessment, the challenge or need that prompted the local government to develop the program**

Since 2002, strategic planning in the City of Rock Hill has greatly evolved. What started out as a disjointed, department centric focused document has evolved into a measurable, outcome based plan that directs the entire City's progress. Highlighted in every strategic plan, the City has utilized data from the National Citizen Survey in order to gauge constituent's perceptions about City services, places, and overall quality of life. The City also implemented focus groups of citizens to get better information about specific issues. Though citizen input is of great value to the City's strategic planning efforts, there were many stakeholders whose feedback was not solicited.

Therefore, the City began gathering input from many other stakeholders. These people have varied interests that are vital to the future success of our City. Key Influencers were first targeted. The City hosted events for small groups, as well as a large group meeting for people who are actively involved in the community. At these meetings, questions focused on where people saw the City in 10-15 years. Although this time frame exceeds the three-year strategic plan, it focused efforts into three different stages: planning, acting, or evaluating. The City also targeted the business community. A business survey was created and distributed to almost 400 local companies with business licenses. This survey sought to address concerns that the business community had related to City services. From that survey, City administration and elected officials were able to better understand the perceptions of local business owners and operators. Finally, the City solicited input from employees through an employee survey.

Regression analysis helped determine relationships between different variables. For example, knowing how one's work relates to the City's goals is statistically significant in explaining perceived employee value.

The combined efforts of these stakeholder outreaches have been instrumental in ensuring that the City of Rock Hill is working towards a better future for everyone. Targeting specific groups within the community has given City leaders specific areas of improvement. The results of these efforts are clearly evident in the new strategic plan, which is currently in development.

- **Program implementation and costs**

These stakeholder outreach programs were developed as a result of City Council and City Management brainstorming opportunities. These events and surveys were all developed in-house and as a result had minimal cost.

- **Tangible results or measurable outcomes of the program**

There have been a number of measurable outcomes as a result of these new initiatives. The Key Influencer meetings provided the City with specific ideas from local leaders of ways to better provide quality services, places, and community. For example, 82% of respondents indicated that citizen engagement is a defining characteristic of Rock Hill's future. As the vast majority of City leaders felt that expanding citizen involvement is crucial to our future, more outreach programs have been instituted. The Mayor now holds a variety of meetings. Bi-annually, the Mayor meets with young City influencers, quarterly he meets with small business owners and developers, and monthly he meets with key community individuals. These Key

Influencer meetings have been added as a proposed task related to the new Strategic Plan for the upcoming three years.

The business survey tool provided great insight into perspectives on business operations in Rock Hill. From the survey, City officials were able to glean important information about things like local regulations, the cost of doing business, workforce quality, and city infrastructure. One of the most interesting results was discovering that a third of respondents indicated that they are seeking to expand an existing facility or to lease, purchase, or construct a new facility within the next three years. With that knowledge, efforts have been made to re-recruit existing local businesses. Every week, a Key Accounts Manager is in direct contact with three to five businesses and physically visits two businesses. This manager is responsible for providing local business owners with information about City services in general, as well as helping facilitate any needs they may have. The City also utilizes the Open for Business program to assist existing businesses with potential changes. Open for Business offers feasibility studies in which meetings are scheduled with City Building Officials, the Fire Department and Zoning Coordinator in order to assist proposed location changes. These feasibility studies then lead business owners through the process of submitting plans, issuing permits, and scheduling inspections. Between fiscal year 2013 and fiscal year 2014, there has been a 46% increase in the number of feasibility meetings. The new Strategic Plan includes measures to hold the City accountable for continuing to re-recruit businesses and assist local owners with their needs.

The last major group targeted was City employees. As the City's most valuable resource, getting feedback from employees has led to great outcomes. Employees in general feel satisfied

with their jobs. However, there was room for improvement related to communication and employee recognition. In terms of communication, the City has instituted many new strategies. An interactive city-wide organizational chart was developed that includes pictures, titles, and key responsibilities. The City newsletter has also been revamped so that there is a focus on major capital projects, water cooler discussions of hot topics, and highlights of extraordinary work that employees have done. The Quality in Action program was created as a way to recognize employees for their hard-work. This program includes quarterly lunches with management and departmental recognition during safety meetings. Although strides have been made to address employee concerns, the City has made an ongoing commitment to focusing on communication in the next strategic plan. A new task is specifically directly aimed at providing employees with information about City-wide goals and progress on a bi-annual basis.

- **Lessons learned during planning, implementation, and analysis of the program.**

Stakeholder involvement can be such a useful tool in the development and support of a strategic plan. However, there are many lessons the City of Rock Hill has learned. The City's efforts related to the key influencer, business and employee surveys involve many people and take a lot of time and work. The preparation and execution of these activities are extensive, but the actual analysis is the most time consuming, especially as this work is done in-house.

Another lesson learned is that every great idea isn't necessarily going to work. Every group of people have dynamics that may not always been conducive to getting the end-result desired. For example, an internal leadership meeting was organized for key employees in the City in order to facilitate cross-departmental collaboration. About 100 employees attended and

provided very valuable information to City Management. These employees also expressed a desire for quarterly meetings. While in theory, quarterly meetings would be wonderful, the logistics of having 100 key employees out of the office every few months isn't going to keep the City running well. Therefore, annual meetings have been arranged to still allow collaboration with these key employees.

Overall Organization Report

### OVERALL ORGANIZATION REPORT

**Significant Relationships**

The data were analyzed to determine how other measures relate to employees' satisfaction with their jobs (*Overall, I am satisfied with my job*). The five measures with the strongest relationships with overall job satisfaction are listed in the table below.<sup>1</sup>

While not causal in nature, these correlations reveal important characteristics of employees who are satisfied with their jobs. Rock Hill employees are more satisfied with their jobs when they feel valued and appreciated, are able to use their skills and abilities, and when they have clear job expectations.

**STRONGEST RELATIONSHIP TO JOB SATISFACTION**

- Feeling Valued
- Utilization and demonstration of skills/abilities
- Being recognized/appreciated
- Clear job expectations

Variable	Correlation to Overall, I am satisfied with my job	Percent Agree/Strongly Agree	
		2013	2014
Overall, I am satisfied with my job.	-	91%	92%
I feel I am a valued employee of the City.	0.59	76%	79%
My supervisor provides me with opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills.	0.58	86%	84%
My job makes good use of my skills and abilities.	0.56	89%	91%
My supervisor gives recognition/appreciation.	0.55	88%	84%
My supervisor clearly communicates his or her expectations of my job.	0.54	89%	87%

There are some similarities and differences when comparing this year's five strongest relationships with last year's. Like last year, "my job makes good use of my skills and abilities," "my supervisor provides me with opportunities to demonstrate my leadership skills," and "I feel I am a valued employee of the City," made the five strongest relationships list. Missing from this year's list are: "my supervisor treats me fairly," "I believe my job is secure," and "my supervisor gives me timely feedback on my job performance." New to the list are: "my supervisor clearly communicates his or her expectations of my job" and "my supervisor gives recognition/appreciation." While a few variables differ when compared to the 2013 findings, the 2014 findings still highlight the important roles supervisors, autonomy, and a chance to develop mastery play in influencing job satisfaction.<sup>2</sup>

It is also interesting to note that this year's five strongest correlations have noticeably stronger relationships than last year's. This year's top five strongest correlations had coefficients ranging from 0.54 to 0.59 compared to last year's 0.48 to 0.53.

<sup>1</sup>The correlation coefficient 'r' reveals the strength of the relationship with -1.0 being a perfectly negative relationship (i.e., the higher one score, the lower the other score) and a +1.0 being a perfectly positive relationship (i.e., both variables move exactly the same direction at the same time).

<sup>2</sup>In the book *Drive*, Daniel Pink argues that employees are motivated and drawn to workstations when they have autonomy, a chance to develop mastery, and a sense of purpose.

2014 City of Rock Hill Employee Climate Survey 9

Excerpt from the City's Employee Survey Results

2014 BUSINESS SURVEY

### TOP CONCERNS FACING ROCK HILL BUSINESSES TODAY.

Respondents were asked to identify the top four issues/concerns facing their business today. Businesses responded in the following manner:

1. Cost of doing business — taxes and fees (80%)
2. Local regulations (40%)
3. Condition of City infrastructure — e.g., roads, quality and availability of water/sewer/electric infrastructure (39%)
4. Workforce quality (38%)

### OTHER CONCERNS ROCK HILL BUSINESSES ARE FACING.

Percent of Respondents Selecting As a Top Four Concerns:

5. Federal and State regulations	37%	Specified responses from respondents selecting the 'other' option included:	
6. Access to capital	21%		
7. Navigating City policies and codes	9%		
8. Other	9%		
9. Housing affordability and livability of the City	6%		
10. Land Availability	6%		
11. Public transportation	5%		
12. Coordination between City departments	5%		
			• Cost of insurance
			• Poor road surfaces
			• Signage for business
			• Safety from crimes
		• Electrical outages	
		• Cost of electric service	

### BUSINESSES ARE OVERWHELMINGLY SATISFIED WITH THE CITY'S RESPONSIVENESS AND WOULD RECOMMEND THE CITY TO OTHERS.

- Ninety-one percent of respondents indicated they were very or somewhat satisfied with the responsiveness of City government.
- Ninety-four percent noted they were somewhat or very likely to recommend Rock Hill as a business location to someone who asked.

**Are Businesses Satisfied With The City's Responsiveness?**

Responsiveness of City government

**Would Rock Hill Businesses Recommend Rock Hill To Others?**

Recommend Rock Hill as business location

Excerpt from the City's Business Survey Results



Collaboration at the Key Influencer's Meeting