

2023 Awards Competition – ENTRY SUMMARIES

J. MITCHELL GRAHAM MEMORIAL AWARD

Beaufort County

The PATH program responds to a shortage of state health care workers by using ARPA funds to make Beaufort County’s healthcare system more resilient. PATH offers on-site classes, clinical skills training, and tuition support to help clinical and nonclinical staff advance and succeed. As of April 2023, \$105,338 in scholarships have been granted to take on-site hospital courses and for nursing students enrolled at colleges/universities.

Berkeley County

In response to a shortage of EMTs, Berkeley County partnered with Trident Technical College to create a free EMT training program to certify paramedics quickly. The county also worked with the SC DHEC to establish a training site. The first graduating class of the EMT Certification Program had a pass rate of 75%, 10% higher than the state and national average. Eight of the 14 graduates were hired by Berkeley County EMS.

Calhoun County

Calhoun County’s Community Paramedicine Program reduces nonemergent 911 calls and provides vulnerable and underserved citizens with care and medical education. Paramedics perform patient assessments and provide at-home treatment and education, with the goal of keeping patients at home, avoiding unnecessary ER visits and hospital readmissions. Since November 2021, EMS utilization has decreased 89%, ER visits decreased 96.7%, and hospital admissions decreased 55.6%. As a result of this program, the county has saved \$185,649 in the first quarter of 2023.

Charleston County

Faced with the on-going challenge of poll worker staffing, the Charleston County Board of Elections and Voter Registration turned to the local community and the government workforce for a solution. The “Adopt a Polling Location” and “Day for Democracy” programs provide a blueprint for future success in upcoming elections. These initiatives are sustainable and can be replicated in other local governments across the state and the country.

Dorchester County

To promote hurricane education and preparedness, Dorchester County partnered with Tradesman Brewing Company to create “Know your Zone” beer. The cans sport a QR code, connecting citizens to evacuation routes and safety tips. After gaining national traction, the project was modeled by the Florida Division of Emergency Management to develop a similar initiative. Between May 2022 and January 2023, a total of 307 QR scans and 292 unique scans were documented, with a majority from newer residents.

Georgetown County

Georgetown County created the Nonprofit Spotlight to highlight positive county news. Time is set aside during each council meeting so that one local nonprofit can share its mission. This promotes engagement between nonprofits, council members, and citizens, resulting in more exposure and partnerships. Nonprofits report increases in donations, volunteers, and involvement after participating in this simple, one-of-a-kind program.

Lexington County

Lexington County implemented a novel partnership with a private ambulance service to better handle low acuity and interfacility transport 9-1-1 calls for service. This partnership will preserve the county's emergency resources to respond more quickly to higher acuity calls where time matters most. The system triages the patient, determines if an emergency exists, sends EMS if appropriate, or removes the call from the 9-1-1 system and directs it to a more appropriate service.

Oconee County

Oconee County leveraged resources and community partnerships to improve access to healthcare and to develop sustainable solutions to meet the needs of the community. The project has resulted in improved health services, including primary healthcare, addiction recovery, and mental health support. The county coordinated and established resource development opportunities in healthcare to improve individuals’ outcomes in health disparities and other quality of life challenges.

Pickens County

Fixing County Roads: Road Sustainability Program addresses the challenge of funding road preservation, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Pickens County Council moved away from the inadequate fee system and increased taxes to meet the need. Staff ensured citizens would be engaged in the process by developing the FixingCountyRoads.com interactive website and #KickingAsphalt media campaign providing transparency of spending and ease of reporting. Citizens now see their tax dollars at work as fresh asphalt takes the place of rough roadways.

Sumter County

The Stash the Trash Litter initiative was undertaken as a response to a dramatic increase in litter that occurred during COVID-19. While many litter programs were suspended due to social distancing, roads were besieged with packaging from take-out orders and single use protectors like masks and gloves. Litter negatively impacts the local economy, tourism, and crime rates by signaling negligence and vulnerability of neighborhoods. The community benefited from this project by improving the quality of residents' living and working environments.

York County

York County recently jumped into the park business in a big and somewhat unexpected way. Nineteen hundred acres of woods, ponds and fields on the Catawba River were slated to become a 3,000-home subdivision. The county used a unique funding source to purchase the land and has preserved it from development. The Catawba Bend Preserve will serve generations of families as a tremendous asset to the county's quality of life.

BARRETT LAWRIMORE MEMORIAL REGIONAL COOPERATION AWARD

Aiken, Barnwell, Beaufort, Dorchester, and Hampton Counties

The Barnwell County Landfill caught fire on May 15, 2022. With the support of Beaufort, Dorchester, and Hampton Counties and other agencies, the extensive fire was extinguished after two days without injuries. Each entity worked well with all team members, looking out for the safety of others and following directions as given by the leaders, demonstrating an exemplary regional partnership.

Beaufort and Jasper Counties

Beaufort and Jasper Counties partnered with local municipalities to address affordable housing for a largely tourism-based workforce that has been priced out of housing markets near their place of employment. Affordable housing concerns cause workforce shortages, longer commute times, and childcare issues due to the extended workday. The Beaufort-Jasper County partnership has resulted in the first regional housing trust fund to be established in SC with eight jurisdictions across two counties.

Georgetown County and the City of Georgetown

Fire departments across the nation are struggling to find and retain firefighters. Georgetown County partnered with the City of Georgetown to create a Firefighter Recruit School to help address the issue. The program allows city and county fire departments to train recruits on their own timetable. Recruits complete a nine-week program training with staff that they will eventually be working with daily. By sharing training resources, the program costs are significantly reduced for partnering jurisdictions.

Pickens County and Regional Municipalities

The Pickens County Leadership Enhancement Academy for Public Servants (LEAPS) is a cross-functional program designed to equip emerging local government leaders with knowledge and resources to become better leaders. Each year, a new class of emerging leaders from Pickens County and the municipalities of Central, Clemson, Easley, Liberty, Pickens and Six Mile meet weekly for practical instruction and cohort discussion. Enrollees have community service opportunities, and alumni continue to meet quarterly to build connections.