

INNOVATION • COLLABORATION • CELEBRATION •

# SCAC Annual Awards Program

## What Sets Winners Apart



SOUTH CAROLINA  
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

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### Overview

- History and Purpose of SCAC's Awards Program
- Role of Judges & SCAC Staff
- Rules & Requirements
- Judges' Evaluation Criteria
- Common Elements of Award Winners
- Resources



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### History & Purpose of Awards Program

#### *J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award*

- Created in 1973
- Named after SCAC President "Mitch" Graham, Charleston County Council Chairman
- Recognizes counties that address community challenges, implement operational improvements, or enhance quality of life in a unique way
- More than 260 entries since 1995



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**History & Purpose of Awards Program**

**Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award**

- Created in 1999
- Named after SCAC President Barrett Lawrimore, Charleston County Council Chairman
- Recognizes counties or county regional partnerships formed with municipalities, districts, or councils of government to complete an innovative project
- More than 62 entries since the program began



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**Role of SCAC Staff & Judges**

**SCAC Staff**

- Select impartial judges who have an understanding of local government
- Promote the annual awards program and receive entries
- Provide all entries and score sheets to judges prior to awards competition
- Coordinate the awards competition and encourage all county officials to attend
- Compile judges' scores immediately following competition to identify winners
- Publish news releases and articles in County Focus magazine
- Facilitate shared learning



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**Role of SCAC Staff & Judges**

**Judges**

- Thoroughly read all written entries and prepare questions for oral presentations
- Actively engage during competition by considering information provided during oral presentations and asking questions
- Independently score each entry based on evaluation criteria
- Rank order entries for each award and break ties, if necessary
- Head Judge prepares announcements for Annual Banquet



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**Rules & Requirements**

**Awards Program**

- Submitted online or received no later than deadline
- Projects must be put into action or completed during previous fiscal year.
- No additional items or information may be provided to judges during competition.
- Adhere to the 10-minute presentation time limit followed by a brief Q&A period with judges.



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**Rules & Requirements**

**Project Entry**

- Project Description cannot exceed 8 pages and should address:
  - Benefit/Importance questions
  - Effort/Difficulty questions
  - Originality/Innovation questions
- May include up to 5 additional pages of supporting documentation (graphs, tables, newspaper clippings, press releases, photos, etc.)



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**Rules & Requirements**

**J. Mitchell Graham Memorial Award**

- Each county may submit one entry per year
- Must be submitted by the county and have a letter of support from council chairman or county chief administrative officer



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**Rules & Requirements**

**Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award**

- Open to two or more political subdivisions (counties or county regional partnerships formed with municipalities, districts, or councils of government) that collaborated to complete an innovative project
- Entry must include letters of support from council chairmen/mayor or county chief administrative officers of each participating political subdivision.
- Counties may submit multiple projects.




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**Judges' Evaluation Scale**

**Evaluation Scales**

- Benefits/Importance of Project
- Project Effort/Difficulty
- Project Originality/Innovation
- Quality of Project Entry

**Additional Scale for Barrett Lawrimore Award**

- Collaboration




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**Common Elements of Award-Winning Projects**

- The written presentation addresses all of the questions and is error free.
- The oral presentation is done well and finishes on-time; supporting videos are helpful but not required; presenters are able to answer questions from the judges.
- The project or the approach is truly original; it has not been done in South Carolina before.
- The work has been done primarily by county staff and not another agency or outside firm.
- Projects have data to demonstrate the success of the effort.




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**Lessons from Winners**

- Internal review process
- Identify who is best suited to:
  - Write the submission
  - Proof the written submission and the oral presentation
  - Give the presentation and answer questions
- Practice the oral presentation to adhere to 10-minute limit



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**Resources**

Awards Online Toolkit:  
[www.sccounties.org/awards-toolkit](http://www.sccounties.org/awards-toolkit)

Awards Video Library:  
[www.sccounties.org/awards-video-library](http://www.sccounties.org/awards-video-library)



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**Questions**

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