



Melanie A. Worley Civic Engagement Award

The Melanie A. Worley Civic Engagement Award was established in 2008 to recognize and elevate visibility of an exemplary individual or group that, through their work, has demonstrated excellence in the creation of collaborative community partnerships that promote understanding of civic engagement. It is the desire of the Partnership to award this honor annually.

This award also provides a venue to highlight the collaborative and innovative work of the Partnership of Douglas County Governments in its collaborate efforts to foster connections between and among local governments for the benefit of the entire County and its citizens.

Background

Civic Engagement became a priority initiative for the Partnership in 2008. Knowing that to move a community toward a Civic Engagement model is a process not an event, there was an assumption made that while 2008 is the first year of the initiative, this approach to governance will be alive beyond 2008. Accordingly, the Partnership also acknowledged that the organization is a model of Civic Engagement.

Therefore - as the Partnership is a model of Civic Engagement and Civic Engagement is an organizational priority, the Partnership award would honor the tenets of Civic Engagement – not in a self-congratulatory way, but in ways that recognize the citizen role in effective, successful civic engagement.

The Award was named the Melanie Worley Civic Engagement Award honoring this former Douglas County Commissioner for fostering the environment that led to the creation of the Partnership in 2001 and the collaborate effort that led us to a focus on civic engagement.

This citizen award would allow the Partnership to seek nominations for and recognize annually a citizen leader in civic engagement within Douglas County.

What is Civic Engagement?

The heart of a healthy democracy is a citizenry actively engaged in civic life — taking responsibility for building communities, solving community problems and participating in the electoral and political process.

“Civic engagement means working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and non-political processes. A morally and civically responsible individual recognizes himself or herself as a member of a larger social fabric and therefore considers social problems to be at least partly his or her own; such an individual is willing to see the moral and civic dimensions of issues, to make and justify informed moral and civic judgments, and to take action when appropriate.” (The American Democracy Project for Civic Engagement)

Civic engagement can take many forms, from individual voluntarism to organizational involvement to electoral participation. It can include efforts to directly address an issue, work with others in a community to solve a problem or interact with the institutions of representative democracy.

Eligibility and Selection Criteria

Eligible civic engagement projects **MUST** have been in existence for at least two years prior to the application deadline.

Eligible civic engagement projects **MUST** include the public, private and not-for-profit sectors – such as education leaders, community members, government officials, business leaders, leaders from not-for-profit service organizations or faith-based organizations, etc.

Selection Committee

The Selection Committee will include Partnership member representatives, as well as representatives from the private and non-profit sectors, and, if possible, at least one member from a prior award winning collaboration will review applications.

Selection Criteria

Applicants will be assessed on the extent to which they address:

- History and description of the project (e.g. date the project started, primary groups involved, primary goals and objectives, range of activities, etc.);

- Genuine partnership (e.g. collaboration, shared responsibility, mutually beneficial nature of project);
- Outcomes (e.g. intentional and unanticipated community learning, understanding of civic engagement, personal development, community impact, etc.); and
- Plans for sustainability of the project

Application Materials and Procedure

Please provide the following materials electronically to Wendy Manitta Holmes, Director of Public Affairs, Douglas County; wholmes@douglas.co.us

1. A cover sheet with information including name and organizational affiliation;
2. A narrative addressing the selection criteria (maximum of two double-spaced pages);
3. Two letters of support from other individuals and/or organizations who can attest to the accomplishments of your nominee ; and
4. Optional appendices with representative materials, such as brochures, reports, news coverage, acknowledgement of other awards (maximum of five items)
5. Nominations will be reviewed and award determined by the Selection Committee (mentioned above).

Time Frame

- Materials due to Wendy Holmes by October 16, 2009
- Award winner invited to attend the November 12, 2009 PDCG Elected Officials Caucus
- Award presented at the Partnership Elected Officials Caucus, November 12, 2009

Questions

For questions regarding the award, please contact Wendy Holmes.