



**FLORIDA COMMUNITIES
OF EXCELLENCE**

**2015
FLORIDA COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

Questions to be completed online at:

<http://www.flcaj.com/coe>



FLORIDA COMMUNITIES OF EXCELLENCE

2015 Florida Communities of Excellence Awards

The 2015 Florida Communities of Excellence Awards is now accepting submissions.

The awards are open to all Florida Community Associations (Condominium, HOA, and Cooperative). There are no entry fees and small and large communities are judged separately. Communities can compete in one or more of the following categories:

1. **Water Conservation, Indoors and Outdoors**
2. **Energy Efficiency**
3. **Florida-Friendly Landscaping™**
4. **Civic Volunteerism & Advocacy**
5. **Communications & Community**
6. **Family Friendly Programs & Initiatives**
7. **Safety & Security**
8. **Disaster Preparedness**
9. **“The Comeback Kid”**
10. **Financial Innovation**
11. **Trendsetter Awards**
12. **Community Video Showcase** -- Are you planning to submit a video of your community? No medium showcases the beauty, spirit and vitality of our communities like video. With the growing use of video, we are expanding the Video Showcase. This year the top three videos, as selected by our panel of judges, will be shown at the Awards gala. Like last year, the maximum length is two minutes. Here are the rules:

- Theme: "A day in the life of our community"
- No longer than 2 minutes (and not a second longer)
- Include the name of the community in some way, either in a shot or as text, along with your city
- Shoot, edit, and upload your video to YouTube, and include "2015 Communities of Excellence video submission" in the video description along with this link: <http://communitiesofexcellence.net/>. (YouTube is free; anyone can easily open an account and upload their video.)
- E-mail a link to your video on YouTube to [Alan Penchansky](mailto:Alan.Penchansky@universityofflorida.edu), by April 1. If yours is selected to be shown, you will be contacted to arrange to receive the video file.

Deadlines

All entries in categories 1 – 11 above must be submitted by Midnight (Eastern) on January 31, 2015. Videos, as explained above, must be uploaded by April 1.

Award winners may not re-enter in the same category for a period of two years, but are eligible to enter in any other category. Finalists are announced in April.

The independent professionals that conduct the judging include executives in local, regional and state government departments and agencies, at non-profit organizations, and at trade and professional associations. For a complete list of the judges go to <http://www.communitiesofexcellence.net/judges.html>

Winners and finalists will be honored at **The Communities of Excellence Conference & Awards Gala**, Friday, May 15, 2015 at the Bonaventure Resort & Spa in Orlando. The event, which includes educational sessions, exhibits, Awards Ceremony and Gala Reception, is free for board members, managers, and residents.

At the annual event, two awards are given in each category. Winners are chosen for smaller communities (up to 400 units) and larger communities.

Additionally, two "Community of the Year" Awards will be presented – one condominium and one HOA. These Awards will recognize communities who achieve exceptionally high scores in multiple category submissions.

Thank you for your participation in the 2015 Florida Communities of Excellence Awards. Good luck with your submission!

™Florida-Friendly Landscaping is a trademark of the University of Florida

Water Conservation, Indoors and Outdoors

This award recognizes communities that have invested in water management and conservation programs that achieve cost economies while promoting environmentally-friendly practices.

Please summarize your community's efforts concerning water conservation. Both technology and behavioral changes should be identified. (Bullet list of initiatives will suffice.)

Provide a detailed description of the planning, development and implementation of your water conservation programs. Identify how long each stage took.

Identify outside consultants or resources that were employed in developing and implementing your program(s).

Provide specifics on the program's results to date including the gallons and dollars saved by the change/retrofit. Discuss how you calculated the savings rate, return on the investment, and payback period for your program. Include information on any audits, tests or other methodologies used in the decision to implement the program.

Please describe communications activities that were part of the development of your program and methods used to create support among property owners, if appropriate.

Discuss any challenges you faced in promoting program adoption to your board and/or residents.

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Please indicate any of the following methods of water conservation that have been adopted by your community. (Select all that apply):

- Submetering and volumetric billing of water use.
- Retrofitting of fixtures including, toilets, urinals, faucets and showerheads with WaterSense labeled fixtures.
- Water use behavior initiatives for residents.
- Installation of leak detection devices or separate meters for the irrigation system.
- Installing reliable soil moisture sensor or ET technology (including WaterSense) to shut off the irrigation controller if sufficient water is present.
- Implementing changes to irrigation system after an irrigation system evaluation was completed.
- Implementing a retrofit of the irrigation equipment to include, sprinkler heads, valves, controllers or zone location.
- Installing rainwater harvesting systems for use with the irrigation or indoors for toilet flushing.
- Switch to reclaimed water source (if available).
- Other _____

Do you have ongoing evaluation and measurements of the effectiveness of your conservation programs? If so, describe the evaluation approach. Describe how your community is involved in the long term effectiveness of the program and how you keep up to date on progress and changes in the program.

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Energy Efficiency

This award recognizes communities that have invested in energy management and conservation programs that achieve cost economies while promoting environmentally-friendly practices.

Please summarize your community's efforts concerning energy conservation. Both technology and behavioral changes should be identified. (Bullet list of initiatives will suffice.)

Provide a detailed description of the planning, development and implementation of your energy conservation programs. Identify how long each stage took.

Identify outside consultants or resources that were employed in developing and implementing your program(s).

Provide specifics on the program's results to date including the kWh, liquid propane, natural gas and dollars saved by the change/retrofit. Discuss how you calculated the return on the investment and payback period for your program. Include information on any audits, tests or other methodologies used in the decision to implement the program.

Please describe communications activities that were part of the development of your program and methods used to create support among property owners, if appropriate.

Do you have ongoing evaluation and measurements of the effectiveness of your conservation programs? If so, describe the evaluation approach. Describe how your community is involved in the long term effectiveness of the program and how you keep up to date on progress and changes in the program.

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Which methods for improved energy-efficiency have been adopted by your community? Be sure to include improvements for common areas. (Select all that apply):

- Air-conditioning duct systems that limit air leakage to outdoors
- Retrofitting appliances including but not limited to refrigerators, water heaters, dishwashers, clothes washers, kitchen steamers/boilers with ENERGY STAR-labeled appliances
- Installing individual HVAC heat pumps with a SEER rating of 14 or higher
- Installation of programmable thermostats
- Replacement windows with higher “U” and “SHGC” values
- Installation of window film or solar screens
- Installation of solar panels for electricity generation
- Installation of solar panels for hot water production
- Installation of energy efficient pool heating
- Installation of LEDs and/or compact fluorescent light bulbs
- Installation of T-5 or T-8 florescent lights
- Installation of LED site and parking lot lighting
- Use of landscaping to promote energy efficiency (shading)
- Installation of cool or reflective roofing materials
- Light and/or reflective exterior color
- Roof garden installation (green roof)
- Installation of additional ceiling and/or wall insulation
- Other _____

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

This award recognizes communities that adopt environmentally sound landscape, wetland, preserve and lake management policies, including Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ which refers to landscapes that conserve water, protect the environment, are adaptable to local conditions, and are drought tolerant.

Please provide a detailed description of the planning and implementation of your environmentally-friendly landscape project(s). Please indicate if consultants used?

What was the motivation for your community to make changes to the landscape?

Please state or describe any outreach activities that were part of the development of your program and methods used to create support among property owners, if applicable.

Please discuss any challenges you faced in promoting program adoption to your board and/or residents.

Which of the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ program's nine principles have been adopted? ([Click here for examples](#)).

Have you made improvements to your stormwater ponds, if applicable? ([Click here for examples](#)).

Does your Landscape maintenance contract incorporate UF/IFAS recommended Best Management Practices (BMPs)? For examples see [The Community Landscape An Environmental Approach](#).

Do your deed restrictions contain any portions of the model Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Covenants, Codes and Restrictions? If so, please include the portions of your restrictions that are Florida-Friendly. Click to view the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ community association resources: [FFL Model CCRs](#) and [FFL Guidelines](#).

Please provide specifics on the program's results to date including time, effort and/or money saved by implementing Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles.

Do you have ongoing evaluation and measurement of the effectiveness of your landscape programs? If so, please describe.

Please include any additional information you consider relevant to the topic.

Please upload up to five images to illustrate your submission.

Florida-Friendly Landscaping is a trademark of the University of Florida

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Civic Volunteerism and Advocacy

This award recognizes community associations that actively contribute to civic welfare and improving society through creation of volunteerism programs to support local and regional non-profit and charitable causes.

Please list the top two or three civic organizations, charities and other groups with which your community has affiliated in its volunteerism activities. For each, indicate the total volunteer hours members of your community contributed in the past year. If appropriate, provide contact information for executives at these organizations.

Please provide a description of your community's civic volunteerism programs and activities. Discuss how the program(s) were organized and steps taken to involve residents.

What results have your community's volunteer and advocacy programs had in promoting a better society and making improvements in your community?

What were the challenges that had to be overcome in developing your program (s)? How was this accomplished?

Please indicate any local or national volunteerism resources that were consulted in developing a civic participation program. (Select all that apply)

- Corporation for National and Community Service
- Serve.gov
- Points of Light Institute
- Network for Good
- Volunteer Match
- HandsOn Network
- Volunteer Florida

You may include additional information about the community that you consider relevant to the topic.

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Communications and Community

This award recognizes outstanding efforts at promoting positive community relations through effective use of email, newsletters, social media, Web site and other communications.

Which of the following methods of communication does your community use? (Select all that apply)

- Newsletters/periodicals
- Email announcements
- Bulletin boards
- Website
- Text messaging
- Phone Chains
- CCTV (Closed circuit TV)
- USPS Mail
- Rumor hotlines or other methods to dispel rumors quickly
- Surveys
- Directories
- Regular meetings that allow owners to express opinions and point out community needs
- Other _____

Please describe the way community rules and regulations are communicated. Discuss the effect of your communications activities on understanding of rules and regulations and compliance among residents.

Does the community have an emergency notification system for residents? How will you communicate with residents in the event of a power failure?

How is communication between residents, such as for interest groups, facilitated?

How do you measure the effectiveness of your communications?

How much of the content you make available is contributed by residents? Who assembles or edits the materials? Please indicate internal and external information resources you employ.

Please provide details on social media adoption, such as Facebook and Twitter, and discuss resident participation. Detail benefits that have resulted, including any examples of improved community relations.

Has your community adopted official guidelines on its use of social media? Please discuss the development and implementation of the guidelines.

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Please indicate the percentage of residents for whom you have email addresses:

- Less than 25%
- 26 to 50 %
- 51 to 75 %
- 75 to 90%
- 90% or higher
- 100%

Describe what steps you have taken to increase email participation.

Please indicate the purposes for which you use email in your community (Select all that apply)

- Emergency alerts
- Meetings and Event announcements
- Community news
- News about activities in the surrounding area
- Opportunities for volunteerism
- Distribution of financial reports

If your community operates a Web site, please enter the URL: _____

Which of the following features does your site include to make it more attractive to residents? (Select all that apply)

- Information on current events
- Newsletter sign-up
- Social sharing (Facebook or Twitter)
- Property manager blog
- Board blog
- Contacts and URLs for government services, such as property appraiser, voter registration, cable company, bar association lawyer referral service, specific city, county and state representatives
- Community bulletin board (items & service for sale, special events)
- Page for photos of recent social events, visiting grandkids, etc.
- Private label email addresses to property owners
- Calendar of events
- Optimization for Smartphones or tablets

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Which of the following are facilitated or made available on the Web site? (Select all that apply)

- Access to current governing documents
- Contact information for elected board members, committee chairs, manager/CAM, including email addresses
- Access to current budget proposal, current budget and past budgets, with updates showing monthly expenses
- Access to summary of professional reserve account study
- Board meeting agenda (upcoming) and minutes of past meetings
- Video of past meetings
- Streaming video of live meetings
- Online owner account review
- Online processing of assessment payments
- Surveys
- Repair/service requests
- Discussion Board, including a place to let residents offer opinions on pending rule changes, suggest new rules and rule changes, and discuss enforcement issues
- Private social network for residents
- Resident directory

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Family Friendly Programs & Initiatives

The Family Friendly Programs & Initiatives Award recognizes communities in which family participation and well-being are actively promoted.

Does your community schedule any regular events or activities that are designed for participation of children, parents and grandparents? If so, please describe.

Do you operate any special intergenerational recreational or educational programs? Please describe.

Do you actively promote your community as “family friendly?” If yes, please provide details.

Have efforts at promoting a family-friendly community affected property sales and rentals? Are you attracting more families?

Please indicate the greatest challenges you encountered in development and implementation of “family friendly” programs and practices? Explain how these challenges were met and overcome.

Please list the two or three of the most important “tips” you would give to other communities interested in becoming more “family friendly.”

Please indicate the amount of money spent annually in support of programs that promote family participation and well being.

- Under \$1,000
- \$1,000 to \$2,500
- \$2,500 to \$5,000
- \$5,000 to \$10,000
- \$10,000 to \$20,000
- More than \$20,000

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Safety & Security Initiatives

This award recognizes innovative programs, policies, and procedures that are designed to protect and ensure the safety of residents and property within the community.

Please describe the security/crime issues that have been addressed by your community and the steps implemented to strengthen security for each of these areas. Please be specific.

Please indicate any external resources that were consulted or employed in addressing your community's safety and security issues. (Select all that apply)

- Local law enforcement
- Local fire & rescue
- Neighborhood Watch
- Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED)
- Citizens Corps Council (FEMA)
- Other _____

Have your efforts led to a decrease in security/crime-related incidents in your community? Please explain.

What steps have you taken to ensure that every resident is aware of security policies and procedures?

Please provide details on any appropriate checklists or other tools developed to help implement your safety and security plan.

You may include additional information about the community that you consider relevant to the topic

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Disaster Preparedness Initiatives

This award recognizes community associations that have developed and implemented comprehensive, effective plans for protecting lives and property in the event of a disaster as well as for community restoration in the aftermath of the emergency.

When was your community's disaster preparedness plan completed? Is it a new or updated plan? Please indicate if it follows the county and state Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CERT).

Please indicate the type(s) of disaster(s) your plan addresses. (Select all that apply)

- Hurricanes
- Tornados
- Floods
- Hazardous materials incidents
- Terrorist attacks
- Fire/electrical
- Pandemic flu
- Nuclear exposure
- Other _____

What resources were consulted or employed in development of the plan? (Select all that apply)

- Outside disaster management consultant
- Local public safety/emergency response officials
- Owner/resident committee
- Florida CERT (State Emergency Response Team)
- Citizen Corps Council (FEMA)
- Red Cross
- Neighborhood Watch group
- Other _____

Please provide details on the membership of your community's Emergency Response Team. Your team could include employees, volunteers, SALT Council (Seniors & Law Enforcement Together), CERT, paid contractors and service providers. Tell us about yours.

Does the community have an Emergency Manual for property owners and residents? How has this information been made available to them? Discuss steps that have been taken to ensure emergency procedures are followed.

Do your conduct training and exercises to ensure the effectiveness of your plans? Are the residents engaged in the process?

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Does the community have an emergency warning system for residents? How will you communicate with your residents if the power is out?

Please indicate what type information and records you have gathered related to the physical property. How will these records be secured in a disaster?

What plans, if any, have you made for the following: a) Official Records and Insurance b) Business Continuation c) Supplies and Equipment, and d) Power Failures?

What are the community's re-entry processes and protocols and how is this information provided to residents before disasters occur?

Please provide details on any appropriate checklists or other tools developed to help implement the plan before, during, or after a disaster?

How have you evaluated your emergency plan(s) for effectiveness?

You may include additional information about the community that you consider relevant to the topic.

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

“The Comeback Kid”

This award recognizes communities whose boards and managers – together with industry vendors – have developed and implemented successful turnaround programs. Communities that were revitalized following major setbacks caused by physical disasters or other emergencies or that reversed decline resulting from long-term causes are encouraged to participate.

What was the history of the problems your community encountered?

Was the distress caused by a specific event (or events)? If so, please discuss the incident(s) and how the community was impacted.

What were the processes that were used to engineer the revitalization of the community? Discuss the specific steps taken to attack the problem(s). Describe the role that community leaders, volunteers and residents played in the recovery.

What was the timeframe in which you achieved a turnaround?

How did your community cope with the financial stress that resulted from dealing with its problems?

Does property sales data substantiate the success of your turnaround program? How has sales velocity been affected?

Please identify any vendors or other external agents that assisted in the turnaround. Discuss the role that they played.

What processes have been put in place to help ensure the community’s long-term health and viability?

How would you counsel another community in need of revitalization? Are there any guiding principles that you learned from your experience?

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Financial Innovation

The award will be presented to communities that have found innovative solutions to ease the impact of financial burdens during challenging economic times while maintaining the quality of amenities and services residents rely upon.

Expense Reduction

Please provide specifics on your cost reduction policies and the savings that have been achieved. Discuss any impacts on services or amenities delivered to residents.

Which of the following cost-reduction measures have been implemented? (Select all that apply)

- Elimination of community services
- Reduction in hours of operation/use of certain facilities or amenities
- Re-bid or re-negotiated contracts for services
- Elimination of positions or reduction of workforce
- Employee leasing/outsourcing
- Employee benefit reduction
- Hiring utility/energy consultant to determine if these expenses can be reduced

Income Recovery

Please describe any improved collections policies that have been implemented and tangible results that have been achieved.

Please describe actions you have taken in dealing with mortgage foreclosure cases. Discuss whether your community has filed answers in mortgage foreclosure cases, pursued personal judgments against delinquents or rented abandoned properties.

Have you stepped up the buyer screening process to ensure that all applicants have financial wherewithal to pay assessments, or do you require a capital contribution for new (resale) owners? Please provide details on changes and the impacts you have seen.

Income Production

Please indicate new revenue generation strategies that have been adopted. (Select all that apply)

- Rental of facilities for parties and events
- Increased fees to residents or guests
- Leasing of rooftop for cellular towers
- Accepting advertising in newsletter or Web site

You may include additional information about the community that you consider relevant to the topic.

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.

Trendsetter Awards

The Trendsetter Award, open to any community, recognizes innovation in any area where a community has created a service or solution that others may someday follow. This could be anything from communication and social media to programming, income production, dispute resolution, traffic management, health and fitness, and environmental protection and sustainability. No ideas are off limits!

Tell us what you've created, how the idea came about, how it was introduced, your goals and measures, and the way in which it has benefited the community and its residents. Include links to sites, photos, and videos that will help our judges understand the creativity and impact of your initiative. Please limit text to 500 words.

These are the questions for all of the categories that you will see when you complete your entry online at <http://www.flcaj.com/coe>. All entries must be submitted online by midnight January 31, 2015.