

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG)
Draft Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Pilot Program Proposal
December 12, 2013

Background: The Climate, Energy and Environment Policy Committee (CEEPC) and Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee (ACPAC) members have expressed interest in COG developing an awards program to promote CEEPC’s 2013-2016 Climate and Energy Action Plan.

A joint CEEPC/ACPAC awards task force was appointed to develop a Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Pilot Program for FY 2014. Awards task force participants from CEEPC include Hon. Del Pepper, City of Alexandria; Hon. Ryan Spiegel, City of Gaithersburg; and Nicole Steele, Alliance to Save Energy. Participants from ACPAC include Bill Butler, Maryland; Caroline Petti, Washington DC; and Glenna Tinney, Virginia.

This document outlines the proposed awards pilot program developed by the task force.

Proposed Program Design

Purpose: To recognize and encourage local jurisdictions and stakeholders in their efforts to achieve local and regional climate and energy goals under the 2013-2016 Climate & Energy Action Plan.

Any projects, programs and policy initiatives that relate to the 2013-2016 Action Plan will be eligible as long as they are current/still benefitting the community. Awards could recognize achievements, improvements, or launching of new initiatives.

Categories: Four award categories are proposed-- small communities (population under 50K), medium communities (population 50K – 200K), large communities (population over 200K) (see Figure 1) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). There will be one award per category.

Figure 1. Population Breakdown for Award Categories

Jurisdiction	Population	
Town of Bladensburg	9,328	
City of Falls Church	13,229	
City of Manassas Park	15,798	
City of Takoma Park	17,205	Under 50K
City of Fairfax	23,461	
City of Greenbelt	23,541	
City of College Park	31,208	
City of Manassas	40,605	
City of Bowie	56,129	
City of Gaithersburg	62,794	
City of Rockville	63,244	50K - 200K
City of Frederick	66,382	
City of Alexandria	146,294	

Charles County	150,592	
Frederick County	173,200	
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Arlington County	221,045	
Loudoun County	336,898	
Prince William County	430,289	
District of Columbia	632,323	Over 200K
Prince George's County	760,932	
Montgomery County	861,466	
Fairfax County	1,118,602	

All of COG’s 22 member jurisdictions would be eligible to apply. For the pilot year of the program the NGO category should be open to CEEPC stakeholders only. After the pilot, the awards task force will review lessons learned from the pilot and may reconsider who the NGO category is open to at that time.

Judging Criteria and Selection Process: All applications will be judged on the following four criteria:

- Creativity/Innovation
- Model/Transferability
- Measured Results
- Public Engagement

There will be a simple online application form in which applicants will be asked for the following information:

- Overview of project/program/policy – up to 500 words (required)
- A description of how their project/program meets each of the 4 judging criteria - up to 250 words for each criteria (required)
- Supporting documents (such as fact sheets, promotional material, photos, etc) and letters of support (optional)

As the citizen advisory committee that advises CEEPC on climate and energy issues, ACPAC would serve as the judges for the awards. ACPAC has equal representation on the committee from across the region. ACPAC members also have a diverse set of backgrounds including business/industry, education/scientific, environmental/health and civic organizations.

Applicants will be judged on a 1-5 ranking scale for each of the four judging criteria. Scores will be totaled and the highest scoring applicant per category will be awarded. A judging rubric will be developed that has a description of how to rank each criteria (i.e. what should earn a 1 versus what should earn a 5 ranking for each criteria). ACPAC will use the rubric to help them judge applications.

Promotion: The key benefits of the program that need to be promoted include:

- Recognition of environmental achievement
- Fosters healthy competition between jurisdictions
- Jurisdictions can learn from each other

The development of attractive and creative branding for the program will be developed for program marketing materials and recognition (the award). *(Use COG logo and/or Region Forward branding? Purchase a branding template already developed and adapted to our needs? Or perhaps the local artisan that creates the award design influences the branding?)*

COG staff will develop draft program materials and review them with the awards task force. A key element of the program will be the development of new webpages on the COG website that would include a description about the program, eligible programs/projects/policies and the judging criteria; a simple and brief online entry form; and page(s) to highlight awardees.

The launch of the program will be featured on COG's homepage and link to the program webpage(s). The program launch will be announced in the COG e-newsletter and at the following meetings: CEEPC, Built Environment and Energy Committee (BEEAC), COG Board, and the Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs). Emails and letters to staff should be sufficient to inform and encourage applications, as needed.

Applicants need to be given enough time to get all the internal approvals (from management and/or elected officials) to apply for the award.

Recognition: COG will recognize awardees with:

- A press release
- Social media, blog, and e-newsletter announcements
- On the COG website
- With a unique award
- The award will be announced at a minimum of 3 events involving local governments over a 2 month period
- A poster, fact sheet and brief video highlighting their awarded project/program/policy

It can be very meaningful to be recognized in front of other jurisdictions. There will be a tour of few events announcing the awards over a couple months. There will be an announcement at a CEEPC meeting; however, it would be beneficial if the award was given to a broader audience. The main presentation of awards will occur at a COG Board meeting. There will be an announcement at the COG 2014 annual luncheon and perhaps an announcement at a local relevant conference that includes a local government audience.

For the main announcement at the COG Board meeting, posters and fact sheets will be on display that the awardees can take with them to display in their communities or at their NGO. Following the Board meeting COG will issue a press release, post a blog, and make social media announcements. It will be important to get local press coverage in the winning communities. Local jurisdictions can also get the word out about their award via social media and at community meetings. Awardees and information on their project/program/policy will be posted to the COG website (this includes the fact sheet), featured on the COG homepage, and highlighted in the next COG e-newsletter.

The award itself should be a unique award that has an environmental aspect (such as made out of recycled content) and serves as a talking point. A local artisan will be sought out to design the awards.

After awardees are announced and prior to the end of 2014, a brief video will be developed (*in house or by college students?*) to highlight winning projects. The video (or video link) will be posted to COG’s website and could also be posted to awardees’ websites, featured on the jurisdiction’s local cable channel, at community events, etc.

Program Evaluation: After completion, the pilot program will be evaluated for potential continuation and modification.

Proposed Implementation

Program Development Timeline: The development of the Climate and Energy Leadership Awards Program began in the fall 2013 and the first set of awards would be recognized by fall 2014.

Month	Tasks
Sept 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CEEPC approved establishment of joint CEEPC/ACPAC awards task force to develop pilot program proposal
Oct-Dec 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awards task force held several calls to define categories, topic areas, criteria and selection process, promotion and recognition and approve draft program proposal
Jan 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACPAC comments on proposal • CEEPC comments and approval of proposal
Jan-Apr 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Branding development • Staff develops program materials (judging rubric, webpages, online application form, etc) • Awards task force reviews draft program materials • Staff hosts webinar on awards and process
May 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program launch/begin accepting applications • Staff, CEEPC and ACPAC promote awards program
June/July 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications due
July 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACPAC judges applications
Sept 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awardees announced/recognized at COG Board, CEEPC, and CAOs
Oct-Dec 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff evaluate awards program pilot and reviews with awards task force • Video development • Awardees announced at COG annual meeting and perhaps 1 additional relevant conference/event (brief video at COG annual meeting?)