



NEWS RELEASE

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Fairfield County earns national achievement awards

WASHINGTON – Fairfield County, Ohio, has been recognized with three Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The awards honor innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents.

NACo recognized Fairfield County with awards in the categories of Civic & Public Education and County Administration & Management for the following programs:

Category: Civic and Public Education
County Auditor’s Civic and Public Education Program

Category: County Administration & Management
Creating a Culture of Customer Care
Improving Governance

A summary of each program follows this press release.

Steve Davis, Fairfield County Board of Commissioners President, stated, “We are very proud of all of the Fairfield County employees who have contributed to the culture of customer care, the auditor’s public education program, and the overall effort to improve governance. While recognition is a good thing, the hard work and dedication that serve as the foundation for these services are things to celebrate.”

NACo President Mary Ann Borgeson said, “We are seeing firsthand now more than ever that counties work tirelessly to support our residents. This year’s Achievement Award-winning programs showcase how counties build healthy, safe and vibrant communities across America.”

Nationally, awards are given in 18 different categories that reflect the vast, comprehensive services counties provide. The categories include children and youth, criminal justice and public safety, county administration, information technology, health, civic engagement and many more.

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) unites America’s 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public’s understanding of county government and exercise exemplary leadership in public service. Learn more at www.naco.org





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2020 National Association of Counties Achievement Awards

Creating a Culture of Customer Care

Abstract: While customer service has always been important in the county, departments were often understandably focused on data analytics about compliance issues, such as issues relating to program standards, auditing, budgeting, or regulatory matters. To build trust internally and externally, it was essential to establish a unified culture of customer care across county departments. The program to build a culture of customer care consisted of three components: stepping up customer service assessments or surveys; highlighting the importance of customer service as a core value to inspire all departments; and establishing progressive customer care steps. In addition, in order to bolster the commitment to customer service, the program included: 1.) encouragement for individuals and groups to set goals relating to customer service, and 2.) continual improvement for essential customer service skills. The results of the program showed customer satisfaction rates of more than 90% within large, compliance-based departments; improved assessments in bureaucratic processes, such as passport processing; the development of a new revenue source; and additional successes with customer service standards. The culture of customer care strengthened and integrated departments. Information from the program helped to improve policy decisions. The coordination of services resulted in better outcomes for the public.

This program involved the County Commissioners, all Commission Departments (including Job and Family Services, the largest department), the County Sheriff, Supervised Visitation, the Clerk of Courts, and other departments.

Improving Governance

Abstract: To address the problem of low participation on multiple agency boards and a lack of candidates for new board positions, the Fairfield County Board of Commissioners developed a formalized advertising, recruitment, and evaluation process for board appointees, which included an evaluation of identified qualities for success in serving as a board member. Commissioners and administrators attended multiple follow up meetings to evaluate how board appointees were participating after they were appointed. The formalized process, not required by law or any regulation, resulted in improved board governance and resulted in an increased interest in the public for service on boards. The amount of time a board position is vacant has been reduced from more than a year in certain cases to three weeks. Board administrators have commented on how the new process has improved outcomes for their organizations.

The program involved the Board of Commissioners, County Administrator, Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, other board members and administrators, and additional elected officials.



About the Author (County Administration Awards): Carri Brown is the County Administrator for Fairfield County, Ohio. As County Administrator, Carri recommends and implements policy of the Board of County Commissioners. She supervises department heads and provides executive level leadership to elected officials, statewide associations, and local agencies to engage governments, non-profits, faith-based groups, and businesses, achieving a common mission of community improvement. Carri is a Certified Government Financial Manager and member of several professional organizations. She has earned a Bachelor of Business Administration, Master of Business Administration, and Doctor of Philosophy in Organizational Management. Her doctoral research was a correlational study on the effect of organizational citizenship behavior on job satisfaction; this was research involving Ohio's child protective service workers, employees who experience high stress, compassion fatigue, and turnover. She can be reached at carri.brown@fairfieldcounty.ohio.gov.

County Auditor's Civic Education and Public Information Program

Abstract: The Fairfield County, Ohio Auditor's office has taken the lead in developing first-of-their-kind education and guidance materials in an area of critical importance to Ohio's taxpayers and public officials: the real property valuation that forms the basis for Ohio's system of property taxation. Despite its importance to the taxpayers of the state who pay those taxes and to the local officials who rely on those taxes, and despite the fact that this system annually assesses and collects billions of dollars in property tax, until now those who seek to challenge their property's valuation at one of Ohio's 88 county board of revision have largely been left on their own, with little to guide them through this dense and confusing system. There was a substantial unmet need to make this system more accessible with effective materials to instruct and guide citizens and public officials through its complexity.

To address these needs, the Fairfield County Auditor's Office has developed a comprehensive suite of materials through its website – *The Ohio Board of Revision Resource Center (OBORRC)* – and its in-depth practice guide – *The Ohio Board of Revision Practice Handbook*. These materials, available either free of charge (the website) or at the cost of reproduction (the Handbook), provide both taxpayers and the public officials who adjudicate property valuation disputes with a wealth of user-friendly instruction and practice materials. These materials, developed and maintained with already-existing staff, have provided greater access to tax-justice for Ohio's citizens and at minimal cost. Both the OBORRC website and the Handbook have been well received and used all across the State of Ohio.

About the Author: **Jason Dolin**, an attorney, serves as the County Auditor's Board of Revision Administrator. He has been in this role since 2017 and has more than 30 years of professional experience as an attorney and educator.



Jon Slater, Jr. is the Fairfield County Auditor and has served as an elected official for more than 25 years.



Fairfield County Commissioners



Commissioner Dave Levacy



Commissioners Steve Davis



Commissioner Jeff Fix