

2015 Achievement Awards Virginia Association of Counties

APPLICATION FORM

All applications must include the following information. Separate applications must be submitted for each eligible program. **Deadline: June 1, 2015.** Please include this application form with electronic entry.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Locality: Prince William County

Program Title: Volunteer of the Quarter Program

Program Category: Communication

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Title: Asst. to the County Executive/Intergovernmental & Legislative Director

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SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Name: Christopher E Martino

Title: Deputy County Executive

Signature: Christopher E Martino



PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

2015 VACo ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER PROGRAM

**2015 Virginia Association of Counties
Achievement Award Submission**

Volunteer of the Quarter Program

Prince William County Government is home to over twenty-six government agencies. We are fortunate to receive frequent requests from County citizens wanting to volunteer their time in an effort to give back to our community. Several agencies have identified programs that can accommodate volunteer assistance and frequently have coordinated recruiting efforts to match program needs with volunteers who have time and or special talents to share. In the past five years, Prince William County Government has had 20,655 volunteers, across all departments, whose volunteer hours have totaled 725,775. These hours have resulted in countless heart-warming stories of everyday people doing small things for others that made a big difference. Volunteers neither want nor receive pay, but we recognize their contribution and wanted to say thank you with a platform that would allow us to acknowledge their generosity and showcase the many wonderful stories. The solution was the Volunteer of the Quarter.

The Volunteer of the Quarter Program (VOQ) was established to provide an innovative means to ensure that all volunteers, who so diligently and freely give their time and talents, can be nominated and recognized for their contributions. Over the last 25 years, the VOQ Program has facilitated the recognition of over 100 citizens whose volunteer efforts positively impact all County departments and the community we serve.

Every quarter, a rotating, cross-departmental VOQ Committee accepts nominations and collaborates to select the most outstanding volunteers to publicly thank and recognize. Nominations are submitted to Human Resources and then forwarded to

the Committee. Each nominee is evaluated on the following criteria: (1) willingness to "go above and beyond," exceeding expectations through providing community service, (2) solving a particular problem or meeting a community need and (3) setting an example through leadership and reliability. The decision is sometimes difficult, but the Volunteer earning the most votes is presented with a personal letter from the County Executive, and an invitation to attend a Board of County Supervisors (BoCS) meeting to be recognized. In the programs' 25 year history, every single recipient has accepted the invitation to attend the recognition - a testament to the respect they have for the agency and their desire to say thank you.

Prior to the presentation, the winner is scheduled for a personal photo session, typically at their volunteer location. This photo is incorporated into a plaque, which is produced by the County Print Shop and presented to the Volunteer at the time of recognition. The plaque is initially displayed in the atrium of the County Seat until the next quarter's presentation. This allows employees and visitors to the Administration building an opportunity to learn about the Volunteer Program and to read about specific examples of contributions from local citizens that change the lives of others. At the end of the quarter, the plaque is given to the VOQ recipient to be displayed in their home as a lasting tribute of our thanks.

The recipient's family members and staff of the nominating department are encouraged to attend the recognition ceremony to show their support and appreciation. A representative of the VOQ Committee reads the nomination and presents the Volunteer with the plaque in front of the BoCS during a televised meeting which is

broadcast on the County's local channel and re-broadcast multiple times during the quarter. The award recipient is afforded the opportunity to address the BoCS.

The most recent VOQ Award recipient offers free Financial Counseling to County citizens. During the award ceremony she shared stories of people whom she has helped that had enriched her life by changing theirs. She said she was "thankful to live in a community that recognizes volunteers" and that "it was a privilege to give back to the community that has given so much to my family".

County agencies continue to conceive of innovative volunteer opportunities and we are fortunate that we receive support from the community and our annual volunteer hours, continues to increase. The Volunteer of the Quarter Program embodies our Vision---"an organization where elected, leaders, staff and citizens work, together to make Prince William County a community of choice." It is a model that other local governments can readily adopt and make their own. The Program's only costs are the printing and framing of a quarterly plaque (\$50.00 a quarter); yet its rewards are priceless!

2015 Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award Overview

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2015 Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award Summary

Prince William County is a Community of Choice impart due to the services provided by the County Government. Many County services and programs are enhanced by volunteers and the County created a Volunteer of the Quarter Program to appropriately recognize and thank the citizens who freely give of their time and talents and volunteer regularly with County agencies.

Each quarter, representatives of a rotating Volunteer of the Quarter Committee accepts and ranks nominations. Volunteer nominees are ranked on such criteria as (1) the willingness to "go above and beyond," (2) solving a particular problem or meeting a community need and (3) setting an example through leadership and reliability. The decision is sometimes difficult, but the Volunteer earning the most votes is presented with a personal letter from the County Executive, and an invitation to attend a Board of County Supervisors (BoCS) meeting to be recognized and presented a plaque at a ceremony attended by agency representatives and their invited family and friends.

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