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# 2016 EXCELLENCE IN INNOVATION Awards Program

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<b>Project ID</b>	IGC-4
<b>Title of Program</b>	Elected Officials Summits
<b>Program Category</b>	Intergovernmental Collaboration
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<b>Implementation Date</b>	1/29/2015
<b>FLSA Designation</b>	Both (if applicable to a team)
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### **Description of Productivity Improvement**

County and municipal governments have shared, cross-jurisdictional responsibilities, concerns and opportunities. They also have shared competencies, resources and information, critical to improving service delivery. And lastly, they have a shared purpose and commitment to serve the same people, residents, who deserve local governments working cooperatively and collaboratively to address complex issues in the community.

In order to facilitate communication, build relationships and improve service delivery, the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners initiated a series of summits called the Elected Officials Summits as a way of getting local government decision makers together to discuss opportunities for collaboration. The summits have led elected officials to develop personal and professional relationships that would not have occurred otherwise, which greatly improved communications between jurisdictions and from that several intergovernmental collaborative efforts have developed as a direct result.

### **Description of why this project was initiated**

The Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners recognized the need for increased intergovernmental collaboration with the five municipalities in Cabarrus County. On January 29, 2015, the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners addressed that need by hosting the first Elected Officials Summit. The summit was also a historical gathering, being the first time in known history that the County and each of the municipal boards met together in one room.

Goals at the first summit meeting included building stronger working relationships between the county and the municipalities and identifying common interests, challenges and opportunities. Elected officials participated in strategic conversations about opportunities and challenges that cut across jurisdictional boundaries, and were challenged to reflect and share thoughts on how collaboration and collective action could improve service delivery and what those next steps should look like.

Since the first Elected Officials Summit, the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners hosted two additional summits in 2015, openly discussing the future of fire protection service (volunteers vs. municipal providers), shared capital and operation of future parks, shared EMS and fire stations, the impact of high density residential growth on school capital and operational needs, and the connectedness of how one jurisdiction's decisions impacts the others. Discussions also focused on the collective good of economic development to the area, and discussions worked to push past the competitive aspects of economic development to emphasize its benefits to the whole group.

The Elected Officials Summits served as an avenue for strengthening relationships and an intersection for increased collaboration, improved service delivery and shared resources. From these discussions, grew the following intergovernmental collaborative efforts:

- Discussions about joint land-use planning resulted in the County participating with the City of Concord on the Downtown Concord Plan steering committee.
- Collaborative efforts on the Downtown Concord Plan also led to exploring options for a joint parking deck with the City of Concord.
- Discussions about joint land-use planning also led to the County participating with the Town of Harrisburg on their West Morehead Road Plan.
- Municipalities began meeting with school leadership and executive staff, in conjunction with developers, to better understand the overall impacts of new developments and subdivisions before approval.
- Two EMS/fire station co-locations opened, one between the County and the Town of Harrisburg, and the other between the County and the City of Concord.

**Quantifiable results (sustainability, cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of service).**

**Indication of what resources were used and what was done with any accrued time savings**

The Elected Officials Summits focused on working together to provide a higher level of service to citizens through enhancing relations between elected officials and increasing intergovernmental collaboration. In doing so, the Board of Commissioners selected a central location, and made use of a County-owned facility, by hosting the summits at the Cabarrus Arena and Events Center. The Arena also provided catering services for a meal at a discounted rate.

Goal: Develop and enhance stronger relations between municipal and county elected officials.

Outcome: Participation and attendance was key to developing and enhancing relationships among elected officials. In 2015, the Elected Officials Summits saw an average participation/attendance rate of 69% of all municipal and county elected officials (measured across a series of 3 summits).

Outcome: Approximately 90% of 2015 participants provided feedback indicating they considered that the summit meetings were valuable and should continue.

Goal: Provide a discussion forum for elected officials to focus on intergovernmental collaboration.

Outcome: In 2015, the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners hosted 3 summits for a total of 7 hours of shared meeting time with an average attendance of 41 elected officials and city/county management staff. Total hourly individual contribution calculated: (41 attendees x 7 meetings hours = 287 working hours contributed to intergovernmental collaboration in 2015)

Outcome: In 2015, the working hours contributed to intergovernmental collaboration resulted in 5 new intergovernmental projects (3 joint-use land planning efforts and 2 EMS/fire co-locations).

Outcome: In 2015, intergovernmental collaborative discussions, working hours and projects impacted a total county population of approximately 192,000 residents.

**Other descriptive information**

The Elected Officials Summits were the first effort of its kind in our county. The summits have continued on a quarterly basis, and as of June 21, two summits have been held in 2016. Several school board members began attending the summits to observe the presentations and discussions in order to better understand city and county functions and budgeting. Members of the public have also attended for informational purposes as well as the opportunity to meet their elected officials.