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Alliance for Innovation

TLG 2014 Case Study Application

8/2/2013 deadline

Collaborating with the Hatfields and the McCoys While Keeping up with the Joneses, City of Colorado Springs, CO

**Collaborating with the Hatfields and the McCoys While
Keeping up with the Joneses, City of Colorado Springs, CO**
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Colorado Springs, CO 80919

Additional Contacts

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Application Questions

1 Please list your jurisdiction's population.

431,834 (2012 Census)

2 Please list which case study category you would like this application to be considered for.

- ☒ Organizational Wellness
- ☐ Technology Advancements
- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Performance Excellence

3 Would you like the application to be considered for an Innovation Award?

(eligible to Alliance member jurisdictions only)

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

4 Would you like the application to be considered for our Rapid Fire Session?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No

5 What is the intent of the project/program/service?

Through multi-sectoral collaboration, the City of CS has forged professional relationships that have vastly improved the scale and scope of services offered to its citizens. This is not a model that simply allows local government to get back to a place where we used to be, but rather to achieve a greater level of innovation, a deeper understanding of issues, a more nuanced and sophisticated set of solutions, and ultimately to provide a more responsive, efficient and higher level of service to its citizens. Additionally, collaborative partners now have much greater access to impact, which provides an important win-win for the community! 3 such examples are: CO Community Center Collaborative, promoting positive youth development and assessing the direct link between services provided by municipal community centers and favorable outcomes in health & wellness, public safety, education, civic engagement and employability. COLORADO COLLEGE, emphasizing community-based research and learning, internships, work-study, and student group activity while participating in meaningful research projects that directly respond to community-identified needs and leverage the college's ample resources that will help shape future department policy. Broad-based Urban Garden Support (BBUGS). Consisting of 3 individuals – a grant-funded master gardener and 2 AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers, this trio has helped establish gardens and/or educational programming at all community centers and offsite locales.

6 What are the costs, if any?

The only true costs associated with these collaborative ventures are the staff time involved in the various coordination of effort and menial costs associated with convenings, provision of office space, marketing materials and other resources that, while underwritten in part by the City, which otherwise would have absorbed 100% of all associated projects and services costs, is subsidized partially by collaborative partners and associated grants.

At the 2012 TLG Conference, a presentation on a then new operational model called Broad-based Partnership was presented. Paramount to the BBP, which serves as

a framework to many of these collaborative endeavors, is the reduction of cost and increase in social engagement when multiple groups engage in efforts that focused on the common good, which is a fundamental role of local government. In 2014, we wish to show the advancement of this principle to projects in which they are applied - BBP 2.0 if you will.

7 What are the savings, if any?

Insourcing of services via community partnerships and external funding offsets the direct costs to the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department and generates a realized savings of over \$75,000 annually. In just the last twelve months, the community centers have received a \$40,000 grant from National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA), been granted placement of three full-time AmeriCorps VISTA volunteers, paid entirely through federal government funds and forged over 100 partnerships, many of whom provide direct services previously provided by city employees. As a service industry in which over 80% of each center's budget is dedicated towards staffing costs, these offsets provided through collaboration is highly significant.

Additionally, utilization of college students as interns has essentially generated outcomes consistent with that of salaried employees. Joint projects have enabled the college to promote GIS technology as a powerful and innovative pedagogical tool, while the Department has benefited from student and faculty support and engagement. Student community-based research projects include the mapping of bike routes, park deserts, bike service and infrastructure, the development of a trail rating system and effective trail signage, and determining the economic impact of local iconic parks.

8 What are the innovative characteristics and explain how they improved the organization.

Common characteristics to each of these collaborations is that government remains in control of policy but operates in a much more fluid and impactful manner than it had previously. Employees, once responsible for all aspects of all projects, are now primarily coordinating the effort and recruiting and employing the expertise of local talent. This has created an influx of support, brought new projects online that were previously unimaginable and brought new energy, excitement and dynamics to the department. An example is the recent introduction of sensors at the base of the Incline trail in nearby Manitou Springs.

Through collaboration and ingenuity, sensors introduced by the department and coordinated through, amongst others, the trail's Friends group, the City of Manitou Springs, has allowed hourly foot traffic to be monitored remotely each day. This important data has benefited in myriad ways, including greater access to grant funds, accurate information to businesses and trail users who can better plan how to market and when to and when not to visit, for example. Along with city staff, college students and local citizens are working together to utilize the technology and data provided to improve all aspects of this amenity e.g. safety, parking, shuttle service. This paradigm shift within the department and organization has generated significant cost savings, expansion of projects and services and involvement amongst all sectors of the local community.

9 Please tell us about the obstacles you encountered when creating and/or implementing this program, if any.

Whenever change is introduced within an organization, even if innovative and bringing immediate positive return, one can expect there to be obstacles to address and to overcome. In the case of the strategic focus on multi-sector collaboration within the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department, primary challenges included managing resistance when precedent wasn't protocol. After decades of operating as a department without much variance, the new ideas and action taken wasn't unanimously embraced by all employees initially. However, after a relatively short period of time the resistance faded across the board and what was once seen as a direct threat was often seen as a refreshing opportunity. With respect to working closely with the greater community, there were those who, having never worked directly with government professionals, possessed a degree of skepticism and uncertainty about entering into a joint venture. Similarly, after a few "dress rehearsals", the uncertainty was by and large replaced with unyielding commitment and enthusiasm for the collaborative projects being undertaken.

10 What were the outcomes – cost savings, for citizens, any performance measures information, etc.?

Numerous positive outcomes have been and continue to be generated through department collaborations, including:

Staff and resource support

Improved health, wellness, safety, services, employability and civic engagement to the citizens

Greater transparency in government

Greater response time to citizen wants and needs

More innovative programs e.g. All weather holiday skating rink in downtown park, operation of two community centers staffed by volunteers and grant-supported employees

Infusion of younger and more ethnically diverse citizens in government services

Greater ties with academic and faith communities, both of which were previously relatively uninvolved.

Significantly greater quantitative data gathered by community members to showcase the impact of existing services and to substantiate the need for services currently not being offered or not offered as need demands

11 What are the applicable results and real world practicality?

It is our contention that any city, town or reservation can apply this model in their community and achieve similar results. We wish to present at the conference so that we can share our best practices with any/all whom are interested. This session seemingly would be relevant for and of interest to local government leaders who wish to engage their community in a way that manifests in improvement of core functions of government. This includes health and wellness, public safety, parks, trails and open space, community and recreation centers, municipal advisory committees, establishment of Friends groups and task forces.

Upon completion of this workshop, attendees will have received information and engaged in a personal experience that will be transferable to their hometown, regardless of politics, budget, population or other community traits. Best practices can be learned from what has taken and continues to take place in Colorado Springs and then applied elsewhere. To that degree, this presentation would potentially provide a needed service in addition to simply providing information.

Finally, all presenters will avail themselves to attendees beyond the session to assist however they can in supporting their efforts in developing multi-sector collaborations in other communities.

12 Was a private consultant used?

If yes, describe their involvement; and identify the consultant and/or firm, including contact information. If no, enter N/A.

N/A

13 Briefly describe what your case study presentation might include.

We want to know how you will make your session creative and unique.

We will begin with informational components through slide shows and "telling our story". Then, attendees will be broken into teams, at which time they will engage in

experiential learning that is fun, interactive and cathartic. Mediums to be employed during the information sharing portion of the presentation include PowerPoint, video, storytelling and performing arts (with a trained actor/staff present)

Group Activity Description. Several names of individuals, agencies, businesses and organizations who have supported this effort will be placed individually on a card and placed discreetly within a bag. Attendees will be randomly assigned to one of five groups. Each group will select eight cards and have 10 minutes to determine, utilizing the knowledge presented prior to this activity, how each can play a part in supporting the mission of their municipality, City of ACME, USA. Using multiple mediums, which will be furnished, each group will develop a poster that visually demonstrates the strategic role of each member to the underlying mission of the organization.

Live demonstration(s). The presenting group will model how a multi-sectoral collaboration can undertake a project that traditionally was only led by government employees and enjoy great success.

To cap the event, the presenting group will attempt to use these skills to facilitate a convening amongst attendees in which strategic and impactful resources are identified and utilized to establish a national collaborative.

14 Please enter your City/County Manager name and contact information.

There has not been a City Manager in Colorado Springs since 2011, when the form of government changed to that of Council-Mayor. Two primary points of contact are:

Steve Bach, Mayor
sbach@springsgov.com

Laura Neumann, Chief of Staff
lneumann@springsgov.com

Documents

Documents Requested *

Program Synopsis - see instructions above

Required?



Attached Documents *

Supporting Documents - additional files, such as videos, reports, etc. that you think would be helpful to the selection committee in reviewing your application.



[The challenge before City of Colorado Springs employees](#)

[Wall Street Journal article](#)

[Denver Post article](#)

[2010 Parks and Recreation budget](#)

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