

County earns awards from national, state organizations

By Hector Flores

Charlotte County recently earned awards from three state and national professional organizations.

The Human Services Department received the Florida Association of County Human Services Administrator's Human Services Best Practice Award for its client intake model. The award criteria honored the department for creating services that support citizens with physical, mental, or environmental needs to do one or more of the following: achieve self-sufficiency; have their basic subsistence needs met; avoid institutionalization; retain shelter and independence; remain mentally and physically well; maintain a healthy lifestyle and/or prevent future problems related to their needs.

These services must be deemed to be a unique contribution to human services operating in Florida. Charlotte County received this award for the integration model at the Family Services Center, which houses numerous non-profit partner agencies. The award was presented at the FACHSA annual meeting in June.

The Center for Digital Government and the National Association of Counties bestowed a 10th-place award to the county in its 20th Anniversary Digital Counties Survey. The survey, developed in partnership with NACo and conducted by CDG, identifies the best technology practices among U.S. counties, including initiatives that streamline delivery of government services; provide data analytics to allow decisions based on performance and outcomes; enhance cybersecurity; and apply innovative and emerging technologies to county priorities.

"This year's survey results highlight how counties continue to use digital tools to respond to top priorities by providing comprehensive access to services, expanding opportunities for economic development, and ensuring the ability to be resilient in the face of unexpected crisis," said CDG Vice President Todd Sander. "The Center for Digital Government is excited to recognize and congratulate this year's winners for their accomplishments and continuing efforts to use technology to make government better."

"Counties are using technology to pursue bold, cutting-edge approaches to serving our residents," said NACo Executive Director Matthew Chase. "Whether improving disaster resiliency, enhancing transportation, or exploring the potential of artificial intelligence, counties are leveraging technology to achieve local priorities. We applaud the Digital Counties Survey winners for deploying technological solutions that improve our residents' quality of life."

Charlotte County placed 10th among counties with a population between 150,000 and 249,999 residents. The county is one of only eight Florida counties to earn the award.

The Center for Digital Government is a national research and advisory institute focused on technology policy and best practices in state and local government.

The Public Information Office received a Silver Circle Award and an Award of Excellence in the City and County Communications and Marketing Association's Savvy Awards earlier this month at the organization's annual conference in Orlando. The Award of Excellence was for the PIO's Annual Digital Communications Report and the Silver Circle Award was for its Social Media Style Guide.

Congratulations to my colleagues who performed the great work required to earn these awards. We encourage and support county staff's professional development within governmental trade groups like the three above. Winning awards not only honor their achievements, it underscores to the public that the people serving them in county government employ best practices and create innovative programs and products that improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our operations.

Readers may reach County Administrator's Hector Flores at Hector.Flores@CharlotteCountyFL.gov.