



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

2010 Annual Awards Program

Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form

Deadline for Nominations: March 12, 2010

Complete this form (sections 1 and 2) and submit with your descriptive narrative.

SECTION 1: Information About the Nominated Program

Program Excellence Award Category (*select only one*):

- ☐ Community Health and Safety
- ☒ Community Partnership
- ☐ Community Sustainability
- ☐ Strategic Leadership and Governance

Name of program being nominated: Family Service Center

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: City of North Port, Florida

Jurisdiction population(s): 56,000

Please indicate the month and year in which the program you are nominating was fully implemented. (Note: All Program Excellence Award nominations must have been fully implemented by or before January 31, 2009, to be eligible. The start date should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: October Year: 2008

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in San José, California, October 2010. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Steven S. Crowell, Jr.

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of North Port

Name: Sherry Borgsdorf

Title: Director of General Services Jurisdiction: City of North Port

Name: _____

Title: _____

Jurisdiction: _____

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Sherry Borgsdorf

Title: Director of General
Services

Jurisdiction: City of North Port

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City of North Port, Florida
Family Service Center

The City of North Port established the Division of Social Services in 1980 to assist families and individuals in need of short term financial assistance. Our mission is to retain or restore dignity and direct families toward economic independence and productivity. Social Services is a non-profit governmental entity of the City of North Port – typically, these services are operated at the county level not by a municipality. In addition to the City support, funding for community assistance is received through various grants, foundations, individual donations, volunteers, churches, civic groups and schools. These charitable sources along with collaborative partners and other outreach programs enable us to provide a lifeline to our citizens in need.

Our Challenge – Meeting the needs of a growing community

The Division of Social Services began as a one-person operation, receiving funding from the City for operational costs and local community donations. As the City grew, so grew the need for services. The 2000 census set the population at approximately 22,000; just 10 years later, today's number is estimated at 55,759 – over 250% increase. This is a young family community, median age of 38, with 33% of the households considered low income earning less than 80% of the area median income. With these demographics, the need for a centralized social service center was never greater. For program assistance not available through the City, residents were required to travel to Venice or Sarasota or beyond to access services which proved to be a hardship for many who lacked transportation. In January 1999, the City partnered with Sarasota County taking the first step toward a full-service center by expanding services to the community from portable classrooms at a neighborhood elementary school.

Our Vision – A central facility to ensure essential services are available and accessible

We broke ground for the new Family Service Center in 2007 and cut the ribbon one year later. Construction was made possible through the collaborative efforts of the City of North Port, grants and in-kind donations:

- City of North Port – \$1,000,000
- Sarasota County/Community Development Block Grant – \$400,000
- Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice/Grant – \$375,000
- William and Marie Selby Foundation/Grant – \$80,000
- Suncoast Foundation for Handicapped Children/Site Work – \$100,000
- PGT/Wind-Resistant Windows – \$40,000

While the original plans called for a one-story building with approximately 7,500 sq. ft., before construction even began the City Commission approved another \$385,000 for the addition of a second floor that would provide future expansion opportunities.

Our Commitment – To Partner

In October of 2008, the City opened its doors to the newly constructed 15,000+ sq. ft. Family Service Center which not only houses the City of North Port's Division of Social Services, but 12 other non profit agencies now have a home to provide a wide range of services to the citizens of North Port. Current collaborative efforts and community partners that work out of the Family Service Center are:

- Department of Children & Family/ACCESS Program
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast

- Child Protection Center, Inc.
- Coastal Behavioral Healthcare, Inc.
- Community Pharmacy of Sarasota County
- Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County
- Jewish Family & Children's Services
- North Port Community Health Action Team (CHAT)
- Sarasota County Technical Institute/GED & Adult Basic Education Program
- Suncoast Workforce Board/Jobs ETC
- Tri County Counseling & Life Skills Center
- University of Florida Cooperative Extension/Family Nutrition and Budget Program
- Women's Resource Center of Sarasota County

In addition, the second floor shell space of the Family Service Center was recently built out with additional funding of \$400,000 from the City. The community impact of this initiative was recognized by federal leaders with the award of two (2) separate grants of \$100,000 from stimulus funds. Currently, the Sarasota County Health Department is occupying that entire space on a temporary basis while their existing facility across the street is being renovated. Once they vacate the center, both the Child Protection Center and Tri-County Counseling will be expanding their services to the second floor, freeing up office space on the first floor for new agencies. The 16-agency collaborative, North Port Wellness Partnership, is actively pursuing future partnerships which will further enhance social service program delivery to the residents of North Port.

Our Results – *To Deliver*

By providing a centralized facility that is located in the low-income census tract, the center is addressing the needs of the residents of North Port and has decreased the need for individuals to travel to multiple locations for aid. From October 1, 2008 to September 31, 2009 the Family Service Center has served more than 7,000 families and the Social Services Division provided over \$300,000 in financial assistance.

Avg. # served/mo.	Program
150	Dept of Children & Families/ACCESS – Food Stamps, Medicaid
45	Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Sun Coast
20	Child Protection Center
30	Coastal Behavioral Healthcare, Inc
20	Early Learning Coalition of Sarasota County/Child Care Connection
50	Jewish Family & Children’s Services of Sarasota-Manatee, Inc
25	North Port Community Health Action Team (CHAT)
110	North Port Social Services
87	Sarasota County Technical Institute
42	Suncoast Workforce Board/Jobs ETC
54	Tri County Counseling
17	University of FL Cooperative Ext/Family Nutrition & Budget Program
<u>22</u>	Women’s Resource Center

669 / average number of families served per month

1,700 / average number of patients served by the Health Department

Our Experience – *“Build it and they will come”*

In this case, the old adage is bittersweet. While the City of North Port is proud of its commitment to serve the needs of its community, the extent to which the need here is so great – and growing – is what makes this Family Service Center a “success.” This was only possible through the commitment of City leaders, past and present, and the many, many community partners who saw the challenge, shared our vision, and committed to help us make a difference. Do not underestimate or under invest when it comes to sustaining the vitality, the viability, the quality of life within your community. We will continue to do our part toward improving the social and economic well-being of our citizens in North Port.