

2015 Local Government Excellence Awards Program
Program Excellence Awards Nomination Form
(All programs nominated must have been fully operational for a minimum of 12 months, prior to January 31, 2015)

Deadline for Nominations Extended to March 30, 2015

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: Business Retention & Expansion

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: Corona, CA

Jurisdiction population(s): 159,132

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 for at least 12 months prior to January 31, 2015, to be eligible. The start date [on or before January 31, 2014] should not include the initial planning phase.)

Month: _____ Year: 2010

Name(s) and title(s) of individual(s) who should receive recognition for this award at the ICMA Annual Conference in Seattle, Washington, September 2015. (Each individual listed MUST be an ICMA member to be recognized.):

Name: Darrell Talbert

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: City of Corona

Name: Daniel Rittatore

Title: Economic Development Manager Jurisdiction: City of Corona

Name: Eugene Montanez
Title: Mayor Jurisdiction: City of Corona

SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact

Name of contact: Daniel Rittatore
Title: Economic Development Manager Jurisdiction: City of Corona
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Description of the Project:

Through the deepest recession in American History, Corona created and enriched relationships within their business community to ensure a successful future. Corona's internationally renowned economic development business retention and expansion program focuses on face to face visits with the companies to provide them resources that allow them to increase sales, lower overhead, increase efficiencies, and add educated and skilled labor force. Through these visits, Corona has been able to rebound well and maintain a Sub 2.0% vacancy within its 34 million square feet of industrial space. To ensure Corona keeps its vacancy percentages low, Corona utilizes a "team" approach that focuses on supplying businesses with resources or a single point of contact at City Hall during permitting or new development reducing their time to market.

Goals and Purpose of the Project:

The purpose of Corona's business retention program is to leverage the existing commodities that are currently in the city by growing them. The goal is always to grow and retain its business base by establishing solid business relationships leading to increased assessed valuation and taxable sales. Because of the business retention and expansion program Corona met its objectives of growing its four industry clusters consisting of aeronautics, aftermarket auto, food processing, and R&D/medical & technology. Growing these industry sectors created a variety of skilled jobs.

Who are the participants? Who was involved in planning/ implementation? Who has been affected?

Corona takes a team approach to building business relationships and working collaboratively to ensure Corona companies are content and prospering within the city. Although Corona's business retention and expansion program starts within city hall it takes a community effort to

help steer the program. While Riverside County Transportation Commission worked through to acquire necessary properties for the CA91 expansion, the economic development office was instrumental in relocating the majority of the impacted companies. Working closely and obtaining feedback from businesses, economic development met some unique needs always focusing on premiere customer service. Through direct engagement with affected businesses economic development was able to include elected officials; executive leadership, external partnerships, and business leaders resolve issues leading to expedited move-in times. Having these strong relationships was integral to finding new locations as well as bringing valuable resources to the companies, some of which allowed some to expand and purchase their buildings.

What has been the impact of the project? How effective has it been in furthering economic development in your community?

Corona's economic development retention and expansion program allowed the city to make a quicker recovery from the recession. Corona's proactive approach led to a 7.9% increase in taxable sales generation closing the 2013-14 fiscal year with \$3.1 billion generation. Continued efforts within the business community also resulted in sub 2.0% industrial vacancy rates, something not seen since 2005, 6% retail vacancy and 14% office vacancy. With limited opportunities to grow, economic development's proactive visitation program helped to contribute to Corona's increase of more than 7,500 jobs in Corona since 2010.

Is this project replicable or transferable? Can it be adapted for use in other communities?

What lessons have been learned?

Corona's economic development business retention program is something that can undoubtedly be transferred to other cities. With budgets being impacted and staff levels dropping Corona has

adapted by establishing college level intern pools. Cities could easily take this model to successfully conduct business retention and expansion programs. The economic development team conducted more than 650 business visits in 2014. These visits allowed businesses to stay updated on current incentives and allowed Corona's economic development staff an opportunity to work with the companies in early phases reducing challenges or providing solutions to roadblocks. A key lesson learned by the economic development team dealt with internal relationships. Acting as the single source of contact caused some grief internally because staff was not 'all in' on economic developments role. Once the economic development team approached the departments and educated them on the function of the business retention and expansion program, the departments were instrumental on streamlining processes.

In what ways is this project innovative or creative?

The Corona economic development business retention and expansion program is unique because it provides a single point of contact for all business interactions including but not limited to external partners. By utilizing atypical solutions to budget and staff issues, Corona adapted its program and continues to successfully grow its economy. This has been done by a unique mix of site visits, in depth tours, business roundtables, and superior customer service. This mix has allowed Corona's economic development team to proactively touch the companies in order to solve issues before they begin, instead of reacting to problems. Corona does not wait for business to come to them, instead they are continuously reaching out to the companies sharing the 'team' approach so companies know they have a valuable resource at City Hall.