



Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

## 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: March 3, 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: American Dream City Branding

Jurisdiction(s) where program originated: City of Arlington, Texas

Jurisdiction population(s): 375,600

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: June Year: 2014

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: Trey Yelverton

Title: City Manager Jurisdiction: Arlington, Texas

Name: Jay Warren

Title: Marketing Communications Manager Jurisdiction: Arlington, Texas

## **SECTION 2: Information About the Nominator/Primary Contact**

Name of contact: Jay Warren

Title: Marketing Communications Manager      Jurisdiction: Arlington, Texas

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## OPPORTUNITY STATEMENT:

Over the last three decades the City of Arlington, Texas has made multiple branding attempts which included “Where The Fun Begins,” “Fun Central,” and “Experience Arlington.” All of these originated from a tourism perspective and spoke solely to potential visitors to Arlington, leaving out the other rich, diverse components that make up the City

In 2012, the City Council created “Define an Identifiable Brand” as one of its four priorities and directed the City staff to work in concert with the CVB to create a multi-dimensional brand that would resonate with all of the City’s stakeholders and customers including residents, businesses and visitors.

## INTENDED GOALS OR OUTCOMES:

Arlington, Texas, the 50<sup>th</sup> largest city in the country, has a long history of rolling up its sleeves and getting things done. This includes building a lake to provide the necessary water to recruit a General Motors manufacturing plant, going up against a sitting president to lure the then Washington Senators MLB team to town, recruiting the Dallas Cowboys to build a world class football stadium in the city, and nurturing a community college into one of the largest universities in the state and country.

Those accomplishments alone may be enough for some cities. But Arlington has not always sung its own praises. And, until recently, the community didn’t stop to recognize what those combined successes reflected about Arlington as a whole or to identify the common thread that tied them together.

Last year, in a historic year-long effort, Arlington’s city, corporate, education and tourism leaders joined forces to forge a united brand, a theme that collectively represented more than any individual message could: You can live your dream here in *The American Dream City*.



For the first time in Arlington’s history, all of the major brands in the city were assembled to take a close look at Arlington’s past, present and future. That group, named the ALIGN Committee, included representatives from the Dallas Cowboys, the Texas Rangers, Six Flags Over Texas, General Motors, the UT Arlington, Downtown Arlington, the Convention and Visitors Bureau, the Chamber of Commerce, Arlington Independent School District and City departments like Parks and Recreation, Police and Economic Development. With that group’s input, and the input of hundreds of interviews with community members, the team developed a brand that tells Arlington’s complete story. The process created one common, integrated message in the same voice to all audiences. One City, One Brand.

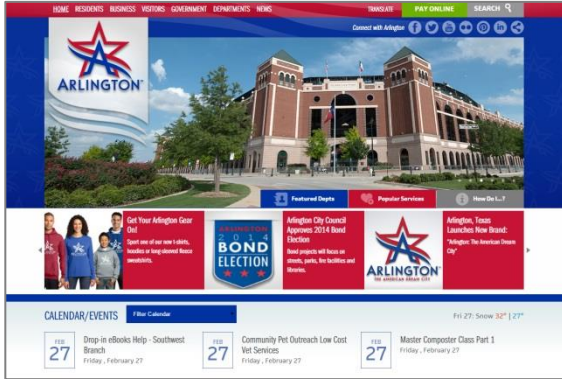


The effort established a community identity synonymous with hard work and opportunity. Arlington: The American Dream City was born. The basis for the brand was rooted in six defined brand pillars that spell dream: diversity, reach, education, aspiration, metroplex and spirit. The new identity—via a redesigned swirled, interlocked star and “A” logo—is now prominently displayed throughout the City.



## SCOPE AND VALUE OF ACTIVITY:

Once created, the goal was to make *The American Dream City* campaign and logo a fixture throughout Arlington to build familiarity with the theme. The logo is present everywhere from light pole banners and signs to billboards to marketing materials.



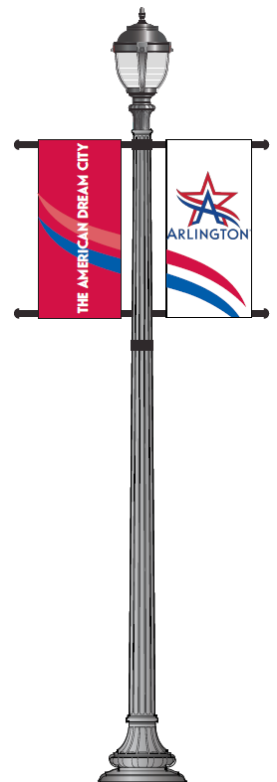
Simultaneously to the brand launch, a newly designed, responsive, user-friendly City website debuted, prominently featuring the City's brand throughout its design and storytelling. The website encourages residents and visitors to tell their "American Dream" story through their own

posts. Full-length videos also feature vignettes of business owners, longtime residents, UT Arlington students and others sharing their tales of how they have lived their dream in Arlington.

A singular message—"achieve the American Dream here"—was folded into talking points for all City of Arlington partners including UTA, the Cowboys, GM and the Rangers. The popular Fourth of July parade, one of the largest in Texas, became an ideal place to showcase the theme through promotional items such as t-shirts, fans and balls. Coasters and lapel pins also advertise the logo.



Upcoming City of Arlington events such as the American Dream City 5K and American Dream City Scholarship will use the brand in their names, further promoting awareness of the campaign.



## EFFECTIVENESS MEASURES:

Building awareness of the City's brand is a constant process. We are measuring success in multiple ways including:

- Website: The City's newly-branded website prominently tells Arlington's American Dream story through stories and videos. Dozens of residents have taken advantage the website's Dream Wall, where they can tell their American Dream story accomplished in Arlington.
- Videos: The city has released more than a dozen brand videos showcasing individuals and businesses living their dreams in Arlington. These are called brand chapters and to date more than 52,370 have viewed these.
- Partnerships: A truly successful brand requires buy in from the



City's many partner organizations, which is exactly what we have seen over the last

12 months. The Chamber of Commerce used the brand as the theme for its State of the City luncheon, the Convention and Visitors Bureau has rebranded itself with the American Dream City and is creating a marketing campaign to tell that story to visitors, Ability Connection Texas has rebranded its annual marathon in Arlington to include the City's brand, General Motors incorporated the theme into its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary program, the Arlington Museum of Art is creating an outdoor sculpture exhibit featuring the brand, and other groups including the Cowboys,

Rangers and area hotels now proudly fly the new American Dream City flag at their venues.



- Social Media: The brand has also been implemented successfully throughout our social media platforms, with branded images, phrases and hashtags used every week on the City of Arlington Facebook, Twitter and Instagram pages. #AmericanDreamCity is incorporated in multiple posts each week on social media and has been used and retweeted by partner organizations as well. During our



Fiscal Year 2014, we saw a 281% increase in followers on Facebook and a 70% increase in followers on Twitter. With increased exposure to our social media outlets, more people are seeing and recognizing the City's brand. Encouraging community members to share their own American Dream stories in Arlington through our American Dream Wall t-shirt contest has also established a direct line of communication with the community and has allowed them to share stories consistent with the brand.

These are all tangible examples of how the brand has taken root in Arlington and is being embraced by the community. People and businesses are starting to incorporate the brand throughout the City. Residents are sending us stories about how they are living the American Dream in Arlington, using The American Dream City when referring to Arlington on social media outlets and responding in a positive way to our brand chapter videos highlighting success stories around the City. The brand message reflects the community's drive to grow and improve and City Council's mission to provide the best place possible for people to live, work and play. Throughout its history, Arlington's can-do, independent spirit has helped build it into one of the country's largest cities, boasting a top level education system, world-class entertainment venues, two pro-sports teams, a strong economy and diverse, safe neighborhoods to raise families. It's that independent spirit that has aligned to create The American Dream City.

