



For Immediate Release

## **2021 Digital Counties Survey Recognizes Leaders with Creative Governance, Data-driven Strategies, Digital Equity Initiatives, and Enhanced Cybersecurity; and Announces the 2021 Future Ready Award Winner**

*Center for Digital Government survey commends counties that deploy technology practices for better government.*

**Sacramento, Calif., July 15, 2021** – The Center for Digital Government (CDG) and the National Association of Counties (NACo) have announced the winners of the 19<sup>th</sup> annual Digital Counties Survey. The survey, [conducted by CDG](#) in partnership with [NACo](#), identifies the best technology practices among U.S. counties, including initiatives that streamline delivery of government services; encourage open data, collaboration, and shared services; enhance cybersecurity; and contribute to disaster response and recovery efforts.

“Top-notch counties are utilizing the governance frameworks, investment tools, broadband implementations and more that were put in place in response to citizen needs around COVID-19...then capitalizing on those going forward to support digital experience initiatives,” said Phil Bertolini, vice-president, CDG. “The Center for Digital Government congratulates this year’s winners for their accomplishments and continuing efforts to use technology to make government better.”

“The coronavirus pandemic underscored the urgent need for bold, cutting-edge approaches to serving our residents, and technology has played a major role,” said NACo Executive Director Matthew Chase. “This year’s Digital Counties Survey winners have demonstrated true leadership when it was needed the most. We applaud their innovation and expertise in leveraging technology to achieve county goals.”

This year’s [first-place winners](#) include:

- **King County, Wash. (1,000,000 or more population category):**  
King County implemented an IT investment management tool to make assessments at completion, allowing evaluation over time. Their emerging technologies development framework supports funding technology on a continual basis. In addition, the Integrated Health Data Hub integrates data from Medicaid, Behavioral Health, and Homelessness support systems using identity-matching algorithms that provide a wholistic view of clients and allows better support of their needs.
- **Prince George’s County, Md. (500,000 – 999,999 population category):**  
Prince George’s County has a best practices-level comprehensive cyber strategy and management. Last year a Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) and Security Analyst were brought on board. A virtual Security Operations Center and a risk-management tool “Security ScoreCard” were implemented across 27 local jurisdictions. The impact of phishing and ransomware attempts was reduced by 90 percent.

- **Marin County, Calif. (250,000-499,999 population category):**  
Marin County adapted IT Governance to circumstances in the chaotic onset of the pandemic. County departments formed a collaboration, the Marin County Data (“MCData”) Committee, to develop data-driven strategies and programs which link the performance measurement program and departmental needs. Both data governance and open data were connected to data-driven decisions which improved transparency as well.
- **Cabarrus County, N.C. (150,000-249,999 population category):**  
Strategic planning and priority alignment of technology resources from the start of the COVID-19 crisis allowed Cabarrus County to respond quickly. This alignment continues to benefit the county. They also added a county innovations manager position whose work is aligned with IT as well as the Board of Commissioners, stakeholders, and department leaders.
- **Albemarle County, Va. (up to 150,000 population category):**  
Last year during the pandemic the county laid more fiber broadband than ever, opened free Wi-Fi locations, and worked with partners across the region to advance broadband. The County also used CARES funding to complete three other broadband projects last fall. In March they received an award for a broadband grant of 2.2 million dollars!

**FUTURE READY AWARD 2021:** The Future Ready Awards were created to recognize the innovative vision that states, cities, and counties have for the impact of technology on the people they serve – specifically those jurisdictions that are laying the foundation for the disruptive and converging forces that are shaping an uncertain future.

- CDG presents the 2021 Future Ready Award to Hennepin County, MN. The county established a Disparity Reduction program using technology to reduce the digital divide for students and residents. Staff retention and longevity are encouraged by allowing IT staff to split their time equally between their current job and learning new skills. In addition, the county IT’s process of developing trend waves for emerging technologies allows them to better understand the dynamics and use of new technology.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the full list of winners.

The Center for Digital Government thanks our corporate members Accela, Amazon Web Services, CAI, Crown Castle, Dell Technologies, EasyVote, Infor, Laserfiche, Medallia, Microsoft, Oracle, Pure Storage, ServiceNow, SHI, Spectrum Enterprise, Splunk, TeamDynamix, Whyline, and Yubico for their support to make this survey and awards program possible.

[CLICK HERE](#) for the article on the top 10 winners who are being honored at a special virtual awards event on July 15.

**About the Center for Digital Government:**

The [Center for Digital Government](#) is a national research and advisory institute focused on technology policy and best practices in state and local government. CDG is a division of [e.Republic](#), the nation’s only media and research company focused exclusively on state and local government and education.

**About NACO:**

The [National Association of Counties](#) (NACo) strengthens America's counties, including nearly 40,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Founded in 1935, NACo unites county officials to advocate for county government priorities in federal policymaking; promote exemplary county policies and practices; nurture leadership skills and expand knowledge networks; optimize county and taxpayer resources and cost savings; and enrich the public's understanding of county government.

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