



Be a Beacon: The Power of Recognition

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From an early age, we learn that every choice has a consequence. We also learn that not all consequences are negative — hard work and perseverance can pay off with good grades, winning scores and successful careers. For the 59 cities and counties in California that have chosen to participate in the Beacon Award: Local Leadership Toward Solving Climate Change, the consequences of their choices and actions have proved quite positive for them and the communities they serve.

Since its inception in 2010 the Beacon Award program has served as a catalyst for innovative and effective solutions addressing climate change at the local level and for informing the community about these activities. The program honors local governments' voluntary efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save energy and adopt policies and programs that promote sustainability. In addition to the annual awards ceremony, online feature videos and articles, the Beacon Award program provides participating local agencies with support services, webinars and small group discussions at conferences and online. The program offers a unique opportunity to recognize the hard work of elected officials, staff and community members by celebrating local sustainability efforts.

Making Measurement Meaningful

The Beacon Award program rewards teamwork and makes the sometimes unglamorous process of data collection meaningful. Participants in the program receive valuable support and encouragement from Institute for Local Government (ILG) staff and its energy utility partners. The team helps local agencies collect and organize data in an effort to understand how sustainability practices influence local efforts to conserve energy and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

To participate in the Beacon Award program, a city or county must sign up, and its city council or board of supervisors must pass a resolution endorsing its participation. Typically, a participating community already has a climate action plan and greenhouse gas inventory in place or is implementing sustainability activities. The Beacon Award program focuses on three areas of accomplishment: greenhouse gas emissions reduction, energy efficiency and 10 best practices. Within each area, a community can earn Beacon Spotlight awards — silver, gold and platinum — based on its level of achievement. To win a Beacon Award, participating agencies are required to complete specific activities related to energy savings, greenhouse gas reduction and sustainability best practices.

About the Beacon Award

The Beacon Award program is sponsored by the Institute for Local Government and the Statewide Energy Efficiency Collaborative (SEEC). It is funded by California utility customers and administered by Southern California Gas Company, San Diego Gas & Electric Company, Pacific Gas and Electric Company and Southern California Edison under the auspices of the California Public Utilities Commission. For additional stories and more information about how to participate in the Beacon Award program visit www.ca-ilg.org/BeaconAward. For information about SEEC, visit <http://californiaseec.org>.

“It helps create a framework to build upon past work and to measure future progress through a straightforward process,” says Chula Vista Mayor Cheryl Cox. “The Beacon Award program is an opportunity to exchange ideas and lessons learned.”

Sharing Models of Innovation

Local agencies participating in the Beacon Award program benefit from the innovation of other participants by learning best practices via webinars, conference sessions and informal information exchanges. ILG’s updated Sustainability Best Practices Framework (www.ca-ilg.org/sustainability-best-practices-framework) incorporates the activities of Beacon participants. As a result, the framework offers cities and counties a variety of activities and programs that differ in complexity and can be easily adapted to fit the unique needs and circumstances of individual communities.

Celebrating Success

The City of San Rafael was recognized with the first-ever Beacon Award at the League of California Cities 2013 Annual Conference & Expo (click here [for more about San Rafael’s work](#)). Thirty-three other Beacon participants received Spotlight Awards for demonstrated achievements in energy efficiency, greenhouse gas reduction and sustainability best practice activities. Who will be honored this year? Will it be your community?

About the Institute for Local Government

This resource is a service of the Institute for Local Government (ILG) whose mission is to promote good government at the local level with practical, impartial, and easy-to-use resources for California communities.

ILG is the nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and education affiliate of the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties. For more information and to access the Institute’s resources on the Beacon Program visit www.ca-ilg.org/beaconaward.

The Institute welcomes feedback on this resource:

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