

Our Mission: Providing quality services through responsible leadership, innovation and the cooperation of dedicated people

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### **County Board celebrates Employee Recognition Awards**

The Washington County Board of Commissioners recognized employees for exceptional service April 5, through the county's Employee Recognition Awards.

The program honors exemplary performance in the areas of customer service; diversity, equity and inclusion; employee engagement; innovation; teamwork; and excellence in county government.

Throughout 2021, county employees nominated fellow employees for the service awards. A committee of county employees gathered in February to review, provide feedback, and make recommendations on the nominations to the County Board's Personnel Committee.

The Customer Service Award honors an individual or team whose performance exemplifies the county value of ensuring services delivered to the public are up to the organization's highest standards and consistently meet or exceed the needs of external customers.

The recipient of the Customer Service award is Colleen Carter, Public Health Nurse II with Public Health & Environment, for her work with the county's COVID-19 vaccination clinics.

Carter led most COVID-19 vaccination efforts in the Washington County Jail, and scheduled, coordinated, and participated in every mobile vaccine event in the community, including events at schools, farmers' markets, agricultural businesses, and more. Carter also worked with homebound individuals, ensuring timely and compassionate care to many people in their homes, offering follow up for their second doses and boosters as needed.

Carter provided 471 vaccinations with more than 67 distinct events to the Washington County Jail, mobile clinics, and visiting clients in their homes.

A great place to live, work and play...today and tomorrow

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award honors an individual or team who encourages a workplace and/or adapts service delivery in a way that provides a culture of security and support around acceptance, belonging, and inclusion for people of all identities. The recipient of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Award is the team of Eden Rogers, Erica Ellefson, Nicki Castro, David Churchich, Allan Brandt, and Don Roberts from Public Works for their work in the approach to awarding of bids for county projects.

The county typically uses a design-bid-build approach to contracting. This approach favors established, larger contractors who have more resources. In 2020, the Public Works team worked with the Minnesota Department of Transportation Office of Civil Rights and the Washington County Attorney's Office to develop a process to create small construction contracts that could be awarded to women and minority-owned businesses after a simple and easy quote system. The outcome was that construction bids were awarded to minority-owned businesses in a way that remained fiscally responsible. The process and outcomes were so successful that Public Works will adopt this as a standard practice and will continue to do this type of work moving forward.

The Employee Engagement Award honors an individual or team who encourages and promotes an environment within the county in which all employees are committed to the mission of the organization and motivated to work hard and perform their best.

The recipient of the Employee Engagement award is Kristyn Stephens, Economic Support Supervisor, for her work in the Community Services department.

Stephens encourages employees on her team throughout the many changes that come their way. She listens to the team's suggestions, helps implement suggestions that will improve the outcome of their work, and she respects and trusts her team. Stephens' positive words and actions make employees want to come to work and do their best.

The Innovation Award honors innovation and creativity in delivering services in a more efficient or effective manner. The recipient of the Innovation award is JJ Williams, Parks Guest Supervisor II, for his work in implementing a new computer system in the Parks division.

The new system is responsible for financial transactions in excess of \$1.5 million annually. The system supports campsite reservations, facility reservations, program registrations, equipment rental, cancellations, permits, ticketing, passes, email confirmations, credit card authorization, campground

information, and operational and management reports. While many staff supported this initiative, JJ was the lead staff person responsible for the overall implementation of this system from hardware, software, web integration, and staff training components.

The Teamwork Award honors a team of employees who have worked collaboratively to deliver exceptional services or bring about a new program, process, procedure, or method of service delivery. The recipients of the Teamwork award are Kesha Marson and Meg Mikulski, Social Workers in the Community Services department, for their work in the county jail.

This team was brought on in early 2021 into newly-created social worker positions for the jail. The team was tasked with finding the gaps in inmate mental health in the jail. Kesha and Meg provide education to staff in roll call, respond to crisis calls from staff, communicate care plans, and other strategies, and track and report statistics to the jail and Community Services supervisors on a regular basis.

The county has benefited from the work of this team and all they have accomplished in less than one year. Inmate safety has increased, officer awareness and training has increased, inmates are receiving assistance with release plans in place, and county deputies are being connected to individuals for welfare checks.

The Excellence in County Government Award honors an individual or group of individuals who has made an outstanding contribution to Washington County and contributed to meeting the county's vision as a great place to live, work, and play...today and tomorrow.

The recipients of the Excellence in County Government Award are Joanne Helm, Deputy Director of Property Records and Taxpayer Services, and Bonnie Gilfillan, Library Services Assistant I in the Library.

Helm is a recognized expert in the Property Records and Taxpayer Services department and her knowledge of the state property tax system is exceptional. She has served county residents for nearly 34 years. She has a unique ability to understand complex problems and issues and communicate and respond to property owners in plain language. Her work in the property tax system has been instrumental in the county's financial stewardship.

Bonnie Gilfillan has worked for Washington County, providing accessible, high-quality services for more than two decades. She is great at her job, especially at providing customer service to library

patrons. She is a core member of the Oakdale Library team and a friendly, familiar face for many regular library customers. Many library patrons come in and ask for her by name. She is always open to learning new ways of doing things.



**Joanne Helm, Property Records and Taxpayers Services Deputy Director, is a recipient of the Washington County Excellence in County Government award. She is with commissioners Lisa Weik, District 5, and Fran Miron, District 1, Helm, County Administrator Kevin Corbid, and Commissioner Gary Kriesel, District 3.**



**Bonnie Gilfillan, Library Services Assistant, is a recipient of the Washington County Excellence in County Government award. She is with commissioners Lisa Weik, District 5, and Fran Miron, District 1, Gilfillan, County Administrator Kevin Corbid, and Commissioner Gary Kriesel, District 3.**