

The logo for ASARCA, consisting of the letters 'ASARCA' in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by a registered trademark symbol (®).

ASARCA®

Americas Sustainability and Resiliency Community Alliance

From the growing impact of climate change and lack of engaged citizens to housing affordability and community health, municipal governments are facing some of this country's toughest challenges. On the frontlines of resilient and sustainable development, municipalities act as laboratories for emerging better practices. By convening a collaborative dialog on emerging better practices across multiple sectors, ASARCA will discuss, share and celebrate the world-changing work happening across American communities.

We will use the top applicants as case studies to be share in our online library of emerging better practices focused on sustainable and resilient community initiatives. A significant part of our work is focused on identifying and celebrating exemplary communities that embrace continuous improvement for sustainability and resiliency in four categories: civil engagement, community health, built environment and management of natural resources.

What is resiliency? It is defined as a measure of the sustained ability of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations the capacity of an individual, community or system to adapt in order to sustain an acceptable level of function, structure, and identity.

What is a sustainable community? A sustainable community is economically, environmentally, and socially healthy and resilient. It meets challenges through integrated solutions rather than through fragmented approaches that meet one of those goals at the expense of the others. And it takes a long-term perspective – one that's focused on both the present and future, well beyond the next budget or election cycle.

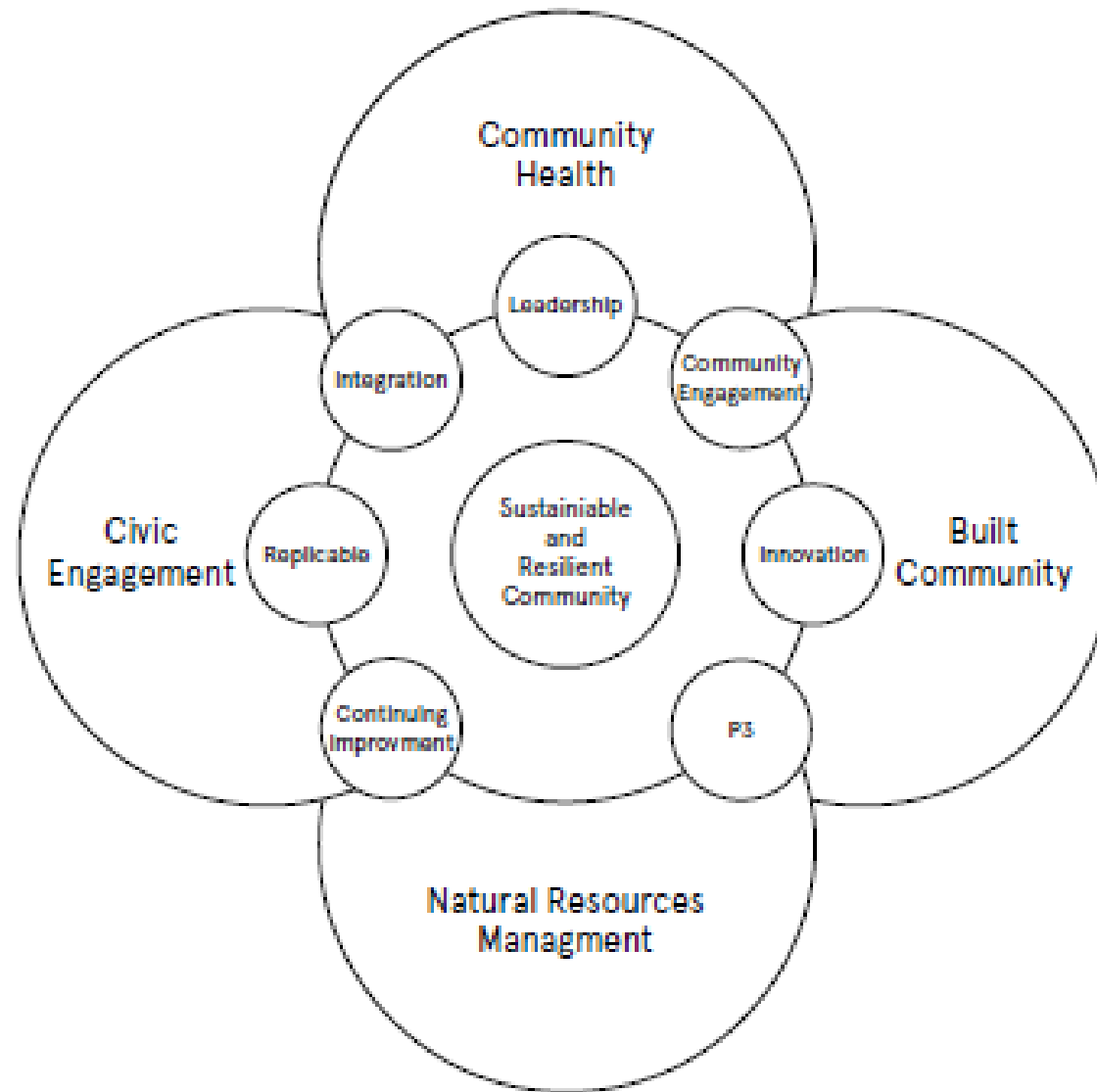
Our focus is lifting up good works performed across the continent, highlighting municipalities that are leading the way. Once a year we gather key stakeholders; academics, municipal officials and social impact investors and entrepreneurs for workshops, conversations and networking among elite sustainability professionals. Our annual award recognizes emerging better practices in the following categories:

Community Health

Built Environment

Natural Resource Management

Civic Engagement



Our application criteria for each vertical; civic engagement, built community, natural resource management and community health is derived from the following leading organizations:



KETTERING
FOUNDATION

communities *of excellence* 2026



**Institute for
Sustainable
Infrastructure**

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Celebrate municipal policy innovation along key verticals to encourage and disseminate emerging better practices to a national audience of municipal leaders and stakeholders.
- 2) Establish ASARCA as a partner and support mechanism for the US Conference of Mayors, National League of Cities and municipal support organizations to encourage and disseminate sustainable and resiliency-minded policies nationally.
- 3) Via annual policy and awards conference, encourage municipal leadership and staff to break down silos, innovate established models and forge new partnerships to tackle critical, 21st century challenges

Advisory Board

Dr. John Tracy serves as Director of the Texas Water Resources Institute and is a faculty member in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Texas A&M University.

Weir Labatt served as a member of the Texas Water Development Board from February 2002 until June 2012. He represented the TWDB on the Western States Water Council and served as Chairman from July 2010 through June 2012.

Sergio Del Barco, He is the Health, Safety & Wellbeing Advisor at BT Americas, responsible for providing professional support and advice on a full range of Health, Safety and Wellbeing issues to the BT Americas businesses.

David N. Sundwall, M.D.: Professor – Public Health, University of Utah School of Medicine. Commissioner of Health and the Executive Director of Utah Department of Health. Current Appointments; Vice Chair - MACPAC– General Accounting Office, National Governors Association - State Alliance on e-Health; member National Academies of Science - Institute of Medicine (IOM), National Health Policy Forum - Chair, State Policies Technical Advisory Group National Academy of State Health Policy (NASHP) Steering Committee on State's Health Reform, RWJ Foundation – National Advisory Committee on Health Insurance for ALL.

Chris McSwain President and CEO IBI, retired from Walmart where he served as Vice President, U.S. Benefits supporting 1.4M associates.

Ed Rightor Ed is currently the Director of Strategic Projects in Dow Chemical's Environmental Technology Center. In this role he works with Dow Businesses, Operations and Corporate groups, to reduce emissions, waste, freshwater intake, and energy use. He serves as the facilitator of Dow's Corporate Water Strategy Team (CWST). He's served externally with the International Council of Chemical Associations leading a roadmap on routes for energy/GHG footprint reduction for catalytic processes, and recently as chair of the American Chemistry Council's Catalysis Working Group. He holds a Ph.D. in Chemistry from Michigan State University and a B.S. in Chemistry from Marietta College.

Continued:

Kinnan Golemon, He has provided professional advice, counsel, strategic planning and public advocacy on complex environmental, energy and natural resources issues for more than 47 years. A founding member of the State Bar of Texas Environmental and Natural Resources Law Section and a prominent leader within the American Bar Association (ABA) on natural resource development, energy and environmental law issues. He serves on the Advisory Board of the Kay Bailey Hutchison Center for Energy, Law & Business at the University of Texas School of Law, and also as a member of Constellation Energy's Public Sector Energy Advisory Board.

Anthony Kane is Managing Director of the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure in Washington, DC where he oversees and directs the research and further development of the Envision rating system for sustainable infrastructure. Kane holds a Bachelor of Architecture summa cum laude from Virginia Tech and a Master in Design Studies from the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Patricia Montoya, MPA, BSN, RN, is the Executive Director of the New Mexico Coalition for Healthcare Value. Pat held political appointments under the Clinton Administration within the US Department of Health and Human Services. These appointments included a senate confirmed position as the Commissioner for Children, Youth and Families Administration. She served as Secretary of Health for the State of New Mexico for Governor Bill Richardson.

ABOUT US

Global Knowledge Exchange Network and Wye River Group

Wye River Group is a nonpartisan, not for profit entity, which serves as catalyst to raise awareness and broaden perspectives to enable cross stakeholder engagement. The organization tackles challenging public policy issues such as water and health and health care.

Based in Washington DC WRG and its sister organization GKEN.org (Global Knowledge Exchange Network) create an intellectual exchange of fresh ideas in a neutral environment, employing a dynamic process that works to stay ahead of emerging trends. We identify and advance approaches that build on the value of consensus and public private partnerships.

Contact: Jon Comola, Founder WRG and GKEN jrcomola@wrgh.org

Tel: 512 695 8806

ASARCA AWARDS

- **Eligibility:**
- Open to all municipal and county governments. There are four award categories applicants may apply for and be recognized for one of more awards.
- The Judges will select two finalists in each of the four categories. The finalist will be invited to present their initiative at the annual awards, all costs paid. The winners will receive \$ 3,000.00. Both the winner and runner-up will received a framed certificate recognizing their outstanding national leadership.

Basic Requirements

- Applicants can be municipalities of any size
- Programs are benchmarked and continuously evaluated
- Applicants must be willing to provide information on the Sustaining Communities Awards website and other outlets selected by the host organizations
- Applicants must be willing to participate in ongoing profiling for a minimum of twelve months, e.g. at regional seminars, periodical newsletters and on the website.
- Applicants will not use supporting materials with their application.
- Finalists will attend the annual Awards Summit to present their program. No videos will be allowed for this presentation.

Community Health

- Pursuing an education, achieving economic security and participating as a productive member of society all depend on sound health. Health, in turn, is strongly influenced by the places people live. Too often, the deck is stacked against people in low-income neighborhoods. They are disproportionately affected by polluting industries, violence, inadequate housing and economic underinvestment.
- Everyone should have access to resources that support health: things like safe, affordable housing and neighborhoods, fresh food and economic opportunities. We seek to recognize programs that help communities overcome the environmental and social disadvantages that contribute to poor health so that everyone has the chance to enjoy productive, self determined lives.

Natural Resource Management

- Natural Resources Management refers to the sustainable utilization of major natural resources, such as land, water, air, minerals, forests, fisheries, and wild flora and fauna. Together, these resources provide the ecosystem services that underpin human life.
- With our collective natural resources foundation coming under increasing pressure worldwide, we want to recognize and support municipalities that are developing and deploying sustainable and innovative approaches to how we interact with our planet.

Built Environment

- The world is urbanizing quickly. The built environment includes all of the physical parts of where we live and work. Factors such as overcrowding, air pollution, too much noise, and a lack of access to nature contribute to the emotional and physical stress of urban life. As cities continue to grow, we need to design our buildings, neighborhoods, and commons to promote human health.

Civic Engagement

- Civic engagement is working to make a difference in the civic life of our communities and developing the combination of knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make that difference. It means promoting the quality of life in a community, through both political and nonpolitical processes.
- We work to recognize cities that are revolutionizing civic life by making their communities more transparent, open, and accessible.

Evaluation Criteria and Self Assessment Guidance on the following pages.

Please check how your programming efforts match the listed guidelines, however, you do not have to fulfill each listed item to apply for the Awards. Your application will be evaluated based on your responses to the questions beginning on page seven.

Leadership commitment & engagement

- Major stakeholders (e.g. civic orgs, business, charity, govt.) are mobilized and committed to integrate the sustainability goals into the community goals and values.
- Necessary permissions, resources and support have been obtained.
- Key evidence of this commitment is provided by developing and adopting a comprehensive policy that is signed by the enterprise's highest authority, which clearly indicates that sustainability and resiliency are part of the communities strategies.

Community Engagement:

Community leaders profit and non profit and their representatives are actively involved in every step of the process from planning to evaluation considering their opinions and ideas.

Participants feel they have valued means of expression in the initiatives.

The initiative (s) enjoys broad participation across the community

Public/Private Partnerships:

- Senior management is committed to use a sustainability/resiliency “filter” for all decisions.
- The sustainability initiatives are integrated into the community’s overall strategic plan.
- Cross functional teams or matrices are used to reduce isolation of work groups and sustainability and resiliency committees have been established.
- Programs are evaluated and continuously improved.
- Measurement in various areas is conducted: health, employee engagement and participation, and financial performance.
- A comprehensive view to sustainable and resilient environment is maintained and all aspects to identify a wider range of effective solutions are examined.
- The program(s) have a plan for continued operation and ongoing improvements.

Follow Continuous improvement cycle:

- Strategic commitment to a sustainable and resilient environment has been mobilized.
- The required resources have been assembled.
- The current situation and the desired future have been assessed.
- Priorities have been developed.
- The four components of the sustainability/resiliency model have been addressed (or plans have been made to address these).
- A comprehensive overall plan and specific project action plans have been developed by learning from others, for example, consulting experts from a local university or asking experienced leaders to act as mentors, visit other communities, consulting the virtual world.
- The plan has been implemented.
- The acceptance and effectiveness of the plan has been evaluated.
- When circumstances indicate that it is needed programs have been improved.

Innovative:

- The program contributes to learning and building an evidence base
- The program introduces applications that have demonstrated success in other areas into new settings and/or implements a novel approach.

Replicable:

- The program shows promise for implementation by other communities.
- The program shows promise for implementation on a larger scale.
- The program shows promise for implementation in diverse environments (e.g., urban and rural, large and small communities).