



Loudoun County, Virginia

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NEWS RELEASE

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Virginia Association of Counties Recognizes Loudoun for Model Programs

Three Loudoun County programs have been recognized for excellence and innovation by the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo). The county's efforts to prevent food insecurity, help Loudoun entrepreneurs and increase equitable access to sidewalks and trails have received 2023 Achievement Awards from VACo.

Loudoun County Public Library Fights Food Insecurity

The [Loudoun County Public Library](#) (LCPL) has developed several innovative food drives, programs and special projects to help members of the community who are food insecure and to raise awareness of the issue. For example, after the library eliminated fines for overdue items, the popular "Food for Fines" program was revamped as the "Loudoun Food Drive," in which residents were encouraged to drop off food and visit loudounfeeds.org. Some 6,221 pounds of food (roughly 5,184 meals) were collected. The overall effort also included special library programs and projects to help address food insecurity and included partnerships with many nonprofit organizations and agencies, including [Virginia Cooperative Extension – Loudoun](#).

Loudoun Innovation Challenge

[Loudoun Economic Development](#) and the [Loudoun County Economic Development Authority](#) (EDA) created the [Loudoun Innovation Challenge](#) to promote entrepreneurship and business growth by identifying and supporting companies that are developing truly innovative products and services in Loudoun County. Any Loudoun County business with an innovative concept is encouraged to apply for the business pitch competition, which awards prize money for entrepreneurs to take their business to the next level. The Innovation Challenge is funded through revenue generated from the EDA's tax-exempt bond financing, which supports commercial development in Loudoun. To date, nearly \$500,000 has been invested directly into Loudoun County's small business community through the Innovation Challenge program. The [2023 Innovation Challenge](#), which will award a total of \$150,000 to companies dedicated to investment in Loudoun County, opens August 7, 2023.

Sidewalk and Trails Program – Equity Lens

Loudoun County developed an innovative framework and approach to increase equitable access to sidewalks and trails in the county. The Sidewalk and Trail Program is included in the [Capital Improvement Program](#) with funding available to plan, design and implement three to five miles of sidewalk, shared-use path or regional trail per year. To determine which missing bicycle and pedestrian links to address first, the [Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure](#) initially developed a data-driven method based mostly on demand and safety metrics. To incorporate equity considerations, an equity lens framework was developed, in consultation with the [Loudoun County Office of Equity and Inclusion](#) and using available public health indexes and the

average percent of sidewalk and trail network completed within a census tract. This framework establishes a set of objective standards that can be used in planning and prioritizing future sidewalk and trail projects.

More Information

The Loudoun County programs were among 33 recipients of the 2023 Achievement Awards for which VACo received 135 submissions. More information about the awards program is available at vaco.org.

The Loudoun County government has a number of award-winning programs and services. Find out more at loudoun.gov/awards.

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