

## Communities of Excellence 2026 Recognizes Eight Communities on their Journey to Community Performance Excellence

Denver, Colorado – On October 24, eight communities received formal recognition for their commitment to the health and wellbeing of residents and pursuit of community performance excellence. The “Commitment to Community Excellence” and “Journey to Community Excellence” Certificates were presented during a luncheon at the 2018 National Baldrige Fall Conference.

The “Commitment to Community Excellence” recipients are: Albany/Bethany, Missouri; Excelsior Springs, Missouri; Kings County, California; and Toledo, Ohio. At this level of recognition, communities respond to the Community Profile section of the Community Excellence Builder, describing their mission, vision, and key factors that lead to success.

For the second level of the recognition program, communities continue to learn and develop effective approaches that help improve their community’s performance. In addition to the Community Profile, applicants describe key processes in response to Category 1: Community Leadership and Category 2: Community Strategy. The Journey to Community Excellence recipients are: Brookfield/Marceline, Missouri; Kanawha County, West Virginia; San Diego County’s South Region, California; and West Kendall, Florida.

The criteria for recognition were developed in partnership with the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. In parallel with Baldrige, the purpose of Communities of Excellence 2026 and the Recognition Program is threefold:

1. To develop a nationally recognized standard of community performance excellence
2. To establish role models of that standard through the Recognition Program
3. To encourage continuous improvement through sharing of best practices and provision of feedback to communities on the performance excellence journey that will lead to better outcomes for the residents they serve.

“The Baldrige Program, and indeed the entire Baldrige community, are excited about helping communities achieve ever-higher levels of performance and improved quality of life for their residents,” said Robert Fangmeyer, Director of the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program. “In fact, that is essentially the mission of the Baldrige Program: to benefit all U.S. residents through improved competitiveness. Partnering with Communities of Excellence 2026 enables us to carry out that mission on a much broader level, with the potential for greater reach and impact.”

Visit our [website](#) for more information about the eight communities participating in the National Learning Collaborative: A Systematic Approach to Excellence in Communities: Using a Baldrige-based Framework to Lead Transformation.

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**Contact: Stephanie Norling**  
858-342-8185 or [snorling@communitiesofexcellence2026.org](mailto:snorling@communitiesofexcellence2026.org)

### About Communities of Excellence 2026

Communities of Excellence 2026’s mission is to improve the quality of life for our nation’s residents by assisting communities in implementing the Baldrige-based Communities of Excellence framework.