



2017 Community Excellence Awards

Application Form

Best Practices, Community Connections

Please complete and return the application form by **Friday, June 23, 2017**. If you have any questions, contact UBCM at awards@ubcm.ca or (250) 356-5193.

SECTION 1: Applicant Information

Local Government: District of West Vancouver

Complete Mailing Address: 750 17th Street
West Vancouver, BC V7V 3T3

Contact Person: Emily Willobee

Position: Policy and Programs Planner,
Engineering Services

Phone: 604-921-2178

E-mail: ewillobee@westvancouver.ca

SECTION 2: Staff Contact

An invitation to attend the UBCM Community Excellence Awards Breakfast Reception will be sent out via e-mail in early September. Winners will not be named before the ceremony.

Please provide the contact information for the person in your office who should receive and reply to the invitation, on behalf of the elected officials/staff who will be in attendance at the UBCM Convention.

Staff Contact Person: Aaron Bichard

Position: Community Programs Coordinator,
Engineering Services

Phone: 604-921-3498

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SECTION 3: Project/Program Information

1. **Name of the Project/Program:**

Student Video Contest

2. Project/Program Summary. Please provide a summary of your project/program in 150 words or less

West Vancouver Engineering Department's Student Video Contest challenges local students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 to create a 60- to 90-second video on a topic provided by the municipality for a chance to win up to \$750.

Engineering Department staff have selected contest topics that are relevant to current, local challenges where individual actions are a contributing factor and changing behaviour is part of the solution. Staff provide students with high-level parameters about the topic and point students to local and regional resources where they can learn more. Students take this information, write scripts and create videos that include a call to action for their fellow citizens and post their videos to social media to be eligible for the contest prizes.

The contest uses video as a tool to engage and educate the students, which in turn engages educators and parents on topics that help push conversations about residents' responsibilities that pertain to municipal services. The premise is that when our residents are civically engaged and take pride in their community and its resources, they help take better care of it.

The program is in its second year. West Vancouver first launched the contest in 2016 with a theme of "Water" and asked students to focus on conserving water and to learn more about West Vancouver's water utility, which is one of few fully metered water services in the Metro Vancouver region. The 2017 theme was "Our Waste. Our Responsibility" and encouraged students to produce videos about key topics such as: Illegal Dumping, Litter, and How to Recycle Right.

The response has been overwhelmingly positive.

SECTION 4: Project Details

Please answer each question in 250 words or less (our judges value directness and brevity). If you experience difficulty answering a particular question, consider the aspects of your program that may relate to the question and show us how they are linked. Remember to include measurable results whenever possible.

3. Inspiration. What was the inspiration behind the program/project?

Civil engineering infrastructure and services play a role in the daily lives of all of us, but they're not necessarily something most pay close attention to. As long as the services are running smoothly, people can easily take for granted that water flows from the tap and that the recycling is collected every Tuesday. When we take these services for granted, we can lose respect for and devalue them by leaving the tap on, littering, or failing to sort our recycling correctly. All these small actions can add up to big costs when it comes to providing service to residents.

Drought-like conditions during the summer of 2015 and the intense water-use restrictions had everyone talking, and the District was looking for a creative way to keep the conversation about water conservation moving forward long after the drought had ended.

Private industry seemed to be having a lot of success generating dialogue with customers through the use of social media and contests, and using videos more often as a great

marketing tool.

We thought video could be a great, fun way to draw attention to some of these issues, engage and educate residents, and encourage people to take ownership of their role in making their municipal services more efficient and effective.

4. Goals. What did you set out to accomplish with the program/project? How effectively did you meet your goals?

We set out to achieve the following key goals:

- Increase community connections, educate residents about their role in municipal services
- Encourage desired behaviours (demand-side management)
- Develop fresh content for social media platforms, grow our networks

The contest has helped make progress on these high level goals. First the act of planning, promoting the contest, as well as sharing the video results have all engaged a large number of community members. Teams of students working on videos for the contest are talking about these topics, and bringing that conversation to their schools and homes. Results of the contest and the video content have been shared with the greater West Vancouver community through social media, school websites and newsletters, and through traditional news media articles. The District has also been invited to visit schools to talk directly with students about contest topics, and how actions of residents matter.

The video contest also provided the municipality with a catalogue of locally relevant, resident-generated, shareable digital content that piques the interest of social media users, further building a network of engaged citizens. The video content generated increased likes, follows and shares on various social media platforms -- Facebook, Twitter and YouTube in particular. Parents and students have actively commented on social media posts, participating in the dialogue.

The impact of the contest on demand-side management is harder to measure over the short term, although we can see in the video content that participants have been spurred to action by these topics. As a recurring event, the contest will have a longer term impact in growing a dialogue with residents that will be seen over time, not just in the short-term.

5. Role. Discuss the role of social media and civic engagement in your local government's overall communications strategy.

The District of West Vancouver uses social media as a communication and engagement tool to encourage information sharing and dialogue with a wide variety of audiences.

6. Participation.

A) How has this program/project increased community connections? Please provide measurable results?

This video contest was the perfect tool to help engage students and enhance partnerships with the West Vancouver School District.

In organizing the contest, Engineering Department staff built new bridges with internal and external partners. Internally, Engineering worked closely with the Community Services Department's Youth Programs and Communications Department staff to develop and

promote the contest collaboratively. Externally, the video contest served to enhance partnerships with the West Vancouver School District. Staff reached out to local school teachers for their advice designing contest details that would mesh well with class timelines and curriculum, and for their help encouraging students to participate. Staff also reached out to community partners and industry associations to sponsor prizes and to participate in contest judging and promoting the student videos.

Because we engaged high school film teachers early, teachers were keen to mentor students as they developed contest video ideas and encouraged the students to reach out to District staff with questions about the topic, which they did.

Participation in the contest itself has also been a success. The District secured sponsored cash prizes for the top three videos and a “participation prize” for the school or class that submitted the most videos. The prize for the first place video is \$750 cash, meant to incentivize student participation.

In the first year, we received 21 video entries from seven different schools. Most video entries were created by a team of students working together, and the playlist on our YouTube channel has been viewed 1750 times.

In the second year we received 42 entries. Again, many students worked with friends to produce videos and the playlists on our YouTube channel have been viewed more than 1500 times so far.

In 2017, one elementary school was inspired by the video contest topic and held a month-long school-wide inquiry project about what it means to be responsible about their waste. Students and teachers took on projects, such as collecting litter from the schoolyard and going through the trash they collected at an all-school assembly to discuss ways their school might reduce waste. They also invited District staff to come and speak with a group of students who had questions about recycling and proper waste management.

At another elementary school, two Grade 5 class teachers took on the video contest as a class project. Teachers helped their 60 students focus on responsible waste management and included the video contest as part of their lesson plans. A number of student videomakers also opted to collect litter in their neighbourhoods as part of their creative process, and featured the results in their video submissions.

There is no doubt that the video contest and topics resonated with students and educators, and that the impact of the contest grew in its second year.

B) Demonstrate through analytics or other data, how your local government’s use of social media has supported dialogue between your local government and its citizens, community and business stakeholders.

The District engages with the community and encourages dialogue through:

1720 Facebook likes of @WestVanDistrict Facebook page

2565 Twitter followers of @WestVanDistrict Twitter account

477 Instagram followers of WestVanDistrict Instagram account

Through this contest, the District has also begun using YouTube to engage with residents.

7. Economic Impact. How has the program/project saved the community money and/or resources or encouraged economic development?

This program relies on securing a small third-party sponsorship for the cash prizes, which makes the program extremely cost effective. Partnering with industry associations and other prize sponsors bolsters relationships by drawing attention to areas where goals overlap, and gives industry an opportunity to show community stewardship.

The first year the Irrigation Industry Association of BC sponsored the prizes. The contest was a good fit for them because it helped them promote water-efficient landscaping and irrigation options following an extremely dry summer where lawn watering was, at times, entirely prohibited. This was a good partnership for the District because we want to see people who choose to irrigate lawns or gardens using the most efficient practices available.

The second year the contest was sponsored by the Solid Waste Association of North America-Pacific Chapter (SWANA), an organization whose members include the many garbage and recycling processors as well as the haulers who operate in the community. Sponsoring the contest provided SWANA the opportunity to promote proper material sorting, which results in better material recovery for haulers and processors.

In the long term, the video contest promotes behaviours that encourage demand-side management. Water conservation behaviour reduces peak demand, decreases strain on the water delivery system, extends the life of infrastructure, and can help to reduce some overall costs of providing water service. Disposing of waste responsibly (instead of littering) helps to directly decrease municipal staff costs, and sorting recycling correctly decreases contamination at the materials processor, avoiding fines and ultimately resulting in higher quality post-consumer materials.

This low-cost video contest starts dialogues in support of demand-side management, uses social marketing tools to promote civic engagement, and encourages behaviours that have municipal-wide benefits in the long term.

8. Challenges. Tell us about some of the challenges you have faced in the implementation and operation of your social media platforms and the solutions to these challenges.

Video and this type of social media promotion was a new medium for the District. We didn't know how to host a video contest, so we did background research into what else what out there and found some information about best practices.

We also knew there'd be some hoops to jump through from a privacy protection and risk management perspective when we opted to put the words "student", "video", and "Internet" together in a sentence. Some key questions were related to parental consent, social media safety for minors, and ownership of the content.

To mitigate the concerns around Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection, we completed a Privacy Impact Assessment with the support of our FIPPA Officer in Legislative Services. We were able to navigate privacy concerns by requiring students create their own YouTube account and post the videos publicly on their own channel. Because students posted the videos publicly on their own, according to YouTube's safety and privacy policies, West Vancouver could share publicly posted videos on our social media channels without raising privacy concerns. We also established a two-tiered system of contest entry forms and permissions slips that provides an opportunity for parental notification that a student has entered the contest and then parental consent for any promotions that feature the winning videos.

Another challenge was making sure students would participate and submit contest entries. To encourage participation, we needed a good prize and help with promotion. We tackled this challenge by engaging community partners and a sponsor for a cash prizes (first prize is \$750, second prize \$150 and third prize \$100). We also offered a participation prize for the school or class who submitted the most videos, as a further incentive.

Finally, an on-going challenge will be to keep the contest interesting and relevant over time by continuing to develop topics that resonate with the West Vancouver community. We plan to meet this challenge by collecting input from our community connections and municipal operations staff. We are also watching for regional issues and trends that might make for interesting and timely contest topics.

9. Innovation. What makes this program/project innovative and creative?

In our background research to design the contest, we were unable to find municipalities that have attempted a similar Student Video Contest. We found examples from the non-governmental world (private, non-profit), but none seem to focus on topics specifically important to municipalities. We also found that most student video contests are focused on the filmmaking, not the message or call to action. Our contest was designed to focus on both.

While digital platforms and social media contests are well utilized within the private sector, government has been more cautious. Municipalities, especially those our size, have fewer resources to spend developing creative approaches to leveraging social media. With our video contest, West Vancouver used social media channels in a new and innovative way to connect with a broad audience of residents. It gave us an opportunity to highlight the talent and creativity of local students, while generating fresh digital content that is on-point with the municipality's messaging.

Further, throughout the design and execution of the project the District took a collaborative approach that included members of the community in creating a contest that would resonate with students. In doing this we were able to leverage community expertise to develop an initiative that would be supported by the community to have a broad and lasting impact.

10. Sustainability. What measures have you put in place to ensure the continued operation of this initiative? (e.g. staff time, resources, financial)

The initial research and creating the appropriate framework for hosting the contest required an investment of staff time. With that hard work completed in the first year, the second year required significantly less staff time and coordination. Implementation of the Student Video Contest will get easier and more streamlined over time.

The direct costs associated with this contest moving forward are extremely low in relation to the benefits of hosting it. Costs are low by design to ensure continued operation of this initiative. Engaging partners to sponsor cash prizes and leveraging free digital social media platforms, means the District has spent less than \$500 over two years (mostly on promotional materials).

Being part of this contest makes people feel good as part of a healthy and engaged community, which will keep them coming back. This is important because the contest's success depends on positive relationships with internal and external partners (educators, sponsors, interdepartmental staff). The project also provides an opportunity for Councillors to engage with youth and the community in a fun way as they help judge the video

entries.

- 11. Best Practices.** How do the processes behind the program/project, and the subsequent results, serve as an example of best practices?

In researching best practices, we looked to examples from the non-governmental world (private, non-profit). We adapted what we found to meet our needs and to fit a local government landscape.

Some best practices were transferrable (eg: prizes that encourage participation, length of videos, strategies for sharing social media content and using YouTube). We also looked to other contests for examples of judging criteria to ensure a transparent, fair and consistent process for reviewing video entries and deciding winners.

However, we created our own strategies and processes for handling challenges unique to municipal context, such as our two-staged contest entry and permission slip process to meet the Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection requirements for BC municipalities. We also adapted our own judging criteria to be sure we were evaluating both filmmaking as well as the strength of story, call to action, and local relevance of student videos when choosing contest winners.

- 12. Transferability.** How is this program/project transferable to other local governments?

The student video contest concept is a low-cost, high-value outreach tool that can be implemented by any municipality, regardless of the communications budget.

The feel-good project can work in any municipality that has a population of creative students and a desire to engage.

- 13. Knowledge Sharing.** What helpful advice would you share with other communities looking to embark on a similar project?

We have seen a broad range of quality in our student video submissions. Some students produce really compelling, professional-looking videos that accurately portray municipal challenges and a call to action. Others do not quite hit that mark. However, regardless of the quality of the final product this contest helps get all student participants, their classes and their families talking about municipal issues in a new, fresh way. This makes the contest worth the time and effort to produce, especially given the low cost.

Hosting a video contest on public YouTube channels helps take care of a lot of the backend organization and privacy issues.

- 14. Additional Information.** Please share any other information you think may help support your submission.

For the project webpage and to view the videos, please visit www.westvancouver.ca/studentvideos

SECTION 5: Signature

Applications are required to be signed by an authorized representative of the applicant.	
Name: Phil Bates	Title: Manager, Engineering Services
Signature: 	Date: JUNE 29, 2017

Applications should be submitted as Word or PDF files. If you choose to submit your application by e-mail, hard copies do not need to follow.

Submit applications to Local Government Program Services, Union of BC Municipalities

E-mail: awards@ubcm.ca or mail: 525 Government Street, Victoria, BC, V8V 0A8