



## Loudoun County, Virginia

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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Loudoun Wins National Achievement Awards for Innovation**

Loudoun County has been recognized with four 2023 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The awards honor innovative, effective county government programs. Loudoun's award-winning programs are:

#### **Hal & Berni Hanson Regional Park, Category: Parks and Recreation**

The opening of the [Hal & Berni Hanson Regional Park](#) in September 2022 was the culmination of a years-long, multi-departmental effort on the part of Loudoun County to transform 257 acres of land into a state-of-the-art park designed for all ages and activity levels. The public played a pivotal role in helping to shape the park's features, which include a tournament-level disc golf course, the first-ever field in Loudoun specifically designed to be a dedicated cricket field, and two stadiums at the park designed as venues to hold regional and statewide tournaments. In addition to 17 athletic fields with lighting, the park includes more than 75 acres of passive recreational space and infrastructure. The project also includes road improvements to Evergreen Mills Road, which bisects the park, including a turn lane and a stop light at the entrance of the park. The park is operated by the [Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Services](#).

#### **Loudoun Farm Exchange, Category: Community and Economic Development**

The [Department of Economic Development](#) created the [Loudoun Farm Exchange](#) to fill a gap in the supply chain among rural producers in the county. While Loudoun offers a robust network of rural products and services, no centralized system to connect them existed, resulting in a lack of knowledge, and therefore, money leaving the county unnecessarily. The Loudoun Farm Exchange was designed to offer both in person networking events, as well as a 24/7 digital option that allows the rural producers to connect in real time, discovering local resources, suppliers and service providers and creating connections within the Loudoun farming community.

#### **Pre-K Skill Builders, Category: Children and Youth**

The Loudoun County Pre-K Skill Builders is a self-paced program offered by [Loudoun County Public Library](#). The program is designed to strengthen preschoolers' school readiness skills, which research has shown to be underdeveloped as a result of pandemic challenges. In the program, children and caregivers explore activities specifically chosen to focus on key areas: early literacy and math concepts, fine and gross motor skills, and social-emotional awareness. Each session includes two or three activities, in which participants can choose to engage for as long as they would like. Loudoun County Public Library staff encourage children's efforts and caregivers' questions but let the participants set their own pace. Through intentional play and dialog, children improve foundational skills while caregivers learn how to easily replicate and build on the activities at home. Both children and adults develop confidence and form relationships with others in the community.

#### **Summer Camp Application Program, Category: Information Technology**

The [Department of Family Services](#) provides annual financial assistance for eligible children to attend local summer camps through an application process. After years of paper-based applications, the department decided to look for ways technology could be leveraged to make the application process easier for families, and to reduce manual data entry for departmental staff. By utilizing cloud applications within the Microsoft 365 system, the department was able to fully digitize the application process. This allowed for a streamlined review process, greater internal collaboration and guaranteed that key stakeholders had visibility into the process from beginning to end. The department was able to accomplish all of this while utilizing a no-cost solution.

### **More Information**

More information about the National Association of Counties and the NACo Achievement Award Program is online at [naco.org](http://naco.org).

More information about Loudoun County government's award-winning programs is online at [loudoun.gov/awards](http://loudoun.gov/awards).

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