

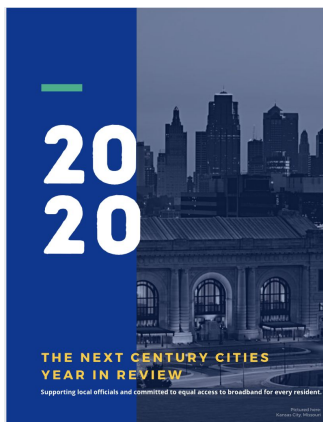
For Immediate Release

Contact: Brittany-Rae Gregory
brittany-rae@nextcenturycities.org
December 21, 2020



**NEXT CENTURY CITIES RELEASES INAUGURAL YEARBOOK
ANNOUNCING CHANGE MAKER AWARD RECIPIENTS**

Washington, D.C. (December 21, 2020) – Today Next Century Cities released the 2020 Year in Review, a first-of-its-kind yearbook-style summary of the organization’s impact, accomplishments, and collaborations during the calendar year. In addition to staff reflections and outlooks plans for 2021, the publication showcases recipients of the inaugural Next Century Cities Change Maker Awards in addition to Local Leaders Making a Difference.



Mayors Making Strides with Broadband

Mayor Andy Berke - Chattanooga, Tennessee
Mayor Jim Coppinger - Hamilton County, Tennessee
Mayor Trey Mendez - Brownsville, Texas
Mayor Wade Troxell - Fort Collins, Colorado

The Community Advocacy Award

Winner: Nathaniel Watkins - Garrett County, Maryland
Honorable Mention: Irv Thomae - Norwich, Vermont

The Community Activism Award

Winner: Joshua Edmonds - Detroit, Michigan
Honorable Mention: Kim Maxwell, Ph.D. - Norfolk, Connecticut

The Digital Equity Award

Winner: Monica Gasparetto - Broward County, Florida

The Digital Inclusion Award

Winner: Candelaria Mendoza - San Antonio, Texas

The Innovation Award

Winner: Becky Lehman - Holland, Michigan

The State Champion Award

Winner: Barbara Fuller - Washtenaw County, Michigan
Winner: Ben Fineman - Washtenaw County, Michigan
Winner: Roberta Willis - Connecticut

The Mission Award

Winner: Rondella Hawkins - Austin, Texas

Winner: Aldona Valicenti - Lexington, Kentucky

Leaders Making a Difference

Catherin Tkachyk - Cuyahoga County, Ohio

Steven Buck - Sanford, Maine

David Williams - Ponca City, Oklahoma

Kathryn Greiner - Condon, Oregon

Nishal Mohan - San Diego, California

Dorothy Baunach - Cleveland, Ohio

Robin Roy - Cuyahoga County, Ohio



Executive Director, Francella Ochillo, remarked on the publication's significance,

"In a year that forced so many communities to double down on support for broadband access and adoption, Next Century Cities set new benchmarks for success. Our yearbook documents the many ways in which we helped to advance universal connectivity goals and highlights our collaborations with local officials. Stitched in between the tributes to local leadership is an underlying story of how NCC made an indelible mark on policymaking this year.

"We are also thrilled to announce the Change Maker Awardees who inspire our work. They have created new success models for data collection, policy proposals, partnerships, and community engagement strategies, largely in underserved communities. We encourage officials at all three levels of government, private sector partners, and public interest allies to collaborate with them on connectivity solutions.

"In 2021, NCC will continue to elevate community-level perspectives. Local governments are working tirelessly to provide affordable and reliable high-speed connectivity for residents. They need strategic and long-term investments, namely from Congress, that reflect the enormity of the digital divide. The \$7 billion for broadband in the latest COVID-19 relief package is the first of many critical steps."

The digital version of the publication can be accessed [here](#) and via the [Next Century Cities website](#). Change Maker Award recipients, profiled local officials, and Next Century Cities member municipalities will also receive hardcopies of the publication.

###