



NEWS RELEASE

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Wake County Recognized for Bright Ideas in Government

EMS and Information Systems honored by Harvard

Two Wake County initiatives were recognized nationally today as Bright Ideas in Government by the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Wake County EMS was recognized for its Advance Practice Paramedic program, and Wake County Information Services was recognized for using innovation to share public health data related to restaurant inspections.

Wake County EMS developed the APP program in 2008 to train paramedics to respond alongside ambulances to select EMS call types, including mental health and substance abuse crisis calls. If no other immediate medical care requiring the emergency department is needed, the ambulance returns to service, and the APP remains with the patient to coordinate transportation and direct entry into a mental health-specific treatment facility.

“Wake County EMS is honored to receive this recognition. We always want to lead and innovate in providing the best care for our patients,” said Dr. Jose Cabanas, Wake County EMS director. “The APP program better serves patients and health care systems by providing quality care in a more cost-effective way.”

Wake County Information Services recognized that while restaurant sanitation inspection information is on the county’s website, most residents don’t know to look for it there. IS saw an opportunity to partner with Yelp, the leading platform for restaurant reviews by customers, to make sanitation scores for food establishments more accessible. Wake County now pushes the sanitation scores to Yelp daily, so users will see a restaurant’s inspection score right next to reviews. Clicking through the scores also provides users with an easy-to-understand summary of infractions. There is no direct cost associated with the project, only a small amount of staff time to establish the data connection.

“Wake County is committed to being a transparent government,” said Bill Greeves, chief information and innovation officer. “This partnership is a perfect

example of how open data in government can be leveraged to create a better experience for consumers while promoting the public good.”

These initiatives are part of a cohort of more than 60 programs from all levels of government that represent the next horizon of work to improve services, solve problems, and work on behalf of citizens.

This is the fifth cohort recognized through the Bright Ideas program, an initiative of the broader Innovations in American Government Awards program. For consideration as a Bright Idea, programs must currently be in operation or in the process of launching, have sufficient operational resources, and must be administered by one or more governmental entities. Bright Ideas are showcased on the Ash Center’s Government Innovators Network, an online platform for practitioners and policymakers to share innovative public policy solutions.

Visit the Government Innovators Network at <http://innovations.harvard.edu> for the full list of Bright Ideas programs, and for more information regarding the Innovations in American Government Awards.

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