



Administrative Report

To: Warden MacDonald and Members of Essex County Council

From: Donald McArthur, Manager, Communications and Organizational Development

Date: Wednesday, March 4, 2026

Subject: Employee Excellence Awards 2025

Report #: 2026-0304-LLS-R13-DM

Purpose

The purpose of this Administrative Report is to provide County Council with information about the County of Essex Employee Excellence Awards, which are presented annually to employees from across the corporation in four categories: Team Spirit, Innovation, Service Excellence, and Empowerment.

Background

The County of Essex Strategic Plan calls for the County to be an “employer with impact” that fosters “positive employee experiences” and administers “employee recognition and appreciation programs” as part of an ongoing effort to “improve the recruitment and retention of high-quality talent at the County.” Additionally, an employee engagement survey conducted in 2023 highlighted areas for improvement including teamwork and innovation.

The County has launched multiple employee engagement initiatives, including a Cheers for Peers program where colleagues nominate each other for exemplary service, and a long-term service pin program recognizing years of service.

Last year, the County distributed 189 pins, including three pins to employees with 40 years of service. Work is underway again this year to honour employees who have reached service milestones.

The Employee Excellence Awards are meant to celebrate employees who embody our organizational values, demonstrate excellence in their roles, and inspire others to achieve their best. Employees are the County’s greatest assets and the awards program highlights their exceptional work and acknowledges their tremendous efforts and value.

Distinct from the Cheers for Peers recognition program, where colleagues nominate each other, the process for the Employee Excellence Awards program is as follows: Department leaders bring forward nominations annually in each category to the Senior Leadership Team, which discusses the submissions and then votes for a winner and honourable mentions.

Winners receive a plaque and have their names added to the County's recognition walls at the County Administration Building and at the Sun Parlor Home. Honourable Mention recipients will receive framed certificates.

All recipients will be celebrated publicly and on County Connect, the County's employee intranet.

Discussion

The Employee Excellence Awards program recognizes employees from across the corporation in four categories that align with the goals of our Strategic Plan and areas for improvement that were identified by employees in a 2023 employee engagement survey. The four categories are Team Spirit, Innovation, Customer Service, and Empowerment.

- **Team Spirit:** This category recognizes employees who excel in collaboration, fostering unity and achieving collective goals. Teamwork is one of the core values in the County of Essex Strategic Plan and it was identified as an area for improvement in the employee engagement survey.
- **Innovation:** This category recognizes employees who introduce creative solutions, improvements or ideas that drive progress and enhance County operations. Innovation was identified as an area that needed improvement in the employee engagement survey and improving service delivery through innovation is a goal in our Strategic Plan.
- **Service Excellence:** This category recognizes employees who go above and beyond delivering exceptional service to internal or external colleagues and partners. Service Excellence is one of the core values in the County of Essex Strategic Plan.
- **Empowerment:** This category is open to all employees, including managers, and recognizes those who empower and uplift their colleagues, creating an environment for success and professional growth. Empowering staff to work together as "Team Essex County" is one of the goals in the County of Essex Strategic Plan.

A list of this year's winners and honourable mentions, and a brief summation of why they are being recognized, is included with this report as Appendix A.

Financial Implications

All employee engagement initiatives, including any costs associated with the Employee Excellence Awards program, are fully funded through the County’s annual operating budget.

Consultations

None.

Strategic Plan Alignment

Working as Team Essex County	Growing as Leaders in Public Service Excellence	Building a Regional Powerhouse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Scaling Sustainable Services through Innovation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Focusing “Team Essex County” for Results <input type="checkbox"/> Advocating for Essex County’s Fair Share 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being an Employer with Impact <input type="checkbox"/> A Government Working for the People <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting Transparency and Awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Providing Reliable Infrastructure for Partners <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Dynamic and Thriving Communities Across the County <input type="checkbox"/> Harmonizing Action for Growth <input type="checkbox"/> Advancing Truth and Reconciliation

Recommendation

That Essex County Council receive report number 2026-0304-LLS-R13-DM, Employee Excellence Awards for 2025 as information.

Approvals

Respectfully Submitted,

Donald McArthur

Donald McArthur, Manager, Communications and Organizational Development

Concurred With,

David M. Sundin

David Sundin, BA (Hons), LL.B., Director, Legislative and Legal Services/County Solicitor

Concurred With,

Sandra Zwiers

Sandra Zwiers, MAcc, CPA, CA, Chief Administrative Officer

Appendix	Title
A	Recipients of the 2025 Employee Excellence Awards