

1. Are you nominating an individual or company?
 - a. Company

2. Name of Company and Point of Contact
 - a. Company Name: Manatee County Government
 - b. Contact Name: Cheri Coryea
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Please describe creative strategies this employer has implemented that have positively impacted the attraction and retention of young professionals to the organization. Include information about organizational mentoring and internships, training and advancement opportunities, and workplace culture.

Recruiting, hiring and retaining young people in our workforce has been at the forefront of leadership conversations at Manatee County for more than a decade. However, we always had trouble marketing our organization to young people until 2015. It was then that a group of new young employees brimming with confidence and creativity formed the founding group Manatee Millennial Movement (M3). M3 quickly partnered with the Manatee Young Professionals on a survey of their combined membership. They wanted to know more about the living preferences of young professionals. Their findings resulted in a notable presentation to the County Commission in 2016. For the first time in recent memory an organized group of young people had become engaged and influential in the community's decision making process. The combined efforts of MYP and M3 helped bring about various changes that are now formally included in the current Livable Manatee incentive program designed to help create affordable housing.

It was that effort that put the M3 group on the map and helped set the course of an active membership that is passionate about local issues. Led by a core group of true stars at the County the original founding M3 members (Simone Peterson, Danielle Walker, Anisley Mena and Ogden Clark) created an inclusive atmosphere of information exchange with a focus on the future. Over time some of the founding members moved on to local private sector careers while those remaining have turned their focus on other important topics: mentoring, internships, place making and more.

M3 sponsored a highly successful Results-First paid Internship Program since the summer of 2017. Each semester the County recruits and selects a number of driven students to participate in a 10-week internship aimed at accomplishing a significant project. No more pencil pushing, these interns are on the job to learn about our government while helping to solve longstanding issues with a fresh new perspective. Projects completed by the interns must be concepts that can be put in place and used by the Departments. Intern applicants come from schools across Florida and the U.S. to participate, with the continued success attracting a larger radius of students every

year. The program has had over 30 successful interns who have completed projects that have greatly benefited the county and in extension the whole community. One in five of our Results-First interns have also transitioned into full-time employees of the County and are seen as some of our up-and-coming leaders!

During their time with the County our interns are trained to become better public speakers, they're offered lessons to improve resume writing, informational graphics, GIS, and video editing. They get hands-on training with a millennial mentor, supervisor, Department Director, weekly group meetings and regular tutelage from staff experts as well as professional portrait photos. They also receive networking opportunities with County leadership helping them pursue careers in other fields.

Manatee County also partners with the University of South Florida twice a year during a unique "speed dating" type interview. On Career Connections Day our department heads host a group of aspiring USF students for a half day. The event culminates with a "speed networking"-type interview where a student sits with a director for five minutes before moving to another. The students drop off resumes and inquire about job opportunities. The Directors inform the students about their departments and let the students know about potential opportunities within the County. It's an ideal way our Government taps into a steady stream of young professionals hungry to make a difference in our community!

How does this employer encourage its young talent to get engaged outside of the organization to make a difference in our community?

From the very highest ranks of our Government there has been a continued philosophy of employee empowerment that encourages risk taking and creative thinking. That empowerment is at the heart of the success for our Manatee Millennial Movement. From the onset, the group was encouraged to break out of their comfort zones and to take their enthusiasm to the community. With guidance from their mentor and the future County Administrator, Cheri Coryea, our M3s hosted an #iSeeManatee expo at Dolphin Aviation where scores of residents and college students stopped in to share ideas for improving southern Manatee County. A year later in 2016 the M3s sponsored #4Progress Millennial Con, a conference about housing affordability and other issues that concluded with yoga and mimosas at Manatee Public Beach.

M3's leaders are known not only in our government but throughout the community as people who not only live and work here, but who also care about Manatee County and the people who live in it. In 2016, our M3 group also partnered with Realize Bradenton on its unique Pop Ups for a Purpose program that periodically changed outdoor spaces into places for conversations on local topics in downtown Bradenton.

In the spirit of giving back to our community Manatee County leaders have consistently encouraged philanthropy both in the workplace and outside of the office. Hundreds of

County employees donate thousands of hours in non-profit work and fundraisers throughout the year. Often, young people – millennials – are at the forefront leading our charitable events that annually raise thousands of dollars for the underserved in our community. M3 members meet monthly to review the status of their efforts and ongoing projects. In the last year they have instituted monthly social events that take them to places like Port Manatee, Bishop Museum, Motorworks and other local area gems.

Young employees also see an opportunity to travel by joining our government! Members of our M3 group are sought after presenters not in Manatee County and beyond. Locally they've presented dozens of Back to the Future community conversations and hosted successful conferences. Beyond our borders, M3 members have been asked to share their story of success at conferences in Minneapolis, Tulsa, Memphis, Omaha, Birmingham, Palm Springs and San Antonio.

What else makes this organization successful in the attraction and retention of young professionals?

The County's two most recent Administrators, Ed Hunzeker and Cheri Coryea, have both promoted a philosophy that embraces new ideas and innovation. It's that outlook that has created the environment for groups like the Manatee Millennial Movement to thrive.

When students – prospective employees – visit for an internship or interview, they see our own millennials taking a lead role in critical topics: affordable housing, recruiting a younger workforce and soliciting community feedback. Those students are probably seeing opportunities beyond a paycheck and benefits. They see an organization that intentionally embraces young thinkers and leaders by engaging their ideas and putting those ideas into action. Those who are passionate about living here or who want to make a difference in the world, see a chance to make a direct impact in the community by working with an innovative employer like Manatee County.

Manatee County is on the cutting edge of government innovation all due to bringing a culture of respect for young ideas and skills sets. There is a long list of projects that were successfully implemented due to our focus on young professionals, GIS data mapping and Drone use. These two concepts alone have dramatically increased the efficiency and brought about cost and time savings to our government. Very valuable results in the world of government.