

**Quality and Productivity Commission**  
**33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
**"Empowering Innovative Solutions"**

**2019 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: ASSESSOR'S PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: JANUARY 2018

(Must have been fully implemented for a minimum of at least one year - on or before July 1, 2018)

PROJECT STATUS:  Ongoing  One-time only

HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT?  Yes  No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 A complex and misunderstood property tax system causes Los Angeles County  
 2 homeowners and businesses to make costly mistakes and miss-out on savings  
 3 programs and resources available through the Assessor's Office and the other property  
 4 tax departments. The Assessor's Public Education Initiative is overcoming this lack of  
 5 information through well-marketed and collaborative resource seminars, aimed at  
 6 ensuring that homeowners, seniors, Veterans, those with disabilities, nonprofits, and  
 7 small business have access to vital resources. Over the last eighteen months, an  
 8 ongoing series of resource seminars, supported by digital media outreach, has provided  
 9 thousands of property owners and businesses with valuable information and in person  
 10 assistance. Three types of resource seminars, including a homeowners' seminar done  
 11 in collaboration with other County departments, narrowly tailored business seminars,  
 12 and nonprofit seminars done in partnership with the State Board of Equalization,  
 13 improved quality of service. The initiative is saving time, preventing costly mistakes,  
 14 and empowering County constituents to access the resources to which they are entitled.  
 15

BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE \$	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS \$	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE \$	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT \$	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS  
 Office of the Assessor  
 500 W. Temple St., Rm 320  
 Los Angeles, CA 90012

TELEPHONE NUMBER  
 213-974-3101

PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME  
 Janet Chin, Chief, Public Affairs

TELEPHONE NUMBER  
 213-974-3101

EMAIL  
[Jchin2@assessor.lacounty.gov](mailto:Jchin2@assessor.lacounty.gov)

PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE  
(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME)  
 Dara Smith, Administrative Deputy

DATE  
 6/26/19

TELEPHONE NUMBER  
 213-974-3101

EMAIL  
[dsmith@assessor.lacounty.gov](mailto:dsmith@assessor.lacounty.gov)

DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE  
 Jeffrey Prang, Assessor

DATE  
 6/26/19

TELEPHONE NUMBER  
 213-974-3101

Quality and Productivity Commission  
**33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
*“Empowering Innovative Solutions”*

**2019 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: ASSESSOR’S PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

**1<sup>st</sup> FACT SHEET – LIMITED UP TO 3 PAGES ONLY:** Describe the **challenge(s), solution(s), and benefit(s)** of the project to the County. What quality and/or productivity-related outcome(s) has the project achieved? Provide measures of success and specify assessment time frame. Use Arial 12 point font.

**CHALLENGE:** The complexity of the property tax system, composed of five departments just within the County, compounds the misinformation and misunderstanding surrounding property assessment and California’s Proposition 13. This means that Los Angeles County property owners and taxpayers are missing-out on information, resources, and tax savings opportunities to which they are entitled. In addition the Assessor’s Office primary responsibility to establish the value of property, it also administers a number of savings programs, and well as provides information resources to help property owners and businesses make informed and educated financial decisions. Among the savings programs, are opportunities for homeowners, seniors, Veterans, those with disabilities, and victims of natural disasters, as well as exemptions for nonprofits. These programs help low-income homeowners, those with fixed incomes, and others save much needed money on their taxes, and can easily be the difference in being able to remain in a family home, afford a home with necessary accommodations, or recover after a natural disaster or calamity. However, property owners, do not know these resources are available. Further, because of the complexity and confusion of property tax law, many homeowners, make costly mistakes during transfers and other transactions. The Assessor’s Office is often able to work with taxpayers to correct these errors, but the financial and temporal burden of such mistakes can be significant, and a homeowner many not be able to bear those costs while corrections are made. Further challenges arise with business property taxes, paid by business and nonprofits for equipment and furniture. This subset of requirements can prove burdensome for small business and community organizations, both of which contribute to importantly to the vitality of our communities.

**SOLUTION:** An important part of a comprehensive solution, has been, and will continue to be, the Assessor’s Public Education Initiative, implemented over the year and a half. The Assessor’s Office has long conducted community outreach and education; however, it has primarily been in response to requests for speakers from professional organizations or participation in larger resource expos. The Education Initiative has expanded this to reach homeowners, small businesses, and nonprofits directly with easily accessible information through targeted, Assessor-led resource seminars. The Education Initiative has comprised of three series of seminars, for homeowners, for businesses, and for nonprofits, each tailored in content and format to best suit the audience.

Quality and Productivity Commission  
**33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
*“Empowering Innovative Solutions”*

**2019 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: ASSESSOR’S PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

Use Arial 12 point font.

The homeowners’ resource seminars, have consisted of short presentations from expert Assessor staff, accompanied by a resource fair, including staff on hand to address specific questions and concerns. Additionally, staff from other property tax related departments, including the Treasurer and Tax Collector, the Auditor-Controller, Registrar-Recorder/ County Clerk, Department of Consumer and Business Affairs, and the California State Board of Equalization also participated in the resource fair segment. This not only provides attendees with reliable, digestible information on property assessment, it addresses the fundamental challenge of having so many departments involved, and allows a constituent to get question answered in one place.

Nonprofit seminars, followed a similar format, focused on resources for nonprofits, and were organized in partnership with the State Board of Equalization.

Business Seminars have been narrowly tailored to the issue of business personal property, a property tax issue that does not affect homeowners or other real estate owners. This provides small business owners, nonprofits managers, financial officers, and the like, with detailed information on how to avoid costly mistakes and penalties. Avoiding the cost of hiring expensive professionals to complete what, with good information, can be relatively easy. The Assessor’s Office has conducted business property seminars for many years, but the Public Education Initiative has greatly expanded the reach and marketing effort, increasing attendance, and increasing focus on the importance of these events.

**BENEFIT:** Since January 2018 the Assessor’s Public Education Initiative has held 4 homeowner resource seminars, 2 nonprofit seminars, and 12 business property seminars. Attendance for the homeowner’s seminars has to date totaled approximate 1200 taxpayers, and the nonprofit seminar 400 taxpayers. Business property seminars held in 2018 had a total of 130 attendees, which increase to 315 for those held in 2019. Total seminar attendance to date has been approximately 2,045, with thousands more engaged through marketing and outreach for events.

The Education Initiative is informing and empowering County homeowners, and businesses, particularly seniors, Veterans, and those with disabilities, to access resources that provide much needed relief and assistance. While not yet measurable, it is probable that continued education will not only avoid the burden of errors for taxpayers, but reduce the use of valuable Assessor personal hours in their correction.

Quality and Productivity Commission  
**33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
*“Empowering Innovative Solutions”*

**2019 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: ASSESSOR’S PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

**Linkage to the County Strategic Plan – 1 page only.** Which County Strategic Plan goal(s) does this project address? Explain how. Use Arial 12 point font.

The Assessor’s Public Education Initiative address several elements of Strategic Plan Goal I, including I.1.2 (preventing homelessness), I.1.5 (affordable housing) and I.1.8 (promoting consumer financial stability). The property tax savings programs, particularly those for Veterans, seniors, and those who inherit their parents’ home but who would not otherwise be able to remain in them due to the high property taxes. The increased knowledge of property taxes and assessment allows homeowners and prospective homeowners to make better-informed financial decisions, especially as they consider the needs of their family or of retirement. While these programs are not technically subsidies, they provide subsidy like assistance to vulnerable populations in line with the Strategic Plan Goal I.2.1, as well.

The Assessor’s Public Education Initiative also supports Strategic Plan Goal II.1 (drive economic and workforce development) as it aids small businesses, providing them with important information and removing challenges that are particularly burdensome for small business early on.

The Education Initiative also supports Goal III.2.2 (to leverage technology to increase visibility and awareness) in its use of digital and social media to market the seminars and increase attendance. However, the digital marketing in of itself been an important educational tool, increasing awareness of resources and dispelling misinformation even among those who do not attend resource seminars.

**Quality and Productivity Commission**  
**33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program**  
**“Empowering Innovative Solutions”**

**2019 APPLICATION**

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

**NAME OF PROJECT: ASSESSOR’S PUBLIC EDUCATION INITIATIVE**

**COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFITS TO THE COUNTY):** If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. Please indicate whether these benefits apply in total or on a per unit basis, e.g., per capita, per transaction, per case, etc. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

**Cost Avoidance:** Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these are costs to the County or to other entities.

**Cost Savings:** A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes. Please indicate whether these were expenditures by the County or by other entities.

**Revenue:** Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$	\$	\$	\$	<b>X</b>

**ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY**