

## News Release

### **Oakland County Board of Commissioners receives three 2023 NACo Achievement Awards**

*Initiatives include anti-violence, Oxford response and invasive species prevention programs*

**May 24, 2023, OAKLAND COUNTY, MI.** – Three Oakland County Board of Commissioners programs have been honored with 2023 Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The Oxford Families and Local Business Financial Response, Anti-Violence Initiative and Invasive Spongy Moth Suppression Program will all be recognized during NACo's 2023 Annual Conference and Exposition in July. The awards highlight innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents.

"Receiving national recognition for these groundbreaking programs is a testament to the commitment of our commissioners and staff to make Oakland County a safer, healthier and more inclusive community," Chair **David T. Woodward** (D-Royal Oak) said. "The Board will continue to innovate, collaborate and create solutions that serve all county stakeholders so that we can keep moving forward together."

The Board launched the **Oxford Families and Local Business Financial Response** to support families and businesses impacted by the tragic shooting at Oxford High School in November 2021. Through a mental health funding assistance program, students, families and staff of Oxford schools were able to apply for up to \$2,000 per household for assistance with insurance co-pay and deductible payments associated with mental health care. Additionally, the Oxford Area Economic Recovery Program provided grants to organizations and businesses that provided indispensable assistance to the community following the shooting. In total, the county distributed \$158,693 to reimburse those impacted for mental health care costs and \$100,000 to businesses to support the region's recovery.

"Unfortunately, a large portion of our community has needed extra assistance as a result of the horrific shooting that took place at Oxford High School in November 2021," Minority Caucus Chair **Michael Spisz** (R-Oxford) said. "As we continue to heal and move forward, it has been a comfort to know that my fellow commissioners support and understand the unique needs of those impacted by the tragedy."

In addition, commissioners collaborated with Oxford survivors, local law enforcement agencies and regional community groups to develop the **Anti-Violence Initiative**. Through the new Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) Pilot Program and a Gun Buyback Pilot Program, the Board has supported communities in their efforts to reduce violence. Expanded access to CIT allows law enforcement officers to better assist individuals with mental health concerns and/or addictions, and through four gun buyback events on October 22, 2022, the county collected more than 350 unwanted weapons.

“It was rewarding to work directly on these award-winning programs to help support our residents in a variety of ways,” Board Vice Chair Marcia Gershenson (D-Bloomfield Twp.) said. “County government is able to both respond to events of the time and help prepare for the future, and this year’s winning programs prove that.”

Currently in its second year, the **Invasive Spongy Moth Suppression Program** provides matching grants to communities around the county that are experiencing a *Lymantria dispar* outbreak. This invasive insect, also known as spongy moth, is a destructive moth that can be pervasive in all areas, whether suburban, urban or rural. By providing matching grants to communities, the Board’s grants go further toward mitigation efforts, which include aerial sprays and mechanical measures.

Started in 1970, NACo’s annual Achievement Awards program is designed to recognize county government innovations. Each nominee is judged on its own merits and not against other applications received. In total, Oakland County received 6 NACo Achievement Awards in 2023.

“The Achievement Awards demonstrate excellence in county government and the commitment to serve our residents every day,” said NACo President Denise Winfrey. “This year’s winners represent some of the most innovative and collaborative efforts we have seen in over 50 years of presenting these awards.”

For more information about the Board of Commissioners, please visit [www.oakgov.com/boc](http://www.oakgov.com/boc) or call 248-858-0100.

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