

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Candi Lemarr, Steele County Finance Director

Steele County, Financial Management, Earns National Achievement Award

Owatonna, MN – Steele County Finance Office has been recognized with a 2025 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo). The awards honor innovative, effective county government programs that strengthen services for residents.

The Finance office revamped the 2025 budgeting process in order to provide clarity to our Taxpayers and Commissioners, to help provide a consolidated project approach between departments to break down silos between departments, which helped funds go farther in our community, and to streamline the budgeting process for effectiveness and efficiency, leading to better clarity for our constituents.

“Steele County Finance staff is honored to have achieved this award through the hard work and dedication of our staff and all of our departments who were willing to work through the challenges of significant change in order to bring about the new process of budgeting for the county. We are hopeful that the community will recognize our commitment to delivering results for our citizens and ensuring that we are providing a diligent and thoughtful budgeting process that will ensure that we are strategically utilizing all resources of the county” ~ Candi Lemarr

Each year, NACo’s Achievement Awards recognize outstanding programming in 18 categories aligned with the vast, comprehensive services counties provide. The categories include children and youth, criminal justice and public safety, libraries, management, information technology, health, civic engagement and more. Launched in 1970, the program is designed to celebrate innovation in county government. Each nominated program is judged on its own merits and not against other applications.

“The Achievement Awards shine a spotlight on the hard work and innovation happening in county governments across the nation,” said NACo President James Gore. “This year’s winners highlight the dedication and creativity of county leaders and our teams to building thriving communities and providing the best possible services to our residents.”

As we continue into the 2026, we will continue to review and revise our budgeting process to ensure that all resources are used as effectively as possible to offer our citizens the best resources while ensuring that we are fiscally responsible.

For more information about Steele County Finance click here ([Finance Department](#)).

For more information about NACo's Achievement Awards, click [here](#).

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The National Association of Counties (NACo) strengthens America's counties, including nearly 40,000 county elected officials and 3.6 million county employees. Founded in 1935, NACo unites county officials to advocate for county government priorities in federal policymaking; promote exemplary county policies and practices; nurture leadership skills and expand knowledge networks; optimize county and taxpayer resources and cost savings; and enrich the public's understanding of county government. www.naco.org