



# **2017 iGO EXCELLENCE IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT AWARD**

**JUAN GUZMAN**

**DENVER COUNTY, COLORADO**



## Juan Guzman Excellence in County Government Nomination

Juan Guzman joined my team in 2008 as my Records Manager in Aurora, Colorado, when I was the City Clerk. When I was elected Clerk and Recorder for Denver, Juan agreed to come with me and run one of my divisions encompassing three departments. In his role of Deputy Clerk and Recorder, Juan is responsible for serving the 700,000 citizens of the City and County of Denver and managing more than 25 people.

Juan Guzman brings creative, data driven solutions to the challenges facing each department. And he graciously shares his lessons learned throughout Colorado with his ongoing work with the Colorado County Clerks Association (CCCA) and the Public Trustee Association of Colorado (PTAC).

The *City Clerk Department* works with the mayor, 13 city councilmembers and city attorneys on resolutions, ordinances and contracts to keep the city running smoothly. We record and archive city records and contracts since the beginning of the City of Denver (1858).

- In 2011, when I took office and Juan came to Denver with me, there was not a single record available online. Juan worked with an outside vendor to leverage technology to safely store and preserve city contracts and more than 150 years of city records. Our internal city customers are now able to access a large historical database of city contracts and records. The public also can access more than 11 million records online. That means they don't have to come into our office – this reduces traffic while increasing business efficiency and revenue.
- Juan worked with the City Attorney's office and City Council to revise a statute to reduce the time to enact a contract. Because of those efforts, money and services reach the public 38 percent faster than in 2015.

**Recording.** Two of the biggest days in people's lives start and end in our office. We issue marriage licenses to all loving couples. And we record their mortgage (Deed of Trust) for their home.

- We were at the forefront of the fight for marriage equality in Colorado in 2014. When counties complained that changing the wording on the marriage licenses was too big of a challenge, Juan led the charge to easily, and simply, fix the licenses. We shared this fix with all the other counties in Colorado and across the country.
- We were sued because we refused to issue marriage licenses to same sex couples. We refused to issue the licenses in order to be sued because Juan and I believed the law was indefensible. And we were right. Juan was by my side throughout the case and helped design our strategy and position.
- In 2015, as co-chair of CCCA's Recording Statutory Review Committee, Juan helped write and champion legislation closing the loopholes in Colorado's proxy marriage laws to ensure marriage can't be used for sex trafficking or bringing people into the country illegally. The revised law now limits proxy marriage to active-duty, deployed members of the military or military contractors. Juan is committed to protecting the rights and freedoms of all Coloradans.
- After a marriage, buying a home is probably the second biggest day in someone's life. With the strong Denver economy, we recorded more than 29,000 deeds in 2015. We've worked to leverage technology in this department as well. Juan worked closely with the private sector to determine their needs for electronic recording. Juan compiled data and determined the demand was great for a simpler method for filing documents. He developed a system to handle the ever-increasing demand of recorded documents. Now, the majority of documents are recorded electronically without the customer having to come into our office. Of the more than 176,000 documents recorded in 2016, 65 percent of those were recorded electronically.
- Previously CCCA had focused its legislative efforts on elections. Juan is single-handedly responsible for educating the CCCA members on the responsibilities and revenue on recording and public trustee.

Colorado is the only state that uses a *Public Trustee* system to manage the foreclosure process. The role of the Denver Public Trustee is to record foreclosure documents and to administer the process in a legal and transparent manner. When the economy was at its worst, we had more than 7,000 foreclosures in 2017 – just in Denver County. At that time, we managed foreclosure cases on paper.

- Because of Juan's leadership and ingenuity, we now have a system where cases can be filed electronically. This makes it easier for the attorneys/bankers and for the foreclosed-upon homeowner to track their case.
- Our mailing system for notices takes photos and uses bar code tracking system to ensure the right paperwork is in the right envelope heading to the right person.

- In 2016, we became the first county in Colorado to host foreclosure auctions online. This initiative wasn't as simple as hiring a firm to build a website. Juan wrote and championed legislation that allowed us to hold our auctions online. Juan built consensus among the other 63 counties for this legislation.
- Online auctions contribute to the properties selling for more money. The difference between what is owed and what the property sells for is called Excess Funds. We championed legislation to ensure that the foreclosed-upon homeowner gets any additional monies available after the sale of their home. Last year, we returned more than \$4.8 million to foreclosed-upon homeowners.
- As you can imagine, with that much money available in Excess Funds, a cottage industry sprung up. Finders are people who charge a fee, often a very hefty fee, to get people Excess Funds. But Finders are unnecessary because we give people their money for free. Juan worked with CCCA and the Public Trustee Association of Colorado (PTAC) to write and testify on legislation limiting Finders' reach. This legislation was signed into law in 2016 and stops these predators.

Every day, Juan looks for ways to better serve the public. His mission is to provide customer-friendly processes that are efficient and transparent, records that are easy to access, and elections that are accurate, secure and convenient for voters. Juan has led the way in technological innovations – when they make sense for our staff and our customers. The focus on our customers means we want to serve our residents and allow business to thrive in Denver. Because of all of his efforts, I can think of no person who better exemplifies leadership, provides excellence in his office and is of the highest integrity. Juan Guzman is truly deserving of the Excellence in County Government Award.



April 6, 2017

Dear IGO Awards Committee,

I am writing this as a letter of recommendation for Juan Guzman, Deputy Clerk & Recorder, Denver, Colorado, to be considered for IGO's Excellence in County Government Award.

I have had the privilege of working closely with Juan over the last two years. From my observations, everything that Juan does is driven by a desire to improve processes for the benefit of county government, their employees and constituents both near and far.

CSC has watched Juan participate in the careful selection of their City/County software system provider as well as oversee the integration of this provider. Everyone in this industry knows how critical a task this is for the success of a county government operation, most especially one the scope and depth of Denver.

Under Juan's supervision, Denver is one of the largest and most efficient eRecording jurisdictions in the United States. From the time Juan was first introduced to eRecording he understood and embraced the benefits of this important technology. He has worked hard to maximize the use of eRecording documents.

In 2016, Juan played a pivotal role in piloting a new program that allowed CSC's many national Submitter Partners to send electronic documents directly to their Public Trustees office for approval and routing to the County Clerk for recordation. This process is unique to Colorado and takes the place of sending these documents through the mail and hand delivering to the Recorder.

This was a big win for the county departments involved as well as for our national Submitters. But that wasn't enough for Juan, he wanted his counterparts in Colorado to experience the same success. Juan participated in presentations to his peers at association meetings. He also invited county officials to visit his office for a tour and demonstration, and even held a number of webinars to demo the program for those unable to travel to Denver. To date, 10 of the most influential counties in Colorado have already followed Denver's lead.

Lastly, I will say that Juan Guzman is one of the most intelligent, hardworking and yet selfless individuals I have met in county government. I believe he is a very worthy candidate to receive this year's Excellence in County Government Award. Thank you for considering Juan for this prestigious award. Sincerely, Joe DeLuca National Account Manager, Corporation Service Company, 302-636-5844



COLORADO COUNTY CLERKS ASSOCIATION

April 13, 2017

From:

Michelle Batey  
5280 Strategies  
1576 Sherman Street, Suite 300  
Denver, CO 80203

To:

International Association of Government Officials (IGO)

Subject:

Recommendation letter for Juan Guzman, Excellence in County Government Award

To Whom It May Concern:

As the lobbyist for the Colorado County Clerks Association, I would like to highly recommend Juan Guzman for the Excellence in County Government Award. I have had the pleasure of working with Juan Guzman over the past four years. During that time, Mr. Guzman has been an outstanding leader in identifying key issues related to recordings in Colorado and played a pivotal role in developing solutions that will impact the State of Colorado for years to come.

Juan Guzman has led the Colorado County Clerks' Recording Statute Review Committee and, in that position, was instrumental in the passage of historic recording legislation. Juan Guzman recognized that the electronic recording systems in Colorado were aging and many rural counties did not have the funds to replace their equipment. Together with members of his committee & CCCA staff, he began to collect data, hold stakeholder meetings with industry partners, assisted in the drafting of legislation, educated Clerks and members of the business community and provided testimony to Legislators. With his leadership, Senate Bill 16-138 passed in 2016 and is in the process of awarding it first grants to counties beginning this summer. He did all of this work knowing that it would have little benefit to his own county but was important in maintaining the efficiency and integrity of recordings in Colorado. Additionally, in 2015 Mr. Guzman became a strong proponent of closing a loophole in Colorado proxy marriage laws to prevent it from being abused by those with bad intentions. Governor Hickenlooper signed House Bill 15-1327 into law on May 27, 2015. While others might shy away from difficult projects or legislation, Juan takes them on and sees them to a successful conclusion.

Finally, Mr. Guzman's professionalism and knowledge has led him to be a teacher and mentor to many recording staff across Colorado. He has always made himself available to answers questions and provides guidance. Juan has been a presenter in many training sessions at the Clerks' semi-annual conference and has become a leading authority on recording issues related to Colorado.

Not only has Juan Guzman earned the Excellence in County Government Award, but also the respect and admiration of those who work with him. It is my honor to support his nomination.

Respectfully,

Michelle Batey  
Lobbyist  
Colorado County Clerks Association



# COLORADO COUNTY CLERKS ASSOCIATION

P.O. BOX 1916 WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO 80034

April 10, 2017

To: International Association of Government Officials (IGO)

Subject: Recommendation letter for Juan Guzman, Excellence in County Government Award

Members of the Selection Committee:

It is my great pleasure to nominate Juan Guzman for the Excellence in County Government Award. Juan has served as the Recording Statute Review Committee Chair for the Colorado County Clerks Association (CCCA) for several years. Not only attending and participating as a member of the association, but stepping up and contributing his strong leadership skills to the benefit of the land records professionals across the state of Colorado.

As a former Clerk and Recorder and the current Executive Director for the CCCA, I have relied on Mr. Guzman for his professional expertise in the legal and technical arena of public records. He has led the committee that reviews all recording legislation that informs our elected members on policy and implementation. He is a professional and reliable voice in public testimony at the Colorado General Assembly on impacts of proposed policy. Last year, Mr. Guzman was an indispensable advocate in successfully developing and passing CCCA-proposed legislation for resources for rural counties to maintain and upgrade their systems. This took a few years of tremendous research and preparation in a difficult political environment and was nearly unanimously supported by the state senators and representatives.

The CCCA presents two large conferences per year with approximately 300 attendees. He has developed and personally instructed many sessions at our CCCA conferences to keep his colleagues up-to-date on current best practices and issues. He is a leading voice in the industry and invaluable resource for our association. County clerks and their staff know they can contact him any time for support.

*Executive Director*

Pam Anderson

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Pam Bacon

Logan County Clerk

*President –Elect*

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San Miguel County Clerk



# COLORADO COUNTY CLERKS ASSOCIATION

*P.O. BOX 1916 WHEAT RIDGE, COLORADO 80034*

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One of our member counties was struggling a great deal due to tremendous local economic difficulties. They were having difficulty keeping up with day-to-day operations over the year and had a back-log that was insurmountable due to lack of resources. Mr. Guzman became aware of the situation and came to me, not only with the problem but with a solution and generous offer of support for their fellow county. This is only one example of his integrity and understanding of the true meaning of public service.

These are only a few of the reasons that I strongly recommend Juan Guzman for the Excellence in County Government Award. If selected, he would be an exemplary representative of your organization and his peers.

Respectfully,

Pam Anderson  
Executive Director  
Colorado County Clerks Association