



# *South Carolina Certified Public Manager®*

## *2021 Askew Award Winner*

The George C. Askew Award is given annually to an individual (or individuals) deemed to have completed an exemplary Certified Public Manager Capstone Project for the year.

It was created by the American Academy of Certified Public Managers® to recognize outstanding projects throughout the country and was named in honor of George C. Askew who, by virtue of being the first named called in the first CPM graduation ceremony in Georgia in 1976, became the first individual to be certified by a Certified Public Manager® program.

Each CPM Program, through its director, may nominate a capstone project to be given the award for its local program.

### **The South Carolina Certified Public Manager Program congratulates the 2021 recipient of the George C. Askew Award, Melody Lucas, SPOE Program Manager, Department of Health and Human Services.**

The criteria for selection include that the project should:

- Be innovative in its approach.
- Demonstrate an improvement in quality within the work unit as a result of the project.
- Show cost savings of the result of the implementation of the project.
- Be an outstanding demonstration of CPM principles.

Nathan Strong and Bill Tomes serve as project mentors for the program. They review every project in its entirety and provide feedback and guidance to the CPM candidates. There were many great projects that will positively impact agency processes and the citizens agencies serve. Selecting a winner each year is no small task. About this year's Askew Award winner, Nathan Strong had this to say:

*"Melody's CPM project, REDUCING THE OCCURRENCE OF LATE BABYNET ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATIONS USING METRICS-BASED PROCESS IMPROVEMENT, was the type of project that I love to review. As I read it, my thoughts were that either Melody was an intuitively a good manager when she took the BabyNet job, or CPM has really had a great influence on her (or both). Her project reflects exactly how things should be managed in a situation like the one she inherited in 2018. The process she reviewed had a high volume of referrals to manage, close to 20,000 each year. In addition, the program had historically had significant number of referrals that were not meeting a required 45-day processing timeline. Her goal was to set up metrics that are useful and relevant and then empower her team to assume ownership of both individual and group performance by managing from the data. She diligently assessed the variation in how the work was performed in the twelve local offices and involved the workforce in the discussion about where the gaps in performance were located and got their input on the causes of the gaps. The biggest takeaways I got from this excellent project is that Melody listened carefully, did not succumb to the temptation to blame people, and is using data to manage the things that the team can reasonably manage. Melody's approach epitomizes what we would hope that all participants are able to learn during their CPM experience."*

Two graduates were selected to receive an honorable mention for their projects:

Wayne Ducote, South Carolina Workers' Compensation Commission  
Melissa Caughman, City of Columbia