

2007 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 07-S-13LASWIFTEMERGENCYTRANSPORT

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Louisiana

- Assign Program Category (applicant): Infrastructure & Economic Development (Business/Commerce) (Use list at end of application)
1. Program Name – LA Swift (Intercity Bus Service Between Baton Rouge and New Orleans) and the Louisiana Statewide Supplemental Emergency Public Transportation Recovery Program
 2. Administering Agency – Louisiana Department of Transportation & Development, Public Transportation Section
 3. Contact Person (Name and Title) – Colonel Thomas F. Atkinson, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary, Intermodal Transportation Division; Carol Cranshaw, Public Transportation Administrator; Donna Lavigne, Assistant Public Transportation Administration
 4. Address – 8900 Jimmy Wedell Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70807
 5. Telephone Number – 225-274-4302
 6. FAX Number – 225-274-4314
 7. E-mail Address – TomAtkinson@dotd.la.gov, CarolCranshaw@dotd.la.gov, DonnaLavigne@dotd.la.gov
 8. Web site Address – www.dotd.la.gov/intermodal/transit/ http://www.laswift.com/
 9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program. LA Swift was designed to transport Hurricane Katrina displaced residents with no transportation from Baton Rouge to New Orleans and back for jobs, job searches and similar recovery efforts. Since its inception on October 31, 2005, LA Swift has operated 7 days per week and has transported over 310,000 riders. The Statewide Emergency Transportation Recovery Program enabled us to obtain an additional \$19 million from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to provide emergency public transportation services for citizens displaced by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita to parishes across the state. The Program also complimented and extended the availability of the LA Swift intercity bus service by providing feeder connections to the LA Swift.
 10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on April 2, 2007, to be considered. 17 months
 11. Why was the program created? In the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the DOTD Public Transportation Section became immersed in several emergency funding and innovative recovery activities. In an effort to address the transportation problems of citizens displaced by these hurricanes, the DOTD together with the Louisiana Department of Labor, FEMA, FTA, the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA), Capital Area Transit System (CATS), Hotard Coaches, Carey CoachOps, the Community Transportation Association of America, the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA), and other state and local officials developed the LA

Swift Intercity Bus Plan and the Statewide Supplemental Emergency Transportation Plan. What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address? Shortly after Hurricane Katrina, thousands of displaced New Orleans residents were placed in FEMA trailer sites in Baton Rouge, which almost doubled the population. Baton Rouge could not sustain the increased population and New Orleans needed workers. The LA Swift service was developed to provide transportation from Baton Rouge to New Orleans to help in the rebuilding and recovery efforts and the Statewide Supplemental Emergency Transportation Plan was developed to provide transportation for displaced persons in various parishes throughout the State. The service has been instrumental in helping thousands of disadvantaged people access jobs and essential services and has been absolutely vital to the recovery of New Orleans and other parishes devastated by Katrina and/or Rita.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order. Immediately following the Hurricanes, the DOTD Intermodal Division developed a public/private partnership team to address the various transit needs resulting from the Hurricanes and hosted a hotline to gather information and address complaints statewide. We began meeting daily to develop the LA Swift and the Statewide Plans. After the Plans were developed and implemented, we met weekly for many months to address various issues such as ground operations, scheduling, communications, data collection and reporting. Nineteen months after the storms, we are still immersed in Katrina/Rita related transit activities. The devastation in the New Orleans area was so great that some analysts predict that it will take 5 to 10 years to fully recover.
13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method? Prior to LA Swift, Louisiana did not have a transit system that operated between two major cities. As far as we know, no other state has a bus service of its type. This new approach was an initiative of the Louisiana Recovery Authority, which focused on returning people to work and participate in recovery efforts. LA Swift was a great success because of the demographic changes post Katrina and lack of housing in the Greater New Orleans area. Also, we believe we are the only State that had to quickly develop a Statewide Plan to address transit issues caused by the Hurricanes in every parish.
14. What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.) Buses and drivers were provided by FEMA. FTA/FEMA provided the initial \$19 Million for the Statewide Plan. The Public Transportation Section provided the expertise for and management of the program with the existing staff of only 12. We collect and report on daily ridership data and address problems that occur. During the first four months, we conducted weekly meetings with LA Swift partners and provided numerous reports to FEMA, FTA and DOTD officials.
15. What are the program's annual operational costs? FEMA provided vehicles and drivers the first year of operation and we used our existing FTA funds for administration and oversight. As a stop-gap measure to give us time to advertise and bid the service, FTA and the State provided \$2.7 Million to contract with the New Orleans Regional Transit Authority (NORTA) for vehicles, drivers and scheduling from December 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007. The service will be advertised the first week of April and a new intercity bus company will provide the service from July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2008, with a budget of \$7.3 million state and federal dollars. FEMA/FTA funded the Statewide Plan with \$19 Million.
16. How is the program funded? From October 31, 2005 through November 30, 2006, FEMA funded the vehicles and drivers for LA Swift. From December 1, 2006 through June 30, 2008, Federal FTA funds under the 5311(f) Intercity Bus Program and State Emergency Relief Funds (SERF) are being used.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number. [No additional legislation was required.](#)
18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program? [Various private companies provided the 55-foot over the road coaches \(buses\) and drivers. The software used to track data is Excel, PowerPoint, Access, and Word.](#)
19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address. [Yes. Colonel Thomas F. Atkinson, Jr., Deputy Assistant Secretary, Intermodal Transportation Division; Carol Cranshaw, Public Transportation Administrator; Donna Lavigne, Assistant Public Transportation Administration, 8900 Jimmy Wedell Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70807. Phone: 225-274-4302, Emails: \[TomAtkinson@dotd.la.gov\]\(mailto:TomAtkinson@dotd.la.gov\), \[CarolCranshaw@dotd.la.gov\]\(mailto:CarolCranshaw@dotd.la.gov\), \[DonnaLavigne@dotd.la.gov\]\(mailto:DonnaLavigne@dotd.la.gov\),](#)
20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? [We are aware of passenger/commuter trains that provide service between two major cities, but are not aware of a similar bus service between two major cities. We believe we are also the only State that has had to develop a Statewide Plan to address post-hurricanes transit issues in every parish.](#)
21. Has the program been fully implemented? [Yes.](#) If NO, what actions remain to be taken?
22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples. [Pro: LA Swift has been very important to the New Orleans economy and has enabled Louisiana citizens access to jobs, conduct job searches and engage in the rebuilding efforts at no cost to the passenger. Con: The extra work has caused a huge strain on an already small staff with limited resources.](#)
23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception? [See #15](#)
24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program? [Other states are only limited by funding and staff to operate the service.](#)

2007 Innovations Awards Program Program Categories and Subcategories

Use these as guidelines to determine the appropriate Program Category for your state's submission and list that program category on page one of this application. Choose only one.

Infrastructure and Economic Development

- Business/Commerce
- Economic Development
- Transportation

Government Operations

- Administration
- Elections
- Public Information
- Revenue

Health & Human Services

- Aging
- Children & Families
- Health Services
- Housing
- Human Services

Human Resources/Education

- Education
- Labor
- Management
- Personnel
- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

Natural Resources

- Agriculture
- Energy
- Environment
- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
- Parks & Recreation
- Water Resources

Public Safety/Corrections

- Corrections
- Courts
- Criminal Justice
- Drugs
- Emergency Management
- Public Safety

Save in .doc or rtf. Return completed application electronically to innovations@csg.org or mail to:

CSG Innovations Awards 2007
The Council of State Governments
2760 Research Park Drive, P.O. Box 11910
Lexington, KY 40578-1910

Contact:

Nancy J. Vickers, National Program Associate
Phone: 859.244.8105
Fax: 859.244.8001 – Attn: Innovations Awards Program
The Council of State Governments
E-mail: nvickers@csg.org

This application is also available at www.csg.org, in the Programs section.

Deadline: April 2, 2007