

**2007 Innovations Awards Program
APPLICATION**

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 07-S-55ALONLINEGOODSTANDING

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: _____ALABAMA_____

Assign Program Category (applicant): __ Business/Commerce __ (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name:

Online Certificates of Good Standing Request

2. Administering Agency:

Alabama Department of Revenue (ADOR)

3. Contact Person (Name and Title):

Richard Henninger, Director, Individual and Corporate Tax Division

4. Address:

50 N. Ripley Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36132

5. Telephone Number:

334-242-1103

6. FAX Number:

334-242-0148

7. E-mail Address:

Richard.Henninger@revenue.alabama.gov

8. Web site Address:

https://www.alabamainteractive.org/dor_cgs/

9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program:

The Online Certificate of Good Standing Request service is a completely automated process for the Alabama Department of Revenue. The service allows businesses to request, pay for, and check on the status of their tax standings with the state of Alabama.

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.

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11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

The Online Certificate of Good Standing Request service was created to provide efficiencies to what was once a time consuming process. Prior to the online system, citizens were required to contact the Department of Revenue via conventional mail to make a request for certificates of good standing; a process that averaged a few weeks. Now, businesses can make a request at any time, from any place with Internet connectivity and receive their requests online typically within a day. Conventional mail is no longer necessary for either the requestor or the Department of Revenue (ADOR) for certificate requests or fulfillment.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

The Online Certificate of Good Standing Request service begins with the user visiting https://www.alabamainteractive.org/dor_cgs/ and selecting the “Request a Single Certificate of Good Standing” link located on the page. The requestor must then enter the information related to the entity making the certificate request. This information includes, name, address, phone, fax, and email. This information is collected so that ADOR has a history of requests. Next, the user must enter information on the entity being requested. Information entered includes the business name, FEIN, address, phone, and the reason for request. This information assists ADOR in locating the information on file for the business. The requestor is then taken to the payment processing page, where they are required to enter their credit card information to pay the processing fee associated with the certificate request. Once the payment has been processed, the requestor receives a receipt with their request information listed and a notice that the process may take up to three to five business days. The receipt also provides a confirmation number and a request number.

ADOR receives the request through the online system once payment from the requestor is processed. Because data is found in multiple backend systems, the department must review each system to confirm that the business is clear and may receive a certificate of good standing.

The requestor may check on the status of their request by visiting https://www.alabamainteractive.org/dor_cgs/ and selecting the “Check the Status of My Request” link located on the page. On the following page, the requestor must enter the request number supplied on their receipt. After submitting, the user will be informed about the status of their request and the dates of request and, if the certificate is completed, the date of completion.

Once the request has been finalized, the user may click on the “Retrieve My Request” link where they will be presented with their certificate. The requestor has 15 days to download and print their request once it has been finalized.

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

Alabama’s online system for certificate of good standing requests is a new and creative approach for the state mainly because it utilizes the Internet to take what was an extremely manual process that could take weeks and created a system that averages hours. Alabama is a leader in the electronic government movement and the certificate of good standing request service is just one more stepping stone for the state.

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.)

A unique self-funded partnership between the State of Alabama and Alabama Interactive allows for the development of applications at no cost to agencies throughout the state. Although there are costs associated with the development of the program, those costs were not paid by ADOR. One project manager and one developer worked to develop the online system based on meetings with ADOR. The entire project took approximately 100 hours to complete and would have equated to approximately \$10,000 in costs associated with its development. However, ADOR has not had to pay any money for the project.

15. What are the program’s annual operational costs?

There is no set amount for annual operational costs. All maintenance and updates are performed at no cost to ADOR through a partnership with Alabama Interactive. The application funds itself through a convenience fee paid by each requestor.

16. How is the program funded?

The unique self-funded partnership between Alabama Interactive (AI) and the State of Alabama allowed the Online Certificate of Good Standing Request service to be created with no upfront development costs to ADOR. AI recoups its cost via a convenience fee, whereby the requestor pays a convenience fee in addition to the statutory fee to utilize the service online.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.

No, no legislation, executive order or regulations were required for this program.

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?

The Certificate of Good Standing Request service is a custom built, java-based online tool. By utilizing Internet based technology, the certificate request process is performed entirely online for the requestor. The program was built utilizing the following tools: NetBeans, Java, Servlet, Resin, Tomcat, and Oracle.

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.

The Certificate of Good Standing Request service as it exists in Alabama originated within the state. Alabama's system for reviewing tax information is currently housed in multiple backend systems requiring ADOR to review each system to check on a business' status. However, ADOR developed a web-based system that appears automated and provides the status, and certificate to the requestor online. In reality, ADOR is still reviewing each request as it did before but the online system allows ADOR to provide responses to requests much more quickly and efficiently online.

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

We are aware that other states have fully automated systems for Certificates of Good Standing. Utah, Montana, Arkansas, and Hawaii are a few of the states with an online Certificate of Good Standing Request service. However, Alabama's system differs considerably from other states in that the Alabama currently requires several different backend systems to be reviewed before a business' status can be provided to a requestor. However, ADOR developed a web-based system that appears automated and provides the status, and certificate to the requestor online.

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?

Yes, the program has been fully implemented online.

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

The system has been a complete success for the state! What was once a several week process has now been reduced to a process that may only take a few hours. The online system benefits everyone involved: the state and the requestor. The state benefits from having all requests and responses available on their systems, saving time and creating efficiencies. The requestor benefits from the ability to make a request, check on a status of the request, and ultimately receive a response on the standing of the business.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

The program is still only in its first year of operation. No changes have been made to the current process.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

The Online Certificate of Good Standing Request service was only prevented from completely automating its process by its multiple backend systems. Other states may not face this limitation, but may need to overcome the hurdle of being willing to take their processes online and commit to an automated process.

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
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Lexington, KY 40578-1910

Contact:

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

Deadline: April 2, 2007