

**2007 Innovations Awards Program
APPLICATION**

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 07-S-58ALONLINECASEMANAGER

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: _____ALABAMA_____

Assign Program Category (applicant): __Training and Development__ (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name:

Online Case Manager Training

2. Administering Agency:

Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (ADMHMR)

3. Contact Person (Name and Title):

Fordyce Mitchel

4. Address:

MR Community Service Programs
Alabama Department of MH and MR
P.O. Box 301410
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-1410

5. Telephone Number:

334-242-3719

6. FAX Number:

334-242-0542

7. E-mail Address:

Fordyce.mitchel@mh.alabama.gov

8. Web site Address:

<http://www.alabamainteractive.org/admhmrm>

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

The Online Case Manager Training program is a completely automated training/certification process for the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. The program allows case managers to study, practice, take the exam, receive their results, and receive their certificate of completion entirely online.

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.

February 2006

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

The Online Case Manager Training program was designed to provide Alabama's case managers in training an efficient means to receive their state certification. The program created efficiencies in the certification process and aided not only the case managers in training, but also the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation (ADMHMR) and the 310 Agencies where the case managers work. The program addressed the need for information at all levels of the certification process. Case managers receive the information they require from the program, use it to study, and ultimately to pass the examination. ADMHMR receives information on each registrant and uses this information to provide continuing education hours, to provide the federal government with state health statistics and information, and also to make sure that case managers are properly trained in the state of Alabama. The 310 Agencies are able to keep up with the certification of their case managers through the system by receiving status reports via email. Every aspect of the case manager training is performed online, from registration to the printing of the certificate of completion. Prior to the program's creation, the site required a great deal of programmer involvement. Today, however, the site is a perfect example of a completely automated process.

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

The Online Case Manager Training program process begins with the individual visiting www.alabamainteractive.org/admhmr to register. The case manager trainee is required to input personal information, login information, whether they would like to receive continuing education credits, and information on their supervisor during the registration process. The credit card payment is processed at the end of the registration process. Emails are sent to ADMHMR and the case manager with their registration information. The case manager now has access to the system and may use the site to read, study, practice, and ultimately take the exam. The case manager has three attempts to successfully pass the self-grading examination. If the case manager does not pass the exam after three attempts, the case manager must re-register and pay again for access to the program. If the case manager successfully passes the exam an email is sent to the supervisor listed during the case manager's registration. This email requires the supervisor to follow a link provided to digitally sign their name certifying that the case manager is under their supervision. Once this is completed, the certificate of completion is sent to the case manager, the supervisor, and ADMHMR. The case manager will have access to the system after successful completion (but cannot retake the exam) for up to one year.

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

ADMHMR is a state leader in the online certification exams as the Internet is not currently a mainstream process for state agencies to certify their constituents. The online system provides a means for ADMHMR to update content, automatically grade exams, and automatically generate certificates of completion. A completely automated process for training is a first for Alabama.

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 ADMHMR. One project manager, a webmaster, and two developers worked to design and automate the exam and certification process. The entire project took approximately 300 hours to complete and would have equated to approximately \$35,000 in costs associated with its development. However, ADMHMR 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 ADMHMR through a partnership with Alabama Interactive. The application funds itself through a subscription fee paid by each examinee.

16. How is the program funded?

The unique self-funded partnership between Alabama Interactive (AI) and the State of Alabama allowed the Online Case Manager Training program to be created with no upfront development costs to ADMHMR. AI recoups its cost via a subscription-based model, whereby the user pays a fee to register and take the exam 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 Online Case Manager Training program is a custom built, java-based online tool. By utilizing Internet based technology, the certification process is completely automated. The program was built utilizing the following tools: NetBeans, Java, 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.

Yes.

Originator: The Alabama Association of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities and the Alabama Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation

Contact: Fordyce Mitchel

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

We are not aware of any that provide a completely automated system online.

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

The Online Case Manager Training program has been fully implemented. There are two more phases that will not impact the training program but will add features to other aspects of the case manager site. These two phases will incorporate an annual subscription provision for 310 Agencies in the state and a forum for case managers and 310 Agencies to communicate with one another on the site. These two phases are expected to be completed in the next year.

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

A number of positive points have come from the creation of the online program. The biggest benefit of the system is that it provides conveniences and tools to the case managers who are working to become certified in the state. In addition, the entire process is automated online, from registration to certification. This benefit impacts ADMHMR, the case managers, and the 310 Agencies where the case managers work. There are no longer any manual processes associated with case manager training in the state. Case managers in training can use the site to study or test anywhere, at any time.

Email is not always a reliable means to send notifications. Currently the system depends on email to send notifications to the supervisors for sign-off before the certification email can be sent to the case manager. To minimize If email sent by the system gets caught in spam filters for example, the certification process maybe held up until the supervisor receives the email and can validate that a case manager currently works under their supervision. Alabama Interactive is considering new features to the system that will remove the necessity to utilize email during the notification process, but the current supervisor approval takes.

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

The program was completely rebuilt in 2005 by Alabama Interactive after taking over as administrator of the service from Hooper Online (former partner of ADMHMR). Alabama Interactive completed the automation of the service when it designed the self-grading exam and online certificate generator in 2006. The program is in the process of receiving added features that will include an upgrade to its exam function. Currently only one exam exists for certification; the upgrade will introduce two new versions of the exam and will generate a different exam if the user does not pass after the first or second attempt.

Two new phases to the site will provide a means for the 310 Agencies to subscribe to the content of the case manager site. This will allow users to keep up-to-date on information associated with case manager training. In addition, the third phase of the site will provide a forum where case managers, ADMHMR, and 310 Agencies can communicate with one another across the state.

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

The Online Case Manager Training program did not face any major limitations or obstacles during its development. Other states may need to overcome the hurdle of being willing to take their processes online and commit to a completely automated process. Because the examination is performed online and can be completed on any computer with Internet connectivity, some states may want to consider methods to monitor the examination 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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The Council of State Governments
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This application is also available at www.csg.org, in the Programs section.

Deadline: April 2, 2007