

## 2008 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 08-M-13MI

**Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:**

State: Michigan

Assign Program Category (applicant): *Government Operations*

1. Program Name
  - a. Public School Employer Reporting Webinars
2. Administering Agency
  - a. Department of Management and Budget, Office of Retirement Services
3. Contact Person (Name and Title)
  - a. Laurie Hill, Acting Assistant Director of ORS
4. Address
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8. Web site Address
  - a. [www.michigan.gov/ors](http://www.michigan.gov/ors)
    - i. Employer webinars can be found online at <http://www.state.mi.us/dmb/ors/emp/psru/EmployerSeminars.asp>
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

The Office of Retirement Services (ORS) created and implemented three webinar trainings (How to Complete the Final Salary Affidavit, TDP Agreements and Addendums, and Supplemental TDP Agreements) for employers in the Michigan Public School Retirement System. We have over 700 employers reporting to ORS and found that the webinar tool allows us to reach a large audience across the entire state of Michigan in one easy, cost effective, and efficient manner.
10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?

After nearly one year of research and analysis, we selected Microsoft Live Meeting and used this tool to deliver our first webinar in May 2007. We continue to develop new sessions as needed. Our next webinar is slated for release in May 2008.
11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

Because our audience is so large (721 reporting units across the state of Michigan) and the budget we work with is small, a fast and inexpensive method for delivering information was needed. Conducting webinars saves money and a lot of travel time. These meetings are live interactive events; our customers are able to ask questions of the presenter during these sessions.

Use of webinars allows us to continue offering quality, interactive seminars while reducing or eliminating travel costs & risks, for both the presenter and the participant.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.
  - a. May 24, 2007 – launched first webinar, How to Complete a Final Salary Affidavit, with morning and afternoon sessions scheduled through June 19. 216 attendees took part in these sessions.
  - b. November 1, 2007 – launched second webinar, Tax Deferred Payment (TDP) Agreements and Addendums, hosting seven sessions with 63 attendees, with additional sessions scheduled through November 21.
  - c. November 6, 2007 – launched the third webinar, Supplemental TDP Agreements, with seven sessions and 35 attendees. These were repeated through November 30.
  - d. Present – we continue to look for future webinar needs and will create and execute sessions when the need for information arises.

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

Webinars got their start in the late 1990's and today web conferencing is a more widely accepted alternative to face-to-face meetings requiring travel. 97.9 percent of attendees reported that they were comfortable using this technology.

For years we have conducted two-hour Employer Seminars that required a great amount of travel and subsequent expenses. However, this was our only way deliver the information to our audience.

Now, we are able to conduct short, concise webinars to get the information needed to a targeted audience instead of making every one sit through a two-hour sessions to get the 15 minutes of information that pertained to them. All from the comforts of their own office!

In addition, these webinars are recorded and posted online allowing any employer the opportunity to view as often as needed.

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.)

**Microsoft LiveMeeting Costs:**

1. LiveMeeting: initial 15 month contract = \$3,500.00
  - a. Provides unlimited (consecutive) meetings and 1 GB of space on their server
  - b. Maximum meeting participation is 24 "seats"
2. AT&T Teleconferencing = \$0.04 per minute, per attendee
  - a. A 30 minute presentation to 24 people is roughly \$29 per meeting for audio

3. Roughly 30 meetings in the first year for an average cost \$146 per meeting (\$3500/30 + \$29)
4. We assumed roughly 1 hour of analyst time for setup, presentation, and clean up.

**Compared to in-person meeting costs:**

1. Average of 6 hours of analyst time for travel, setup, presentation and takedown per meeting.
2. One hour of analyst time is a wash. The ADDITIONAL 5 hours of analyst time at roughly \$40/hour is \$200/meeting.
3. Travel costs average roughly \$40/meeting, if the presenter uses a state vehicle or \$100/meeting, if they use their own vehicle.
4. These tangible costs equal somewhere between \$240 and \$300 per meeting.

**Intangible costs reductions:**

1. Travel costs and time for our customers are also significantly reduced or eliminated. Our customers don't need to travel to off-site venues, saving travel costs and increasing productivity, by eliminating travel time. They attend the meetings at their own desks. Ultimately, this saves a lot of taxpayer money. It's good for the state and it's good for our customers!
2. Travel risks are reduced or eliminated, for the ORS presenters and meeting attendees. No auto accidents or slipping on icy sidewalks, etc.

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

This amount varies because we pay per session; therefore operational costs are based on the number of webinars scheduled.

16. How is the program funded?

Program costs are paid for out of our annual budget which is an allotted amount from the state's general fund.

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

No.

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

The use of a telephone headset with microphone is required. In addition, we use Microsoft PowerPoint, Live meeting, and host the sessions on our employer website.

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.

No.

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

No.

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

Yes, however, it continues to evolve and grow as we see need from our customers. In addition to new topics we continue to explore the most cost effective and customer-friendly tools to deliver information from a remote location.

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

- a. PROS – 99 percent of participants indicated an increased understanding of the webinar topic. Of that same audience 97.9 percent indicated they were comfortable using this method of learning.
  - a. Our customers love it, as evidenced in their survey comments:
    - i. “We appreciate the webinar because we understand that it is difficult to reach everyone in a timely fashion. We look forward to more of this learning!”
    - ii. “This is a fantastic way to convey information. I can remain in my building and at the same time receive very valuable training.”
    - iii. “Very informative, moved quickly, and all of my questions were answered.”
    - iv. “This was my first webinar, but it will not be my last! This was so convenient and easy.”
  - b. CON – we are limited to the software capabilities and availabilities. Under the current contract we are limited to 24 attendees per session. Addition attendees would increase the contact cost.

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

Since inception, we continue to learn from customer feedback and develop webinars that address their needs. In addition to new webinar topics, we explore new tools to make sure that we keep up with user-friendly technology.

We plan to expand webinars to our active and/or retired member audiences and grow our list of topics in the near future.

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

You are only as limited as the software, telephone, and IT support. The tools only require a slight amount of tech savvy from the users.

It is important that your audience has access to high-speed internet.