

**2008 Innovations Awards Program
APPLICATION**

CSG reserves the right to use or publish in other CSG products and services the information provided in this Innovations Awards Program Application. If your agency objects to this policy, please advise us in a separate attachment to your program's application.

ID # (assigned by CSG): 08-E-05DE

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Delaware

Assign Program Category (applicant): Personnel (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name: **Delaware Employment Link (DEL)**
2. Administering Agency: **Human Resource Management: Office of Management and Budget**
3. Contact Person (Name and Title): **Dana Jefferson, Ph.D., Director, Human Resource Management**
4. Address: **Carvel State Office Building, 10th Floor, 820 N. French Street, Wilmington, DE 19801**
5. Telephone Number: **302-577-8977**
6. FAX Number: **302-577-3966**
7. E-mail Address: **Dana.Jefferson@state.de.us**
8. Web site Address: **www.delawarestatejobs.com; www.delawarepersonnel.com**
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program. **The Delaware Employment Link is a comprehensive online recruitment and selection system for state employment which uses a similar look and feel and is competitive with other large online job sites such as monster.com. Implementation of this new system presented the opportunity to significantly restructure the merit hiring process and update job requirements statewide.**
10. How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 1, 2008 to be considered. **The DEL system went live on March 24, 2007.**
11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address? **The program was created to address a variety of issues with the state's merit hiring system. Customers complained about the length of time the process took along with inconsistent scoring of applications across agency lines. Hiring managers wanted more flexibility in recruitment and job applicants were frustrated by how complicated the former system was to use. The concept of "registers" after decades of use was still not widely understood outside of human resource staff. Many job requirements did not make sense to customers as the requirements for qualifying were often more difficult for lower paying jobs than for higher paying jobs. Reporting tools for managing recruitment were almost totally nonexistent. While Delaware had several of the hiring functions automated, the various programs did not talk to each other. The former system actually consisted of nine sub-systems with the main one so dysfunctional that Delaware's Department of Technology and Information was unable to provide any support for the system.**
12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order. **The program began with a comprehensive review of the State of Delaware's classification**

structure. The number of job classifications was reduced and all new job codes were developed along with revised job requirements. The new job codes and revised job requirements were implemented simultaneously with the implementation of the new DEL system. Initially, the eRecruit function within the State's ERP was reviewed as a logical solution to the State's requirement for a new recruitment system. However, it became clear that this option would not position the State of Delaware to competitively access the available labor market. This decision was also based on a series of meetings with state agencies to analyze their issues with the hiring process and to ensure that selection procedures and processes occurring at the various agencies were clearly understood. Other states, businesses and vendors were also researched to determine best practice and available leading edge software for hiring and recruitment systems. It was imperative to discover systems that could also ensure the integrity of a government merit system. Once the research was completed and the decision was reached to find a vendor, a request for proposal was published in April of 2006. A vendor was selected in September of 2006 after a very comprehensive review process. A contract was signed on October 26, 2006, and the system went live on March 24, 2007.

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method? The solution is new and creative because it positioned a state merit system to maintain the integrity of its classification and hiring system while providing a view to job applicants that was competitive to private sector systems. DEL fully integrated the State's classification, selection and recruitment while interfacing with the State's HRIS for nightly downloads. The creativity and effectiveness of DEL has been recognized in Delaware and nationally:

- The DEL Project Team received the 2007 Governor's Team Excellence Award for teamwork and outstanding results.
- The DEL program was recently honored at a ceremony held by the Departments of State and Technology and Information for its assistance in the state's web portal, Delaware.gov, being named among the top five state web portals in the nation in the Center for Digital Government's 11th Annual "Best of the Web" Competition.
- The DEL information brochure won the 2007 Communications Award (print category) from the National Association of State Personnel Executives.
- Governing Magazine, recognizing Delaware's successful deployment of technology, has requested a presentation of the DEL system at their May 28, 2008 conference in Seattle.

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.) One new position, a project manager, was added to the existing personnel complement to implement and operate this program. Other in-house staff were redeployed to assist in program implementation. The initial implementation cost was \$180,000 plus \$150,000 for additional Delaware-specific customization (see question #21 below.) Since the program utilizes an ASP (application service provider) solution, there were no additional costs or technology staff required. Such functions as database maintenance, web hosting and disaster recovery are provided by the vendor. The State of Delaware did utilize this opportunity to voluntarily upgrade some of its laptops and personal computers utilized in our county employment service centers.

15. What are the program's annual operational costs? The 2008 annual operational costs are \$180,000 plus the cost of the one new state position to manage this program.

16. How is the program funded? The program was initially funded with one-time General Fund appropriations. The annualized costs have been requested to become part of the base budget in this year's Governor's Recommended Budget.

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number. **House Bill 109 was passed by Delaware's General Assembly and signed into law by Governor Minner to implement the changes required for this new process. The legislation specifically provided for the following major changes:**

- **Changed the minimum number of days to post a vacancy from 15 to 7.**
- **Increased the number of eligible candidates on an eligibility list from 15 or 15% of the pool to no more than 30 unless equally qualified. In addition, all tie breaker rules were deleted.**
- **Eliminated registers and allowed agencies to post for actual vacancies.**
- **Updated rules relating to veterans' preferences. (With the new system, veterans only have to submit their DD214 and/or proof of disability, once rather than for each separate job application.)**

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program? **Users access the program through their web browser on any computer using any network connection speed. Applicants access the system through a web browser and computer using Windows 2000, Windows XP, Windows Vista, LAN, Internet Explorer 5 or above. The web-based application (SaaS) is written in .NET with a backend Microsoft SQL Server Cluster and Microsoft Windows 2005 Web Server Cluster. The vendor's secure data facility is CBS' Secure Nevada NAP.**

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. **While other states have recently implemented software by the same vendor, it is believed that Delaware's program is unique. The program was developed by a team, but the above contact information can be utilized here.**

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? **The State of Oklahoma has implemented with the same vendor, but it is not believed that their classification and hiring system was essentially restructured prior to such implementation.**

21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken? **The initial implementation has been fully completed. However, the State of Delaware has a longer range vision which will take multiple years for full implementation. This vision includes implementing online testing of all jobs. Currently, the majority of jobs are tested online via use of a supplemental questionnaire. The supplemental questions were developed through a process of converting all job requirements to screening questions. As part of the restructuring process, written tests were eliminated for all but a very few law enforcement related classifications. On-line testing is expected to be fully implemented by mid-March 2008. Delaware is also in the process of allowing direct access to the system to all hiring managers. While some managers currently have access to follow the recruitment of their positions, other managers just receive an e-mail with a password and URL where they can access their list. An online education program was recently developed to train hiring managers not only to use the system but to update their knowledge of best practice selection interviewing at the same time. A new *User's Guide to Merit Hiring* was developed and published. As mentioned above, Delaware has a contract with JobAps to further customize the system to better handle competencies. The ultimate vision is that the competencies residing in this system, as associated with a particular job or classification, will be fully aligned across other Delaware human resource systems such as performance management and learning management.**

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples. **Well before the vendor was selected, the following goals were developed:**

A. Create Efficiency by 1) Automating the Hiring Process; 2) Streamlining and Simplifying the Business Process and Workflow for Hiring; 3) Removing Inefficiencies and Barriers; and 4) Providing Real Time Information for Decision-Making.

Pros: DEL has made the application process so much easier for the applicant. The application does not time out as it did in the previous system, and it is faster to complete. The applicants' profiles are stored, and they can copy it when applying for multiple positions. Agencies can monitor the number and quality of applications in real time along with tracking the effectiveness of recruitment scores. By reducing the minimum numbers of days to post a position, the time to hire has been significantly reduced. While accurate statistics on hiring were not available in the previous system, it is estimated that the average time from request to fill a vacancy to receiving a list of qualified candidates has been reduced by half. DEL has fully automated all parts of the hiring process from request to fill vacancy through disposition of applicants. DEL has created uniformity among all recruiting and selection functions by standardizing the hiring process.

Cons: For most positions a self-assessed Supplemental Questionnaire is utilized. Some applicants tend to either over or understate their qualifications, which have required a manual quality control check procedure to ensure better accuracy. The vendor is working with the State to customize DEL to utilize both screening and ranking questions, which will lead to improved automated selection. That customization is currently ninety-five percent complete.

B. Create Competition by 1) Creating a Competitive Advantage in the Labor Market; 2) Providing a Paradigm Shift for Human Resources from Posting Jobs to Pro-Active Recruitment; and 3) Modernizing Employment Services Rules.

Pros: DEL has provided the competitive advantage expected with over 86,000 applications received in less than a year from a broader market. Agencies are able to manage their recruitments more efficiently by monitoring applications, having reporting capabilities (e.g., applicant flow, workflow, EEO, Sourcing) and obtaining a larger and more qualified pool of applicants. Sections of the Delaware Code and Merit Rules were revised to modernize Delaware's employment services rules. Being able to recruit by specific vacancies rather than having to utilize registers and open-ended recruitments has meant that hiring managers only receive applications for individuals interested in their specific job (as opposed to the receiving a list of names from a register that could be almost a year old). The job search site uses a similar look and feel and is competitive with other large online job sites such as monster.com.

Cons: Some of our recruitments are still limited by the available labor market such as the low number of Registered Nurses in Delaware per available Delaware nursing jobs.

C. Provide Self-Service by 1) Providing Tools to Applicants to Manage Job Search and Applications; and 2) Providing Tools to Agencies to Manage Recruitment and Hiring.

Pros: The self-service tool allows the applicants to follow the status of their recruitments. They can see when the applications are reviewed and when the interview process will take place. This empowerment of applicants has reduced the number of calls from applicants asking such questions. DEL offers an "interest card service" that allows applicants to sign-up for e-mail notification of new job openings.

This prevents them from missing opportunities even though some jobs may only be posted for seven days. Agencies can check the status of their recruitments in real time and manage position openings in response to the number of qualified applicants. Agencies communicate with all applicants throughout the recruiting process via email notices in DEL. This has allowed agencies to communicate more timely and effectively with applicants and this process has also reduced State spending by eliminating the cost of paper, envelopes and stamps.

Cons: A possible con might be that applicants now have to have an e-mail address to get the notification alerts and notices from agencies. This con has been essentially overcome by the offering of links to free e-mail providers on our website. Our website and marketing materials also include information on how to utilize this process.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception? The program is growing and changing on a regular basis as mentioned in #21. Additionally, when the program was originally designed it was generally thought that it would be impossible to fully do away with paper applications. By doing a very comprehensive marketing and training campaign, the program has been able to operate for almost a year without having to print any paper applications. It has been estimated that the DEL system has saved approximately 600,000 sheets of paper - enough paper to fill a 13 foot by 13 foot room one foot high with paper. In addition to the savings of paper and ink, it is hoped the system has made a positive contribution towards “thinking green.”

The comprehensive marketing and training campaign included:

- Developing a totally new website for job applicants.**
- Developing marketing materials including brochures, mouse pads, wallet cards, a “post it note” for the front of the State’s major Sunday newspaper, posters, buttons, newspaper and newsletter articles, payroll stuffers, e-flyers and ads in Employment Guides.**
- Training of all statewide Human Resources staff including quarterly newsletters and continuing education.**
- Training all librarians in the State of Delaware so that they could assist applicants utilizing community-based personal computers in public libraries.**
- Training Department of Labor employees working in our State’s “One-Stop” Centers so they could assist their clientele in applying for state jobs.**
- Partnering with the Department of Labor to utilize their mobile “one-stop” van at Job Fairs so applicants have computers available to apply for jobs. This partnership has been especially effective at Job Fairs to recruit Correctional Officers.**
- Addressing the questions and concerns of the labor unions in Delaware so that they became a partner in the implementation of the system.**
- Meeting with officials from the Division of Social Services and the Division of State Service Centers to coordinate with their client base who are potential job applicants.**
- Extending hours at our county Employment Services Centers during the month after launch to ensure applicant’s questions could be answered and to assist them in setting up their basic information in the system for those not computer literate. (Once applicants saw how easy it was to use the system, they registered at their leisure and felt comfortable applying without further assistance.)**
- Education was conducted for employees and other potential applicants at state agencies and local libraries to again ensure their comfort in using the system.**
- Local job fairs were attended to educate jobseekers on the new system.**

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program? **Each state is unique. One of Delaware's unique traits is its size and ability for all stakeholders to have a direct voice in the process. If other states do not have an established trust relationship with operating agencies, labor unions, members of the general assembly, etc., then such major structural and operating changes necessary for the implementation could be more difficult. However, this obstacle can be addressed with appropriate recognition of this factor in the beginning of the process.**