

**2008 Innovations Awards Program
APPLICATION**

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 08-E-10ME

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Maine

Assign Program Category (applicant): Human Resources/Education - Personnel (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name- **HireME**
2. Administering Agency- **Maine Bureau of Human Resources, in partnership with InforME**
3. Contact Person (Name and Title)- **Kelly Hokkanen, Director of eGovernment Solutions, InforME**
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7. E-mail Address- **kelly@informe.org**
8. Web site Address- **<http://www.maine.gov/online/hireme>**
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

The HireME online service allows any person seeking employment with the State of Maine to apply electronically for jobs through the Bureau of Human Resources website. This convenient service stores the applicant's personal profile (personal information, work preferences, work history, and education history) so that completing multiple job applications is quick and easy.

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 HireME service was launched in April, 2007, and has been operating for just over 10 months.

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

In an effort to better serve applicants and state agencies, reduce costs, and attract more job applicants, BHR took steps to modernize their process by partnering with InforME to create this free online State of Maine job application service.

Up until 2007, all job applications were submitted on paper and manually keyed into the database. By 2005, the number of paper applications received daily by the Bureau of Human Resources had grown immensely, making it nearly impossible to keep up with

the manual process of entering each application into this system and creating a paper backlog of approximately 3 weeks. In addition, the paper application forms were not fully accessible to applicants with disabilities and the Bureau had received requests to offer a more accessible format.

Recently, the State of Maine has entered a budget crisis and many agencies have been forced to reduce their number of staff and BHR is no exception. The reduction in staffing and pressure to reduce costs have provided even more reason for BHR to create a more streamlined solution for the labor intensive job application process. Manual processing of a paper application at BHR takes approximately 10 minutes of staff time on average, with associated costs of approximately \$3 per application. The state receives more than 2,000 job applications each month, translating to a processing cost of \$6,000 per month under the paper application system.

Furthermore, the electronic process enables the state to be more attractive to recent or pending college graduates. This is especially important as the State of Maine will be dealing with a retirement-based workforce reduction of more than 59% in the next eight years. Making preferred tools and communications mechanisms available to Generation Y users will ensure the state is positioned to compete with other competitors in the market.

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

To apply for a state job online, an applicant first views the list of open positions and selects a position to apply for. The applicant then requests a user account and the system sends an account confirmation email that includes a link to the user's profile "wizard". Clicking the link activates the user's account and allows the user to begin setting up their profile online. The user sets up their personal profile, including contact information, education, and training. Once the user has finished their profile they may start applying for jobs, by completing the skills and requirements questions and job history.

Subsequent applications do not require account set up or profile completion as this information is saved in the system. Applicants may log into their account at any time to update their personal profile, view submitted applications, cancel an application, or apply for additional positions.

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

HireME is one of very few, if not the only electronic state job application service to interface directly with such a complex agency job application database to dynamically generate job-specific questions. This dynamic generation allows BHR to receive not only basic "resume" information electronically, but also to gather responses to the skills and requirements that are specific to each job classification. Having the complete application electronically, including personal and job skill information, allows systematic scoring of each application without manual intervention. By creating this dynamic process, BHR has shortened the turnaround time for application scoring from weeks to days, allowing applications to be reviewed by state agencies much sooner than

before. This ultimately reduces the agency's costs and provides job applicants with feedback and/or interviews in a much more timely manner.

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.)

The agency's back-end database was already in place, though some modifications were necessary in preparation for moving to the online system; this work was performed by existing Bureau staff. Development of the HireME online service was provided by InforME, Maine's eGovernment portal provider. The service was created at no cost to the Bureau of Human Resources, and no General Fund Appropriations were used in the creation of this service. The Bureau of Human Resources contributed staff time for project requirements, testing, and coordination of the change in internal processes to move to the electronic system.

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

The ongoing costs associated with maintenance of the online service, customer support, hosting of the application, and project management are absorbed by InforME and provided at no cost to the Bureau of Human Resources. The Bureau absorbs costs associated with the back-end database.

16. How is the program funded?

Development and maintenance of the HireME service is provided without the use of appropriated funds as the result of a partnership with InforME, the state's self-funded portal manager. The InforME Board of Directors determined that the HireME application was of such high citizen and agency benefit that the service would be developed and provided at no cost to the state or the end users.

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?

HireME was built to interface with the existing ApTrack database maintained by BHR. A custom Perl web application uses procedures to query the database in real-time and insert results.

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, other states do offer electronic job applications; however, we believe HireME to be the only one that provides such a complete solution.

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

During our research of electronic state job applications, we found several states that offer a way for users to submit a portion of their application online. However, we are unaware of any state which has implemented a complete electronic solution like HireME.

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

The HireME service has been fully implemented. The Bureau, in partnership with InforME, plans additional marketing of the HireME service in 2008.

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

The HireME service has been extremely effective in providing a solution to the problems that were previously faced by the agency. The 3-week turnaround time for processing each application has been reduced to 2 business days. Due to the automated and streamlined electronic process, most applications now require little, if any, staff review time. Because of the faster turnaround and high adoption of the online service, 10,547 applications have been submitted through the online service in the last 10 months, saving the agency over \$31,600 to date. In addition, the service has been successful in providing a job application format that is fully accessible to the disabled community, including the blind, allowing these individuals to apply for state jobs independently. Finally, the Bureau has also indicated that the service has been successful in increasing the total volume of job applications received, by making the process easier and more convenient, and more attractive to younger, tech-savvy applicants.

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

The Bureau initially launched the service with just a few job classifications eligible for online submissions. Very quickly, though, the Bureau added many more job classifications to the online service, and made the decision to *only* accept electronic applications for those job classes.

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

Obstacles encountered by other states will depend on the type of back-end database and process that is currently in place for handling job applications, and the level of modifications that might need to be made to support online submissions. States would also need to develop application procedures that allow the online system to interface with the existing database. Perhaps most importantly, states would need to determine the business rules surrounding online submission of applications and online user account set up.