

2009 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 09-E-07NY

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: New York State

Assign Program Category (applicant): Business/ Commerce, Economic Development, Administration, Aging, Housing, Human Services, Labor and Workforce Development (Use list at end of application)

1. **Program Name** – Empowering Communities for Successful Aging/ Community
2. **Administering Agency** – New York State Office for the Aging
3. **Contact Person (Name and Title)** – John Cochran or Greg Olsen New York State Office for the Aging
4. **Address** – Two Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223-1251
5. **Telephone Number** – (518) 474-4425
6. **FAX Number** – (518) 474-1398
7. **E-mail Address** – Mike.Burgess@ofa.state.ny.us
8. **Web site Address** – www.empoweringNYcommunities.org
www.aging.ny.gov/
9. **Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.** – The New York State Office for the Aging, and our partners AARP and the New York Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, along with many other sister agencies and stakeholder groups led the development of an innovative Community Empowerment Initiative that was designed to assist civic leaders in planning for and addressing the needs of the rapidly increasing older population in New York. The starting point of this effort was a unique conference convened November 12 & 13 in Saratoga Springs that, in the face of an unprecedented state budget crisis, drew over 550 people to learn about replicable program and planning practices and provide technical assistance resources that can help communities rethink and plan for a growing older population.
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 2, 2009 to be considered. 1 year (planning and implementation) An RFP was recently released to distribute State funding to stimulate local action to either 1) provide planning grants to initiate a planning process, or 2) implement livable community programs/services. It is expected that grant awards will be made over the summer.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address? Some local communities and associations of older persons have taken the initiative to develop grassroots approaches to maintain and support independent living. The Community Empowerment Initiative was established to help communities prepare for the challenges and opportunities the growing aging population presents by using already tried and tested locally generated solutions and approaches that include organizing older adults and other stakeholders to help solve problems and recognizing that older adults, as a community resource, can play a major role in helping to solve local problems. In New York State by the year 2025, adults age sixty and over are projected to grow from 3.5 million to 4.9 million, a 39 percent increase, comprising nearly 24 percent of the general population. Not only will this cohort be 50 percent larger than the existing senior adult population, it will also be more culturally and economically diverse.

This empowerment initiative effort was designed to assist communities during this time of fiscal crisis by providing civic leaders the tools they need to have access to replicable best practices in the areas of housing, community planning, volunteerism and civic engagement, model zoning, and home and community based services that help older residents remain in their own homes and communities. Studies show that older adults prefer this option, yet most communities are not prepared or structured to encourage persons to do so. In addition, assisting individuals so that they can live independently in the community has proven a cost effective strategy for helping individuals remain out of expensive institutional settings – generating a savings to the state Medicaid program - and also retaining a tax paying member of a community who also contributes to its social fabric. Finally, the lifelong skill sets that older adults possess are beneficial to the success of the community, from mentoring and other academic assistance to younger generations, to using their skills in work or other volunteer related capacities.

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

- funding included in the SFY 2008-09 and 2009-10 state budget for the Community Empowerment Initiative – local grants to stimulate action;
- planning and convening of the Empowering Communities for Successful Aging Conference;
- posting on Conference Website – www.empoweringNYcommunities.org – conference products/ workshop presentations, national and state replicable planning models, national and state replicable program and service models;
- distribution of the Community Empowerment RFA; and
- commencing regional organizing and technical assistance efforts.

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method? This is a unique initiative that focuses on stimulating discussions that lead to local actions that address specific locally identified needs and challenges. Most efforts by State government are designed to create structures and policies that drive local decision making process. NYSOFA's Community Empowerment Initiative is designed to change this paradigm by assisting and facilitating senior organizations and civic leaders in developing their own plans of action that will help them understand and address the needs of their aging population through innovative locally developed and owned plans.

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.) NYSOFA's portion of the costs associated with organizing the conference were \$12,000, however, due to the widespread support for this idea, NYSOFA and our partners raised \$100,000 for the conference. No additional equipment purchases were required for organizing the conference. Existing materials, technology and staff resources were used to organize this event, including resources and staff from the sponsoring organizations. An appropriation of \$250,000 was required for the seed funding of local activities and an additional \$250,000 was provided in this current year's state budget.

15. **What are the program's annual operational costs?** \$250,000

16. **How is the program funded?** State General Fund appropriation.

17. **Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.** Yes, appropriation authority in the state budget.

18. **What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?** What makes this a particularly innovative model/ approach is that no special equipment, technology and software was needed outside of what we had in-house.

The internet, ours and our partners web-sites and telephone have been the primary organizing tool of this effort.

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 Mike Burgess, Director of the New York State Office for the Aging, 2 Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York 12223-1251 Ph: (518) 474-4425 mike.burgess@ofa.state.ny.us

20. **Are you aware of similar programs in other states?** If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? No, this is unique.

21. **Has the program been fully implemented?** If NO, what actions remain to be taken? NYSOFA is in process of developing regional forums that will be designed to provide general and needs specific technical assistance to communities. The Community Empowerment RFP that will help distribute seed dollars that encourage development of local organizing efforts has recently been posted.

22. **Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.** NYSOFA has received much positive feedback about this approach. Over 100 individuals stepped forward and be leaders in their communities to organize local stakeholders and by the fact that the conference was oversubscribed. In addition, a large number of individuals have requested information about the Community Empowerment RFA funding opportunity.

23. **How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?** No

24. **What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?** An obstacle that states will be facing when seeking to replicate this initiative is securing the availability of funds for organizing a kick-off conference and to provide the follow up technical assistance that communities may request as they search for ways of preparing their community to become livable for persons of all ages. In addition, statewide

legislation may be required to implement some of the changes that might be considered as a best practice. For example changes may be required in a local or statewide statute to allow for implementation of age friendly model zoning and planning ordinances.

2009 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 2009
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Lexington, KY 40578-1910

Contact:

Nancy J. Vickers, National Program Administrator
Phone: 859.244.8105
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This application is also available at www.csg.org, in the Programs section.