

2009 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 09-MW-10ND

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: **North Dakota**

Assign Program Category (applicant): **Human Services** (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name **Multi-Program Collaboration**
2. Administering Agency **Child Support Enforcement Division, North Dakota Department of Human Services. Other programs involved are: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Medical Services (including Medicaid and State Child Health Insurance Program (SCHIP)), and Children and Family Services (including Foster Care and Child Welfare) – also all within the Department of Human Services; as well as Job Service North Dakota (which includes the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program).**
3. Contact Person (Name and Title) **Mike Schwindt, Director**
4. Address **Child Support Enforcement, P.O. Box 7190, Bismarck, ND, 58507-7190**
5. Telephone Number **(701) 328-7501**
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7. E-mail Address [**mschwindt@nd.gov**](mailto:mschwindt@nd.gov)
8. Web site Address **N/A**
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program. **The five programs involved in this multi-program collaboration effort share common customers and common goals. A primary result of this effort was the development of an action plan which focuses on improving outcomes for customers and programs through collaboration among programs on the local level.**
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. **The key meeting starting the effort was held in November 2005. The collaboration workgroup's first meeting was in March 2006.**
11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address? **While all five programs were generally performing well, the programs were experiencing constant changes and increased expectations from customers and stakeholders. We believed that in order to**

bring the programs to the next level of performance, local collaboration among programs was key. Activities of one program affect other programs and, through improved collaboration, benefits could be realized by shared customers and the programs.

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.
 - a. By way of background, the following occurred prior to this effort:
 - i. In August 2004, North Dakota was a pilot for a three-program (Child Support Enforcement, TANF, and Job Service) collaboration seminar. Seminar curriculum (“Better Outcomes Through Collaboration”) was developed by the federal Administration for Children and Families of the Department of Health and Human Services and the Employment and Training Administration of the Department of Labor.
 - ii. In July 2005, representatives from the Child Support Enforcement, TANF, and Job Service programs participated in a federally sponsored academy in Chicago which focused on planning for rolling out the three-program collaboration effort state-wide. Also in July 2005, representatives from Child Support Enforcement, Medical Services, and Children and Family Services participated in a meeting in Reno to improve collaboration among those programs. Instead of undertaking two separate collaboration efforts, North Dakota decided to combine all five programs into one collaboration effort.
 - b. In November 2005, senior managers of the five programs came together to share information about each of the programs and do initial high-level planning for a multi-program collaboration effort. At that time, a collaboration workgroup was formed which included a representative from each of the five programs. This workgroup’s responsibilities included revising the three-program curriculum developed on the federal level to include five programs and to be specific to North Dakota.
 - c. The collaboration workgroup began meeting (usually once per month) in March 2006. A draft curriculum (“Making a Difference in the Lives of our Customers – Through Collaboration”) and a recommended plan for statewide roll-out was developed.
 - d. In June – November 2007, the draft curriculum and recommended plan for roll-out was staffed with various groups including the senior management of the five programs, the Department of Human Services Cabinet, and the County Social Service Board Directors Association.
 - e. Three seminars were held in March, April, and May 2008. Each seminar’s primary participants were managers from regional and county offices associated with the five programs. The primary purpose of the seminar was to improve local collaboration among the five programs in order to improve results for customers (families) and for programs. Local offices from each of the eight regions of the state, and representing the five programs, participated in one of three seminars. The seminar was a combination of lecture, small group activities, and large group discussions. The seminar facilitators were the collaboration workgroup members. The ultimate result of each of the seminars was the development of an action plan to increase local collaboration among the five programs. These action plans included many action steps to address existing issues and ensure on-going collaboration among the programs. In addition to the development of an action plan, other benefits for the participants included learning valuable information about the other programs and getting to know their local counterparts in the other programs.
 - f. Following an opportunity for participants to comment on the draft Action Plan, the final Action Plan was issued in September 2008. It was sent to all participants and other interested persons.

g. The collaboration workgroup developed a process to review the Action Plan items. It was decided a review would occur semi-annually. The first review was initiated in October 2008, with the next review planned for May 2009.

13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method? **This program brought together several programs within two state agencies; included state, regional, and county input; provided a structured environment to identify issues and develop action plan items; and included a monitoring function.**

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 primary outlay was in staff time, mostly in terms of the collaboration workgroup members. During the development phase, the facilitator averaged approximately 16–20 hours/month, while the other four members each averaged about 8 hours/month. Costs were minimal and included such things as paper and copying.**

15. What are the program's annual operational costs? **The operational costs were primarily related to the seminars. For these, there were duplication and supply costs (estimate: \$600) and travel costs for participants to attend the training. The travel costs (mileage and hotel) were paid by the state (for state employees) and by the counties (for county employees).**

16. How is the program funded? **There was no special appropriation. The funds came from state and county operating budgets.**

17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? **No.** If YES, please indicate the citation number. **N/A**

18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program? **The curriculum, for which there is a participant guide and a facilitator guide, was developed in Microsoft Office Word. There were several presentations developed in Microsoft Office PowerPoint that were used during the seminars. Equipment included flip charts, computer, and projector.**

19. To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? **YES, although the curriculum was revised from an existing curriculum (see response 12(a)), and other states have used that curriculum (see response 20).** If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.

a. Mike Schwindt (see contact information in responses 3 – 7)

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20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? **Yes.** If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? **We believe other states have rolled out the “Better Outcomes Through Collaboration” seminar (see response 12(a)) involving the three programs. However, to our knowledge, this North Dakota effort is the only one that has been expanded to five programs, and to contain state-specific information.**

21. Has the program been fully implemented? **No.** If NO, what actions remain to be taken? **Although the seminars have taken place and the action plan has been developed, we believe on-going monitoring for some time is essential before its processes are considered to be part of the normal course of business.**

22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples. **Reports have been received that staff are now more likely to contact their counterparts in other programs when they have a question or need information. In addition, staff reported learning a great deal about the other programs (including who is served, the goals, the services and activities, the funding sources, and the performance measures). In addition, in a more tangible fashion, progress reports have shown that several Action Plan items have been addressed through implementation of new procedures, re-engineered processes, and enhanced automation.**

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception? **The basics have remained relatively unchanged. From the inception, the plan was for the effort to include the five programs, focus on local collaboration, use a curriculum that contained state-specific information, and result in an action plan which includes timeframes and persons responsible.**

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program? **Buy-in from senior management of all programs was key. Challenges were mainly in the area of scheduling: scheduling meetings when all collaboration workgroup members could participate, and scheduling the seminars when key staff could all attend.**