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## 2010 Innovations Awards Application

Deadline: March 1, 2010

ID # (assigned by CSG): **10-S-07KY**

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: **Kentucky**

Assign Program Category (applicant): **Government Operations and Technology-Public Information**

1. Program Name **Open Door – Kentucky’s Transparency Portal**
2. Administering Agency **Office of Governor Steve Beshear; the Finance and Administration Cabinet**
3. Contact Person (Name and Title) **Greg Haskamp, Executive Policy Advisor**
4. Address **702 Capitol Avenue, Room 383, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601**
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7. E-mail Address **[greg.haskamp@ky.gov](mailto:greg.haskamp@ky.gov)**
8. Web site Address **[opendoor.ky.gov](http://opendoor.ky.gov)**
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

**The Open Door website is a bipartisan, multi-agency effort led by Governor Steve Beshear to provide a more transparent, accountable state government. Information displayed on the website includes department and agency budgets, information on Kentucky taxes, open records, ethics, as well as searchable databases for employee salaries, contract, and expenditure information.**

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, 2010 to be considered.

**January 2009**

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

**In the spring of 2008, Governor Beshear issued an Executive Order establishing the e-Transparency Task Force, a 14-member, bipartisan panel charged with providing a more transparent, accountable state government that helps eliminate wasteful spending and restores public faith in its leaders. What followed was a concerted, multi-agency effort, led by officials of the Finance and Administration Cabinet, which involved the**

hard work and extensive cooperation of representatives of every state agency, including the staff of the other, independently elected constitutional officers. The task force solicited dozens of ideas from members of the public, some of whom testified at its public hearings, while others emailed their ideas via the Finance Cabinet's Web site. Kentucky's Open Door is a product of this effort.

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

June 6, 2008: Governor Beshear issued Executive Order 2008-508 establishing the e-Transparency Task Force; a 14-member bipartisan panel charged with providing a more transparent, accountable state government.

November 1, 2008: The final report of the e-Transparency Task Force was delivered to Governor Beshear; work was underway to produce "Open Door," Kentucky's one-stop portal for transparency and accountability in state government.

January 1, 2009: Open Door was launched after a concerted, multi-agency effort led by officials of the Finance and Administration Cabinet. Some of the features on the initial website included the following sections:

- *Your Money: A section with helpful charts, graphs and descriptions that summarize state revenues, expenditures and budget priorities.*
- *Cabinet/Agency Search: A search engine that provides agency-by-agency data on all executive branch and constitutional officers' state expenditures. This search was provided without exemption level and was updated daily.*
- *Budget Basics: A tutorial that allows the average citizen to log on and find out basic information on state expenditures, revenues and how budgets are developed.*
- *Budgeting for Kids: A fully interactive children's section that offers games, cartoons and interactive lessons on budgets and government finance.*
- The site also served as a clearinghouse for existing government resources on the web, providing taxpayers easy access to state audits, investments, tax incentives, election finances, and two transparency initiatives begun by constitutional officers: the Vendor Income and Expense Watch (V.I.E.W.): an effort by Treasurer Todd Hollenbach that allows citizens to search checks written by the state Treasury; and Check it Out Kentucky!, a searchable database of expenditures from Secretary of State, Trey Grayson's Office.

January 2009-October 2009: Finance and Administration officials solicited public comment for website improvements to respond to the needs and interests of Kentucky taxpayers.

June 2009: A basic contract search was added containing contract information on all state agencies and constitutional officers.

July 2009: A salary search was added providing citizens a searchable database for state employees.

September 2009: Accountability sections were added, which provided basic information on open records requests, executive branch ethics, and the operation of general government.

October 13, 2009: After extensive inter-agency work to address taxpayer comments, Kentucky's Open Door, Version 2.0 was introduced to the public. In addition to increasing the user-friendliness of the site, all existing searches and information on the site were refined. The following new features are part of the existing website:

- Comprehensive information and detail on contracts for the Executive Branch and constitutional offices, including the kind of contract-specific data that national watchdog agencies have rated optimal, and a PDF copy of each state contract, updated daily. Approximately 8,400 contracts will be added annually;
- Much more extensive and user-friendly search features for expenditure data, allowing the user to drill down into individual Executive Branch and constitutional office expenditures and access to more detailed information, updated daily. Approximately 1.4 million transactions are processed each year with a total of over 4 million transactions processed for fiscal years 2007-2009;
- Salary information for state employees updated automatically every two weeks;
- Agency-by-agency budget data;

- New features on tax credits available to individuals and businesses wishing to locate in Kentucky and Treasurer Todd Hollenbach's unclaimed property program;
- Two new e-transparency features launched recently by Secretary of State Trey Grayson concerning business and legislative notifications;
- GIS mapping services that are among the most innovative in the country;
- Interactivity with the leading social networks, Facebook and Twitter; and
- The Web site also offers an opportunity for citizens to weigh in on efficiency ideas, and to offer suggestions for improvements of the site

October 14, 2009: Finance and Administration Cabinet Secretary Jonathan Miller hosted a live demonstration of the new, updated Open Door site on the Internet in a "webinar" format, allowing members of the public to participate and submit questions from their computer terminals.

January 12, 2010: Kentucky's Open Door was upgraded to include Judicial Branch expenditure and contract data.

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

Several states have transparency websites. Open Door apart is set apart by the fact that it is a one-stop-shop for transparency and accountability in government. It is the first transparency website of its kind which contains information on all independently elected constitutional officers, and two branches of government with both the executive and judicial branches. Since Open Door's inception, the site has proved a valuable resource in streamlining open records requests in the Commonwealth, and has aided in the procurement process for both state and local agencies/governments looking to make purchases from existing contracts, or vendors who are looking to do business with the state.

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.)

Open Door was created through existing resources and contracts; there was no direct appropriation or direct cost to taxpayers. The website was created and is maintained by existing staff; no new systems or technical support was procured for the creation of the site. During Kentucky's budgetary crisis it was necessary that the project be conducted on a zero budget basis.

Direct staffing needs were handled in house through the Finance and Administration Cabinet, several employees from the State Controller's Office, Commonwealth Office of Technology, the Secretary's Office, Office of Administrative Support, and Office of Procurement Services. At any one time no more than 5 employees were working on the site, with an average of 2-3 employees working part-time to create the various features. The estimated staff time and related costs are estimated to have been valued at \$75,000. Additional assistance was at times requested from cabinets/agencies across government- a truly cooperative effort, involving the Office of the State Budget Director, information officers, and legal counsels from each cabinet/agency.

Technical support for the project was provided by ky.gov, an independent contractor which provided assistance in the appearance and display of the site through the terms of their existing contract. Database construction and storage are provided by the Commonwealth Office of Technology via existing servers. A considerable amount of the start up cost for Open Door was managed by working through existing technology resources. Kentucky has a centralized accounting system and many state agencies pass through the Finance Administration's procurement system. As a result, Kentucky's transparency portal was created by capitalizing on these existing resources.

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

Annual operational costs for the site are estimated between \$15-\$20,000. These costs largely reflect storage costs and minimal staff time necessary to maintain the site's operation.

16. How is the program funded?

**The program is funded through existing budgets in the Finance Administration Cabinet. There is no direct cost to taxpayers for either the construction of, or the services provided through, Open Door.**

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

**The Open Door website is the product of recommendations submitted to Governor Beshear via the E-Transparency Task Force, which was created through executive order on June 6, 2008. The final report was issued November 1, 2008 with a completion date for the site listed as January 1, 2009. The executive order establishing the task force is listed as 2008-508 and can be found through Kentucky's Secretary of State's Office, or via the following link: <http://apps.sos.ky.gov/Executive/Journal/EJimages/2008-MISC-2008-0508-195890.pdf>**

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

**A wintel server is used to house the information.**

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?

**Yes, other states have transparency websites. However, the other websites are not as comprehensive as Open Door. Additionally, we are not aware of any other state that has consolidated efforts to include both executive and judicial branches and all constitutional officers' expenditure and contract information on a single website.**

**There are three interactive searches which are the foundation for Open Door: an expenditure, contract, and salary search. These searches surpass any other state transparency website in terms of the depth and breadth of information presented. Open Door has over 4 million line item expenditures over a span of three years from the executive and judicial branches, as well as all constitutional officers and is updated daily. All expenditure records are listed on the site through an interactive search feature and includes all records subject to state Open Records law. The site also contains an interactive search for state contracts, and includes all the executive and judicial branches and constitutional officers': Master Agreements or term contracts (MA); one time contracts created by centralized procurement agencies (CT and CT2); personal service contracts, grants, and memoranda of agreement (MOA and PON2) which are reviewed by the Government Contract Review Committee. Open Door exceeds other states' contract and expenditure searches, because pdf. versions of the actual contracts are provided; also, for both contract and expenditure information Open Door is updated on a daily basis without an exemption level for transactions. Finally, the site contains an interactive salary search, which contains the most up to date information on state employees.**

**Open Door also contains detailed information on the State Budget, including agency/cabinet budgets and revenue and expenditure information. The site has detailed information on sources of state revenues and other areas of public interest including executive branch ethics, open records requests, and general information on state government. Finally, the site has dedicated "kids" section which serves as a financial literacy tool with plans for expanded interactive features to be launched in the coming months.**

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

**No. Open Door is ever-evolving and ever-improving; it is our continuing goal to refine and supplement this invaluable taxpayer resource.**

In the immediate future, plans are in place to create an interactive search of all state owned and leased properties, to create “drillable” graphs for cabinet/agency budgets, to expand the “kids” section to include detailed lessons on financial literacy and some form of interactive game, and to provide detailed information on energy usage in state facilities- as part of the Finance and Administration Cabinet’s larger efforts to reduce energy consumption.

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

Kentucky’s Open Door website was designed and continues to be re-designed according to user feedback, and new standards of transparency developed by other states.

Open Door contains fully interactive searches for expenditures, contracts, and salaries. It contains line item expenditures, with details on all grants and appropriations. Open Door also is one of only a few states which provide visitors with actual pdfs of active state contracts. Open Door is the only state that combines all three searches with the depth provided, and does so for two branches of government and all constitutional officers.

Sunshine Review is a group that reviews websites nationwide by using a [transparency checklist](#) to evaluate the content provided on government websites. Open Door displays the information specified in the checklist or a link to the state agency responsible for that particular function. In addition, Kentucky is only one of two states that meet all of the criteria for the Sunshine Review’s evaluation of spending databases. Kentucky surpasses the Missouri Accountability Portal through the variety of information available and the inclusion of pdfs of active state contracts.

In addition, several states have requested information regarding the development and design of the website. North Carolina, Oregon, Nebraska, and Michigan have all contacted site administrators to share best practices and seek ways to emulate the success of Open Door. A few of the “contact us” items are below:

- “The State of Nebraska is very interested in learning more about the development and Implementation of your transparency site.”
- “I am writing from Michigan because I would like to speak with someone regarding the content and design of your website. We are extremely impressed with the layout, amount of information available, and ease of navigation. Unfortunatley(sic), our state’s information is not nearly as accessible and we are interested in speaking to someone about replicating your site here.”

The success of Open Door has also eased Kentucky’s other transparency site Kentucky at Work: [www.kentuckyatwork.ky.gov](http://www.kentuckyatwork.ky.gov) which serves as the Commonwealth’s transparency portal for spending associated with the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Both sites are managed and maintained with the same staff and utilize searches and displays which were created for Open Door.

One of the drawbacks we’ve learned about through Open Door deals with the release of information on the site in a timeframe that is consistent with the expectations of the public. The site originally drew critics when only the expenditure search was available, but not the contract search; or when both the contract search and expenditure search were online, but not the salary search. Searches were released as they were developed. Public perception presumed that the display of “transparency” information should be straightforward- thus, not acknowledging the need to protect confidential information (such as payments to individuals for Medicaid or child support). The major drawback is the practical ability of operating in a zero budget operation with a vast amount of accumulated information alongside a public that is entitled to the information they want to see, in very short order.

Since the site re-launch in October, there has been considerable positive feedback regarding the redesign and functionality of the site.

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

At its inception Open Door was created as a “good government” initiative to communicate to the public in a transparent and meaningful way about how the state manages and expends tax dollars. Since Open Door has been in operation now for over a year, the site has evolved into an efficiency measure that helps streamline government.

Shortly after launching the Open Door website, agencies began to utilize the site to streamline the Open Records request process. When agencies receive an Open Records request, many are now including information regarding the records available through the website in an effort to reduce prospective requests. Additionally, agencies use the system to access records which may be difficult to retrieve using existing state systems when filling the requests.

Requests are typically directed toward agencies' Point of Information Officers and general counsels. The Finance and Administration Cabinet receives the bulk of state requests which often pertain to expenditure/contract details. The existing active Contract Search on Open Door is easier for the public to use than the current e-procurement website. As a result a number of vendors and local governments use Open Door to locate active contracts which purchases can be made from, thus reducing the costs to both state and local government in retrieving the information.

Also, when cabinets receive information requests for particular types of expenditures or personnel, the searches reduce staff time in retrieving information. One request would have required approximately a month to complete, which would have involved retrieving information from both payroll and the state accounting system. Due to the interactive searches on Open Door, the request was capable of being processed in a matter of minutes.

Staff within the Finance and Administration Cabinet continues to spread the word regarding the capabilities of Open Door. Meetings with state procurement officials and general counsels, both in state agencies and local governments continue to drive site usage.

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

There are two significant sets of obstacles for transparency/accountability websites.

The first set can be summarized as "institutional momentum," where agencies' active participation must be incorporated into the design and function of the site. Many agencies may resist transparency at first from both a cost perspective and a resistance to publishing oversimplified information that they fear may mislead the public. Most agencies inherently understand that taxpayers have a right to see how their money is being spent; the key is to find a way to portray complex processes in a way the public understands. Once agencies see that posting information helps the public be more specific in the information they request, and that the costs associated are held as low as possible, the agencies begin to value transparency as an asset to their operations.

The second set of obstacles is the physical limitations of the systems which are in place. The Commonwealth utilizes a single accounting system for financial transactions; therefore, we did not have to address the issue of multiple accounting systems. We anticipate that multiple accounting systems would be a major obstacle to overcome. Additionally, identifying the proper fields from the statewide accounting/procurement systems to display is another obstacle. For tracking purposes, state systems were designed with a great deal of specificity for individual transactions, and creating a reverse roll-up of transactions which the public will understand is always a challenge. Other examples of physical limitations involve data quality issues. Only certain types of information may be stored, which requires manual entry and changes in process to capture a complete picture that can be displayed to the public, or information may be entered into the system in multiple ways (eg. spelling or data entry differences) creating a constant task to ensure that data is being displayed correctly.

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## 2010 Innovations Awards Application 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 and Technology*

- Administration
- Elections
- Information Systems
- Public Information
- Revenue
- Telecommunications

### *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

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**This application is also available at [www.csg.org](http://www.csg.org).**