



The Council of State Governments  
Sharing capitol ideas.

## 2010 Innovations Awards Application

Deadline: March 1, 2010

ID # (assigned by CSG): **10-W-06CA**

**Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:**

State: California

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

**1. Program Name**

MyHazards

**2. Administering Agency**

California Emergency Management Agency, Hazard Mitigation Program

**3. Contact Person (Name and Title)**

Jami Childress-Byers  
California Emergency Management Agency

**4. Address**

3650 Schriever Avenue  
Mather, CA 95655

**5. Telephone Number**

(916) 845-8161

**6. FAX Number**

**7. E-mail Address**

Jami.Childress-Byers@calema.ca.gov

**8. Web site Address**

<http://myhazards.calema.ca.gov>

**9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.**

The MyHazards portal enables an individual to assess the severity of and prepare for natural hazards such as an earthquake, fire, flood and tsunami based on location – enabling a new level of security for people who live and work in California.

**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.**

Two years.

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

The mission of the California Emergency Management Agency (CalEMA) is to enhance all phases of emergency management which include preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. The mission of the California Environmental Resources Evaluation System (CERES) is to provide automated decision support tools and data coordination to improve decision making.

In today’s world, the role of individual citizens is becoming increasingly important in all phases of emergency management, yet citizens historically didn’t have access to the information they needed to better understand and prepare for natural disasters. This meant that people, their families and businesses were solely reliant on first responders during a disaster – and that severely limited response, recovery and mitigation.

CalEMA and CERES set out to solve this information and preparedness gap by creating the MyHazards portal. With MyHazards, individuals can learn about the various types of natural disasters common to California, the level of hazard for each natural disaster for their home or office, and can learn how to prepare themselves for a disaster given the level severity of the hazard for their location. The MyHazards portal enables an address search – which generates for the user a customized assessment of the likely seriousness of different potential natural disasters in their area. This then enables the individual to create a personalized preparedness plan.

This combination of state mitigation expertise and direct action by citizens to mitigate their own risk and to increase their own level of preparedness has provided a new level of security statewide.

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

The MyHazards portal is designed to be seamless and simple for users.

First, the person enters a street address and clicks on the “Map Search” button. Results will then appear that include content on the types of disasters prevalent in that location along with maps.

Second, the MyHazards portal provides comprehensive information on how to prepare for a natural disaster such as a flood, fire, earthquake or tsunami, and what an individual should do to respond during a disaster.

Lastly, the person receives a customized PDF of their search and can save, print or email the information to herself, family members, friends, or in the case of a business, to colleagues.

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

CalEMA and CERES have known that citizen mitigation and preparedness dramatically improve community resilience and recovery from a disaster. Yet the scope of communicating specific hazards and preparedness best practices to all the citizens of a state the size of California has been difficult.

Now, with network-enable business models and new geospatial technologies, we are able to analyze disaster information and data by location and synthesize it for use by citizens – providing them with unprecedented

access to the information they need to protect their homes, families and businesses. When combined with a personalized and easy-to-use platform, we've provided a unique and creative partnership with citizens.

**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.)**

\$24,000

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

\$14,000

**16. How is the program funded?**

FEMA Grant

**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?**

ArcGIS Server, MS Internet Information Services, ASP.NET 2.0, MS SQL Server, in-house (CERES) content management system, Google (for address search locations), Winnovative HTML to PDF converter.

**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

Eric Dean Kauffman

California Natural Resources Agency/CERES

1416 9<sup>th</sup> Street #1311

Sacramento, CA 95814

[eric.kauffman@resources.ca.gov](mailto:eric.kauffman@resources.ca.gov)

916-869-7601

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

No

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

Yes

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

Homeowners and business owners are in the best position to mitigate their natural hazard risk before the fact. This web site lets citizens know about potential risks they face, and, it gives them practical advice on what steps to take to lessen their exposure to natural hazards.

The two top “pros” for this application is that since it is on the Internet, the information is available free of charge to a vast majority of Californians who have web access. Secondly, this is pro-active, in that it is preventive rather than reactive.

The two major “cons” of this approach is that it isn’t useful for those people without Internet access. A second con is that the system is only as good as the geographic data going into it, and there are seismic and other hazards that have not yet been mapped for the entire state of California.

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

Mostly through refinements to the user interface made after showing the web site to the public.

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

Sometimes natural hazards are mapped for certain areas but may not be state-wide. Also, as new information comes to light, the geographic data must be updated.



The Council of State Governments  
Sharing capitol ideas.

## 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

**Save in .doc or rtf. Return completed application electronically to [innovations@csg.org](mailto:innovations@csg.org) or mail to:**

CSG Innovations Awards 2010  
The Council of State Governments  
2760 Research Park Drive, P.O. Box 11910  
Lexington, KY 40578-1910

### **Contact:**

Nancy J. Vickers, National Program Administrator  
Phone: 859.244.8105  
Fax: 859.244.8001 – Attn: Innovations Awards Program  
The Council of State Governments  
E-mail: [nvickers@csg.org](mailto:nvickers@csg.org)

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