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2011 Innovations Awards Application

DEADLINE: MARCH 28, 2011

ID # (assigned by CSG): 2011- _____

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: New Jersey

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

1. Program Name
Environmental Stewardship Program
2. Administering Agency
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, Compliance & Enforcement Program
3. Contact Person (Name and Title)
Knute Jensen, Bureau Chief, Bureau of Enforcement & Compliance Services
4. Address
401 East State Street, Mail Code 401-04B, PO Box 420, Trenton, NJ 08625-0420
5. Telephone Number
609-984-9482
6. FAX Number
609-292-9938
7. E-mail Address
Knute.Jensen@dep.state.nj.us
8. Web site Address
<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/enforcement/stewardship/>
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.
The Environmental Stewardship Initiative is a recognition program developed by the Compliance & Enforcement Program for use by all NJDEP programs that conduct compliance assurance inspections. The program is broad in scope and covers a diverse spectrum of environmental stewardship and sustainable related practices.
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 28, 2011 to be considered.
The program commenced in January 2008.

11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address? *The goal of this initiative is to encourage regulated entities to voluntarily improve their environmental performance beyond the minimum requirements of existing rules & regulations. Often during compliance visits inspectors will observe improvements at a facility that exceed the regulatory requirements. In the past there has not been a way to recognize and promote the efforts of these environmentally proactive businesses. The intent is to showcase the achievements of members of the regulated community and serve as an information resource to encourage others to follow.*
12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.
The program is an add-on to existing compliance monitoring inspections. During an inspection the inspector seeks to identify activities at the site that may qualify the site for recognition as an "Environmental Steward". The inspector has a checklist of 21 stewardship categories that he/she uses to try and qualify a site for. Sites are encouraged to complete the checklist in advance of an inspection. Upon completion of the checklist, the entries are reviewed for appropriateness and completeness. Once the review is completed the site's name, location and qualifying categories is placed on the Department's Participating Stewardship Site List. A certificate acknowledging the site's participation including the qualifying categories is also mailed to the site.

Subsequent compliance inspections allow the site to add additional stewardship categories to their existing recognition.
13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?
The program is unique in that it is an add-on to existing compliance inspections that a site may receive. In addition, it seeks no additional commitments from a facility; it simply captures what is already occurring. The program does not create an additional burden on the facility nor require additional reporting by the facility.
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 program's initial costs were strictly staff time and used our existing data management system. Current costs are roughly 5 fte annually divided among approximately 185 inspectors. Some of this time includes database management, web development and reporting.
15. What are the program's annual operational costs?
The 5 fte identified in question 14 above.
16. How is the program funded?
The program does not have its own funding source. The program utilizes staff funded through other sources to implement and run the program.
17. Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.
The program is a voluntary program and did not require legislation, executive order or regulation to commence. Subsequent to the Stewardship program's implementation, in January 2010, the New Jersey Legislature passed the Environmental Stewardship Act, N.J.S.A. 13:1D-148 et seq. that requires the Commissioner of Environmental Protection to establish and maintain a list of environmentally responsible businesses, companies or corporations that qualify for recognition. This law formally commits the DEP to continue the stewardship program and affirms the legislature's support of the expanded role of DEP inspectors.
18. What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?
The program uses an existing data management system entitled: NJEMS
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.

The program is unique and originated in New Jersey. What started as a concept was further developed and refined by Knute Jensen (see above) and Janet Smolenski [609-292-3036 Janet.Smolenski@dep.state.nj.us Same address as above] into the present program.

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?
In developing New Jersey's Environmental Stewardship Program we looked at EPA's former Performance Track Program, Arizona's Environmental Strategic Alliance, New York's Environmental Leaders Program, North Carolina's Environmental Stewardship Initiative, Virginia's Environmental Excellence Program and New Jersey's past Silver /Gold Track programs. We found these programs generally limited, require significant administration, applications, review and reporting, heavily weighted to large corporations and entities and typically less than 100 participants.
21. Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?
Yes, the program has been fully implemented and continues to grow as more compliance inspections are conducted. To date we have over 516 participants in the program with some rapidly approaching acknowledgement in all 21 categories that we have identified as qualifying for stewardship recognition. We continue to look at ways to enhance the value and interest in the program.
22. Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.
PROS:
The program has garnered a very positive response from the regulated community. Companies actively seek to participate in the program. The Department's portrayal of a company/site is more balanced since the Department's posted web information regarding a specific site contains both positive as well as negative (if violations are found). Previously only the negative would be found. The interface between inspector and facility has changed. Both large and small companies have an equal opportunity to participate. The inspector becomes an educator on stewardship. Having violations doesn't automatically disqualify a facility from being in the program.
- CONS:**
Participation in the program is limited to those entities that we regulate and inspect. Stewardship activities conducted by those we do not inspect are difficult to recognize since they would not receive an inspection. The Department does not certify that the stewardship activities are occurring but does attempt to verify to the extent possible that a particular category standard is being met. The standards of each category of stewardship are not based on statutory or regulatory requirements and instead are based on publically available best standards or practices and/or 3rd party certifications. 100% staff buy-in has not occurred. Some small portion of staff do not feel that it is appropriate for inspectors to look for anything beyond violations.
23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?
The program continues to add new participants monthly. The criterion used to evaluate the various stewardship categories continues to evolve and be refined as new information and standards become available. New categories relevant to stewardship and sustainability will be added as they emerge. We continue to explore adding more value to receipt of the Department's recognition.
24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?
Development of a database to track and report stewardship activities. The Department utilizes an existing enterprise data management model that other states may not possess.

CSG reserves the right to use or publish in other CSG products the information provided in this application. If your agency objects to this policy, please advise us in a separate attachment.



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2011 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 or mail to:

CSG Innovations Awards 2011
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Lexington, KY 40578-1910

Contact:

Nancy J. Vickers, National Program Administrator
Phone: 859.244.8105
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The Council of State Governments
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This application is also available at www.csg.org.