



The Council of State Governments
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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 York State

Assign Program Category (applicant): Infrastructure and Economic Development

1. Program Name – Empire State Development Websites
2. Administering Agency – Empire State Development
3. Contact Person (Name and Title) – Laura Magee, Public Affairs Specialist
4. Address – 95 Perry Street, Suite 500, Buffalo, New York 14203-3030
5. Telephone Number – 716-846-8239/1-800-260-7313
6. FAX Number – 716-846-8260
7. E-mail Address – lmagee@empire.state.ny.us
8. Web site Address – www.esd.ny.gov and www.NYfirst.NY.gov
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.
Empire State Development, New York State’s primary agency for economic development, launched its new agency website (“ESD 2.0”) in February 2010, followed by “New York First,” an innovative business-focused website that serves as a one-stop shop for businesses seeking financial incentives and technical assistance. Uniquely, New York First is inclusive of the state’s full portfolio of economic development programs, irrespective of administering agency. Prior to the website’s launch, an interested business stakeholder had to view multiple state agency websites to learn the full scope of economic development programs available in New York State.
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.
ESD 2.0 (www.esd.ny.us) launched in February 2010, followed by the launch of New York First (www.NYfirst.NY.gov)
11. Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?
The websites were created to streamline design and improve access to information in order to best serve the agency and state’s constituents. Although Empire State Development often serves as a first point of contact for businesses seeking assistance, additional agencies throughout the State also offer targeted financial incentives and technical expertise. The content on New York First is inclusive of 35 state agencies and provides information for every type of business. New York First offers visitors unprecedented access to the programs, tax credits and incentives the State has available to help businesses realize their vision and run a successful venture in New York State. Technology is a crucially important factor in determining our success in the 21st century and it is critical that we incorporate it into our go-to-market strategy to effectively and more clearly communicate with those who may want to locate or expand a business in New York State.
12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.
 - The Governor tasked Empire State Development with fostering economic growth and job creation in New York State on the principle that we must do more with less in a challenging economic climate.

- In February 2010, ESD unveiled a new agency website (“ESD 2.0”) organized with streamlined design and improved access to information in order to best serve the agency’s constituents. The website offers increased agency transparency in outlining the organizational structure, provides information on its statewide subsidiaries and large-scale urban development projects and clearly identifies ESD’s business programs and incentives. ESD used open source technology and in-house talent to create <http://esd.ny.gov> at a cost of just under \$1,000. The site was spearheaded by ESD’s Office of Public Affairs, working closely with the talented team in ESD’s Office of Management Informational Systems (MIS).
 - By design, ESD 2.0 was not crafted to be all things to all possible web users. The agency-only focus reserved a potential space for a new website to be more broadly focused on New York State’s business incentives and supports.
 - New York First was launched after extensive research and collaboration with partners throughout the State to populate the site. This site was created at just over \$1,000 and was once again, spearheaded by the Office of Public Affairs working in concert with MIS, as well as the divisions of Strategic Business, Small Business and Minority- and Women-Owned Business Development.
 - New York First was created to efficiently and effectively provide visitors with all of the information they need to do business in New York State. It is a one-stop shop for all statewide economic development assistance programs New York has to offer. It’s currently inclusive of 35 agencies and provides information for every type of business.
 - In addition, we now offer our “experts on demand” commitment – a 24-hour guarantee. On the NY First website we personally guarantee that every email or phone call we receive will get a response within one business day.
13. Why is the program a new and creative approach or method? The content on New York First is inclusive of 35 state agencies and provides information for every type of business. New York First offers visitors unprecedented access to the programs, tax credits and incentives the State has available to help businesses realize their vision and run a successful venture in New York State. Prior, an interested business stakeholder had to view multiple agency websites in order to learn the full scope of what New York can do for his or her business. New York First organized all of that information in one place – searchable by type of assistance, size of business, MWBE status, administering agency and more. Browseable menus allow for more freeform exploration while still displaying only information relevant to the user’s self-selected needs.
 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.) ESD used open source technology and in-house talent to create ESD’s new agency website (www.esd.ny.us) at a cost of just under \$1,000 and NY First (www.NYfirst.NY.gov) at a cost of just over \$1,000.
 15. What are the program’s annual operational costs? None.
 16. How is the program funded? All work is done in-house and as such levies no additional costs.
 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? Microsoft .Net server environment, Microsoft Expressions, Script Ocean Flash Menu Wizard.
 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. Warner Johnston, Vice President of Public Affairs, Empire State Development, 633 Third Avenue, 37th Fl., New York, NY 10017, 1-800-260-7313, wjohnston@empire.state.ny.us
 20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? n/a
 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.
 - Since going “live” on October 6, 2010, www.NYfirst.NY.gov has had 31,298 visitors from a total of 105 countries/territories. This breaks down to 183 visits per day on average. New York First’s mobile site for Smartphones has had 395 unique visitors. Interestingly, over 77 percent of visitors were from *within* New York State, indicating that we are succeeding in our objective to provide useful resources to New York State constituents and businesses. In fact, the 24,109 visitors from within New York came from 597 discrete cities. The largest numbers of visitors have been from New York City, Albany,

Brooklyn, Rochester and Buffalo. The top five most visited pages offer content on Start-Up Assistance, Business Financing, Taxes & Mandated Filings, Local Government Resources and Permits & Licensing. The top five agency pages are: New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA), New York State Office of Cyber Security, New York State Homes and Community Renewal, Department of State and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey.

- Since launch on February 1, 2010, www.esd.ny.gov has had 711,808 visitors from a total of 197 countries/territories, with nearly 1.7 million total page views. This breaks down to an average of 1,703 visitors each day. Visitors to the site visit nearly three pages per visit and spend an average of two minutes on the site. The most visited content areas of the website are, in order from most to least visited: Business Programs, Minority- and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE), Small Business, About Us, and ESD's Regional Overviews. This data proves that our site is frequented by a diverse cross-section of visitors—those interested in programs and incentives at the State level; members of distinct populations looking for targeted assistance, constituents or journalists interested in the agency, and those looking for location-based resources.

23. How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception? The site is monitored and updated daily by ESD's Office of Public Affairs and MIS.

24. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?
A high level of cooperation from other state agencies is key to the success, comprehensiveness and accuracy of the site. Without high-level state support, such a project may offer information of an uneven quality. In our case, the Governor's office directed the leadership of relevant state agencies to work with ESD staff in supplying the necessary information to implement New York First as a valuable resource. Another obstacle may come in securing enough in-house staff members with the relevant web talent and organizational skills to build such a site and maintain it in perpetuity.

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
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

This application is also available at www.csg.org.