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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

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

1. Program Name – **On-line Clearance System (OCS)**
2. Administering Agency – **NYS Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)**
3. Contact Person (Name and Title) – **William Travis, Jr., CIO/OCFS Deputy Commissioner of Information Technology**
4. Address- **52 Washinton Avenue, Rensselaer, NY 12144**
5. Telephone Number – **(518) 402-3194**
6. FAX Number – **(518) 473-2348**
7. E-mail Address – [William.TravisJr@ocfs.state.ny.us](mailto:William.TravisJr@ocfs.state.ny.us)
8. Web site Address – [www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/](http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/)

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

**Adults that have applied for employment, or to be certified, within child care or child welfare agencies must be cleared for the presence of any indicated child abuse or maltreatment report(s). The On-Line Clearance System (OCS) is a web-based, citizen to government, government to citizen, electronic system developed to improve the process by which agencies and potential employers request NYS to clear the applicants.**

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 OCS has been operational since June 2010.**

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

**The business problems faced by the Agency were financial, operational and quality related. Organizations that work closely with children need their employees to be vetted against the State Central Registry (SCR) database of abuse. Any individual requesting certification as a foster or adoptive parent is also required to be vetted against the database. The agency would previously submit details of identification on a paper form LDSS-3370 to clear individuals. The form must detail several years' worth of demographic information that is used to identify/validate individuals and associated individuals in their residences including address history. The submitting agency requiring clearance verified and mailed the hand-**

written document to the SCR. Any issues or mistakes were identified and the document was then mailed back to the submitting agency. Following the return, correction and resubmission process (which could take multiple iterations), the clearance could be completed. Responses would then be mailed to the clearance requestor.

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

**Prior to this system, the request for clearance was time consuming and costly. Currently, when an agency or employer needs an individual cleared, they are able to submit the required information on-line through the OCS. The staff, in the requesting agency, data enters the following information into the system;**

- **the agency name, address, contact person and**
- **the applicant's current name, previous name or names, date of birth, current address, and the address history for the last 28 years.**

**The agency staff submits the request by clicking on the submit button in the system. The OCFS staff is immediately alerted to the request by the system. The OCFS employee then reviews the information submitted, data enters the information into a search tool within the statewide child welfare system, reviews the results of the search to conclude whether or not the applicant has an indicated child abuse or maltreatment report within the NYS system, and selects the correct response letter. This action causes a system generated letter to be sent to the requesting agency with the determination of the clearance.**

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

**The OCS is a web based system developed in VB.NET using Oracle data store. It is creative in that it is a collaborative effort that utilizes new technology to meet a business need while reducing cost and enhancing quality. The inception, development, pilot and roll-out of the OCS has been a collaborative effort across the human services spectrum. The joint effort of the OCFS Information Technology, Child Welfare and Child Care policy staff, as well as external stakeholders established the application requirements. This was seen as a critical component that added to the successful creation and implementation of the OCS. The OCFS child welfare staff participated and was supportive throughout the pilot as was the involvement of several other child care and child welfare agencies and advocates. This diverse group of participants and interested parties helped (and continue to) mold the OCS into a tool that is being successfully utilized to more efficiently and effectively support NYS' mandated function of processing clearances.**

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 start-up costs included four physical servers (approximately \$20,000 each with an additional cost of \$11,000 for a VMware license) totalling \$124,000.**

**In addition, four staff focused on the development working ½ time totalling approximately \$200,000. The total start up-cost for OCS was approximately \$ 325,000.**

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

**The annual cost involves server and software maintainance at approximately \$ 120,000 per year as well as \$50,000 for staff totalling \$170,000 annually.**

16. How is the program funded?

**NYS funds this program.**

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?

**Four servers are required and the system was developed in VB.NET using Oracle data store with NYS Office for Technology logon Site-minder. Specific information pertaining to the servers is as follows: 13 ESX hosts that house 108 VM's (.NET, MOSS 2007, MOSS 2010, SQL, TFS, WCF, BizTalk).**

**The system requires that staff have computers with a Windows operating system and Internet Explorer.**

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.**

**William Gettman, Executive Deputy Commissioner of OCFS**

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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?

**No. We are now developing a financial process to handle pay requests for clearances.**

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

**The business process has been vastly improved by introducing an automated, electronic process for submitting and responding to clearance requests. The automated process provides improvements in the following areas:**

- **Speed of submission: on-line data entry – delivery is instantaneous.**
- **Elimination of errors: edit checks and the enforcement that mandatory data is included have drastically reduced the volume of errors and the need for resending corrected documents. Errors are also significantly reduced due to the elimination of illegibility issues.**
- **Cost reduction: on-line data entry – eliminates initial and send-back postal costs; labor time is also reduced due to nearly error-free documents being submitted the first time.**

- **Economic Development**: this process allows employees to be placed on the payroll much quicker and provides for a more rapid start up for Day Care Centers.

Specific examples of how the OCS has been effective in addressing the business need are listed below. The OSC;

- verifies that the organization submitting the request is approved to submit clearances,
- eliminates illegibility issues inherent with the handwritten forms,
- eliminates postal costs with an estimated savings of \$132,000 annually,
- eliminates the need for redundant data entry of form content at the SCR,
- significantly reduces paper-handling and overtime costs,
- allows agencies to monitor the status of requests submitted without contacting SCR staff,
- provides an on-line capability to capture all the demographic information needed to undertake the clearance, and
- provides edits including date and address validation to eliminate errors and the subsequent need for correction send backs.

### **Con**

**Change management practice is to allow requestors to voluntarily use the new system. Adoption has been steady with over 1200 automated requests weekly, however, an additional 35% remain using the manual process. Imminently, we will contact that population and strongly suggest implementing the automated system. The final future step will be to eliminate the paper process.**

**Overall, the OCS greatly speeds the submission process of the clearance and provides for a more rapid response of the clearance results.**

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

**When first implemented, there were 458 clearances processed in one month. Now, there are 1200 clearances processed per week from approximately 300 agencies. Additional agencies have begun to use the system and there are now 2,500 agencies using OCS.**

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

**Change management to process with internal business staff and external stakeholders will present challenges as will the need for a complete set of requirements.**

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

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