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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:** Iowa

**Assign Program Category (applicant):** Government Operations and Technology (Use list at end of application)

1. **Program Name** – IowaGrants.gov, Comprehensive Electronic Grant Management System and Grant Notification Portal
2. **Administering Agency** - Iowa Department of Management
3. **Contact Person (Name and Title)** - Kathy Mabie, Fiscal and Policy Analyst Senior
4. **Address** - State Capitol Building, Room G13, Des Moines, Iowa 50319
5. **Telephone Number** - 515-281-8834
6. **FAX Number** - 515-242-5897
7. **E-mail Address** - Kathy.Mabie@iowa.gov
8. **Web site Address** - [www.iowagrants.gov](http://www.iowagrants.gov)
9. **Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.**

IowaGrants.gov manages the grant posting, application, selection, award/contracting, monitoring, communications, modification, reporting, close-out, and financial management processes for Iowa state agencies that administer competitive and pass-through grants. By using a configurable approach to grant management, IowaGrants.gov provides participating agencies the flexibilities needed to accommodate the unique requirements involved in managing each grant program.

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.**

August 2008 to present

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

Iowa's state agencies award in excess of 13,000 grants each year using varying methods for awarding and managing the grants. Most approaches involve massive paper shuffling, redundancy and complex spreadsheets. Prior to IowaGrants.gov, several state agencies purchased their own proprietary grant management software, resulting in a significant investment of resources in non-replicable grant management programs. This siloed approach to grant management prevented the sharing of best practices and contributed to an inability to identify and facilitate more coordinated efforts at the state and local level.

Budget constraints are influencing the need to streamline processes and move toward better transparency regarding how tax dollars are spent.

The State also has a responsibility to serve 13,000+ sub-grantee customers in a consistent, customer-focused manner. It's imperative that all state government funding opportunities be easily identifiable and applications accessible and straightforward.

Other issues addressed by this program include:

- Transparency of Iowa's grant making process and resource allocation
- Reduced costs associated with procuring and administering grants
- Elimination of the costs of continued investments in the development and operation of agency-unique grant management systems
- Access to a rich source of project and financial information for strategic planning, benchmarking, and performance-based budgeting
- Reduced staff time spent managing and administering grants
- 24-hour, on-line access to information
- Reduced costs associated with processing applications (printing, paper, postage)

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

- Project Team Identified, representing the project pilot agencies – January 2007
- RFI Posted – April 2007
- RFI Vendor Demonstrations – July 2007
- RFP Development – September 2007 through March 2008
- Application for Pooled Technology Funding – Competitive process - funding for FY2009 – July 2007
- RFP Vendor Demonstrations – June 2008
- Funding provided through the Pooled Technology Program beginning July 1, 2008, \$455,000 over 3 years.
- Contract awarded, Dulles Technology Partners, Inc. – August 2008
- Project Team (Pilot Agency Representatives) worked with the vendor to customize each module of the system – Application, Review, Awards, Claims – August 2008 through February 2009
- License Purchased – February 2009
- Pilot agencies test system resulting in ongoing customization
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Application for Pooled Technology Funding – July 2009
- Funding provided through the Pooled Technology Program beginning July 1, 2010, \$414,000 over 3 years
- Ad-Hoc Reporting features deployed – June 2010
- Dulles Technology Partners provides on-site staff person to offer technical assistance to agencies new to IowaGrants.gov
- Additional Agencies and Customization – Ongoing
- Agencies currently utilizing IowaGrants.gov:
  - Office of Drug Control Policy
  - Office of Energy Independence
  - Public Safety – Governor's Traffic Safety Bureau
  - Homeland Security and Emergency Management
  - Public Defense
  - Mitigation
  - Economic Development – Iowa Commission on Volunteer Services
  - Department of Education

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

The old approach to electronic grant management typically focused on programmatic areas and encouraged individual agencies to purchase agency-specific, non-replicable software. This approach resulted in fragmented processes, increased costs and a culture of exclusivity within and between state agencies.

The new approach provides a comprehensive, integrated system that looks at grant management for the State of Iowa as a whole. While there are common templates and a shared database that allow for collaboration and information sharing within and between agencies, the system design allows flexibility to accommodate the specific requirements of all grant programs and the variations in departmental business processes.

The icon based system consists of Modules that follow grants through the posting, application, selection, award/contracting, monitoring, communications, modification, reporting, close-out, and financial management processes. The Form Creator and other features of each Module look and feel the same. Agencies also have the option of opting out of one or more of the Modules to meet the unique requirements of each grant program.

**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 contract with Dulles Technology Partners is for three years with three additional one-year extensions. The total cost of the contract is \$1,432,300. To-date we've received funding from the state's Pooled Technology Fund totaling \$869,000. The Pooled Technology Fund is part of a larger Technology Reinvestment Fund which receives its funding from a percentage of gambling revenues. Pooled Technology is a competitive funding resource for state agency technology projects and is managed by the state's IT enterprise.

**Staffing Levels** - The Project Manager is a full-time state employee with duties that extend beyond managing IowaGrants.gov. The original Project Team consisted of full time state employees from the pilot agencies and has grown to include representatives from all agencies utilizing the system. The Project Team meets bi-weekly to discuss issues and enhancements. Beginning in November 2010, the vendor provided an on-site technical assistance staff person to work with agencies.

**Purchases** – The one-time license fee in the amount of \$45,000 was paid in February 2009. Monthly maintenance and hosting fees total \$2,000 per month. The technical assistance expenditure is approximately \$4,000 per month. The remainder has been spent on implementation and customization.

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

The cost of maintaining the system after full implementation is estimated to be \$100,000 per year. Agencies will be responsible for the cost of customization requested after the project has been rolled out to all agencies. Maintenance and Hosting - \$24,000. Technical Assistance - \$76,000.

**16. How is the program funded?** Pooled Technology Funding

**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?**

It was not necessary to purchase equipment to operate this program. The vendor provides hosting services.

**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, Kathy Mabie, contact information same as above.

**20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?** Montana recently signed a contract with Dulles Technology Partners. Colorado issued an RFP in 2010 but the status of their project is unknown at this time. They are both statewide systems.

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

No. The process of adding all state grant programs to IowaGrants.gov is a significant undertaking with a projected full implementation date of December 2013. Also, we are always looking for ways to improve the system. As an example: We are adding a new Grant Tracking Module which will allow agencies to track the grants they are applying for, making this a full “start to finish” system, and provide managers with instant access to all grant activity. Agencies will:

- Use IowaGrants.gov to identify grants posted in Grants.gov and other grant search databases
- Share potential opportunities with others within their agency or across state government
- Record all grants applied for and received
- Manage the application process within the applying agency. Portions of the application can be assigned and progress tracked by management
- Track disposition status of all grant applications
- Transfer awarded grants automatically to the grant management portion of IowaGrants.gov.

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

State agencies requesting an RFP to purchase a grant management system or enhance a current system are advised by the state’s purchasing division to work with our project team. This has resulted in a reduction of expenditures for proprietary grant management software.

The Grant Notification Portal provides public and private entities, seeking funding through state administered grant programs, with a single portal to search for open solicitations or ongoing grant programs. The portal provides potential applicants with summary information on grant solicitations and directs them to additional information and application instructions/materials.

The consistent look and feel of the application allows applicants to easily navigate the system, regardless of which state agency is offering the funding opportunity.

Agencies currently using IowaGrants.gov reported the following reductions in the time it takes to perform various grant management tasks, resulting in streamlined processes and estimated savings to-date of \$750,000. Total task-related savings after full implementation are projected to be approximately \$20 million annually.

- Marketing and publishing the grant opportunity – 50%
- Rollout and training for prospective applicants – 50%
- Create/Design application forms to meet requirements of individual grant awards – 10%
- Mailing forms to prospective applicants – 100%
- Receiving and sorting applications – 75%
- Application review & revisions – 75%
- Determine eligibility – 50%
- Award sub-grants - agreements mailed and signed – 20%
- Set up database to manage the grant program – 50%
- Track communications regarding grants-Grantor & Sub-Grantee – 80%

- Payments processed –
- Receiving and reviewing status reports – 90%
- Final Reports – 50%
- Close-out grant – 75%

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

The foundation and purpose hasn't changed but we are continually identifying modifications and enhancements. One example is the new Grant Tracking Module.

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

It's important to understand that full implementation is a long journey so it's essential to establish a realistic completion date. When getting started, work with the agencies that are interested in participating. Many agencies will "wait in the wings" to see how the system works for others before making the decision to give it a try. Rather than expending resources trying to coerce reluctant agencies to join, we're confident that successes realized by participating agencies and the benefits of utilizing the system will eventually win them over.

Currently, electronic claims are submitted by the grantee and tracked within the system but IowaGrants.gov is not yet linked to the financial management system. Until this happens the system won't be totally paperless. The biggest issue in overcoming this obstacle is cultural, directly related to a reluctance to change the way claims are paid. To address this barrier, the Project Team is starting a dialogue with the central staff involved with claims processing.

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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).**