



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: __Louisiana_____

Assign Program Category (applicant): __Public Safety / Corrections - Corrections_ (Use list at end of application)

1. Program Name: [Video Court Project](#)
2. Administering Agency: [LA Department of Public Safety & Corrections](#)
3. Contact Person (Name and Title): [Darryl Campbell, Executive Management Officer](#)
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8. Web site Address: www.corrections.state.la.us
9. Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

[Our Video Court Program enables the Department to utilize available technology by producing incarcerated individuals for court appearances by means of video. This program is designed to increase public safety by keeping offenders within the security of our state prisons, while reducing the travel expense involved in transporting to and from various types of court appearances, mainly for post conviction and administrative hearings.](#)

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. [July, 2009](#)
11. Why was the program created?

[This program was created to reduce the risk involved with transporting offenders to and from various court appearances and to reduce the cost associated with transportation. What problem\[s\] or issue\[s\] was it designed to address? Louisiana is facing one of our toughest budget situations in history, and we were forced to look at every aspect of our business, this is one example of how we are able to provide an offender access to the courts without having to bear the costs involved with physically transporting.](#)

12. Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.
[Formed a partnership between the Louisiana State Penitentiary and the Orleans Criminal District Court – selected due to the volume of offenders from LSP having court orders in Orleans;](#)

[Initially, to get the court to buy into the program, the Department provided the video equipment necessary to connect via the courts;](#)

[The Department created a point of contact for the courts – one person within the Department to handle scheduling, connection issues, questions, etc.;](#)

[The program began as a pilot, and has currently expanded to eleven parishes, selected by highest court volume and video connectability.](#)

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

This program satisfies the court mandate of producing an offender as needed by the court, without endangering the public and while reducing the costs involved.

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.) Equipment was purchased (Polycom QDX); 32" HDTV; and Avteq Video Cart (for each system we provided);

We delivered and set up equipment to various parishes without video equipment already in their courtrooms – we connected into in-place systems where already in use;

We utilized one IT Supervisor from LSP to make the initial connections, then passed the function on to our Central Office IT staff;

We decided that the courts were not going to be interested in utilizing this system if it became too cumbersome, so the Department utilized one staff member from Elayn Hunt Correctional Center to be the point of contact for the courts. This position was responsible for making contact with the courts, developing a system for organizing, tracking, and maintaining records for the program, etc.

Overall start-up costs are estimated at \$74,877.

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

To date, we have not had to purchase any additional equipment for the video court project. Annual expenses to each state facility currently include a dedicated T-1 line for video connections, estimated at \$5767. We are in the process of upgrading to Metro E-network connections to replace the T-1, which, once complete will provide approximately 10 times the strength of one T-1 line, whereby allowing one line to be used for Parole Board hearings, Telemedicine follow-up, and Video Court.

16. How is the program funded? General Fund

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? For courtrooms without monitors already installed, we use a video cart, a TV monitor with RCA, S-video, HDMI compatibility, and a Polycom video camera.

For courtrooms where video was already used for bond hearings, etc, our IT staff worked with the court's IT staff to make allow connection through each agencies firewalls.

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.

No, other states have implemented such programs – the State of Ohio began utilizing in March, 2003 according to their website.

20. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? Yes If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? Ohio is utilizing video conferencing.

21. Has the program been fully implemented?

No, not yet. If NO, what actions remain to be taken? We have all 12 state facilities with video capability, and 10 out of 64 parishes on-line. Court volume determined which parishes were targeted for Phase 1 of the program, with expansions to additional parishes later this year.

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

The program has enabled the Department to reduce part of our annual transportation expenses, which are currently estimated to be over \$8 million, by providing various courts access to offenders via video connection rather than having to physically transport an offender for his hearing. Public safety is always a big consideration when removing an offender from the confines of a secure facility, whether for a court appearance, a medical appointment, etc. While these trips leave our prisons every day, they put our officers and the offenders themselves at risk while traveling the roadways, as well as court staff and the general public due to the offender being in a less secure environment. In simple terms, the fewer trips, the lower the Department's transportation costs, the less chance for an unfortunate event to occur. Offenders do not necessarily like using video, because most would rather the trip out of the prison, however, some have expressed that they appreciate being heard via video because they are not having to get on the road so early in the morning. Court trips are generally an all day event for the officers, which often times end up on overtime due to the travel time, waiting in the courtroom, etc.

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

The program initially began as a pilot between our largest state prison and the criminal district court with the largest volume of offender court appearances. It has grown to include all 12 state facilities and 10 parishes – as well as connections to the Federal Court System in Orleans and East Baton Rouge parishes.

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

We had internal opposition from the people in our facilities in the beginning because they did not see the big picture. This program changed the way they processed court requests, it added an extra step – all are now on-board and have adapted the way they process these requests when the parish has a video connection. We also have experienced hesitation from some judges because there are no clear guidelines as to which cases are ok vs. which are not ok for video. We take each case, make a request to the presiding judge, and follow his decision. We do realize that not every case can be conducted via video, but as we implemented this program, for FY 2009/10, we requested a total of 504 cases for video consideration, of which 317 (or 51%) were approved. This translates into an estimated savings of \$112,366 for the first year. For the first half of FY 2010/11, we estimate the savings to be \$80,405. This is a win-win situation, the offenders are provided their right to appear before the courts, without the State and the Department having to bear the costs involved.

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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.