



Innovations in American Government Awards Background

Innovations in American Government (IAG) identifies and promotes creative problem solving in the public sector through a national awards program that each year confers broad public recognition and monetary grants on innovative government programs. The program is administered by the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard Kennedy University, which is endowed through a grant from the Ford Foundation. Since its inception in 1985, Innovations has recognized nearly 500 programs and has provided them with over \$22 million in grants to spark their replication across the nation. The Innovations Program has also provided substantive experience and data for dozens of teaching cases, videos, books, and research articles.

Each year experts in government operations and policy participate in evaluating the applications received by the Innovations Program. The evaluations are conducted in three rounds over several months, and the Innovations National Selection Committee, a group of prominent public leaders, then selects the winner(s).

ELIGIBILITY

All units of government-federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial-within the United States of America are eligible for consideration for the Awards under the following guidelines:

- Programs or initiatives must be administered under the authority of one or more governmental entities
- Programs or initiatives must have been implemented 12 months prior to the date of submission - e.g. for a 2012 Award, the program must have been launched prior to March 1, 2011.
- Programs or initiatives must be currently in operation
- Applications must be submitted by the governmental entity responsible for the innovation; nonprofit, private sector, and union initiatives are eligible only with significant governmental involvement and oversight

SELECTION CRITERIA

Innovations seeks to distinguish truly great, prize-worthy innovations from tremendously praise-worthy successes. Our selection criteria are intended to help you draw that fine distinction. The four selection criteria are:

NOVELTY:

To what degree has the program:

- ★ Represented a fundamental change in the governance, management, direction, or policy approach of a particular jurisdiction?
- ★ Represented a significant improvement in the process by which a service is delivered?
- ★ Introduced a substantially new technology or service concept?

EFFECTIVENESS:

Has the program:

- ★ Identified and responded to the needs of a well-defined group of clients?
- ★ Demonstrated its effectiveness in meeting its stated goals and objectives quantitatively and qualitatively?
- ★ Produced unanticipated benefits for its clients?

SIGNIFICANCE:

To what degree has the program:

- ★ Addressed a problem of national import and scope?
- ★ Made substantial progress in diminishing the problem within its jurisdiction?

TRANSFERABILITY:

To what extent can this program:

- ★ Be replicated in other jurisdictions?
- ★ Serve as a model that other jurisdictions will seek to replicate?

For more information and to view the application materials, please visit www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu.