ID # (assigned by CSG): 12-S-02-FL

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Florida

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

Program Name: Child Support Enforcement Web Chat
Administering Agency: Department of Revenue, Child Support Enforcement Program
Contact (Name and Title): Chris Faupel, Senior Management Analyst
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1. How long has this program operated (month and year)? July 2011 Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old as of April 5, 2012 to be eligible for this year’s award.

2. Describe the program:
   Why was it created? The Child Support Program provides services to over 1 million families each year. Child support activities require interaction and participation by the parents and caregivers. The Program currently offers the following customer service options: a toll-free number to the Customer Contact Center; a visit to a local child support office; searching for general information from the website; or use of Child Support e-Services. Last year, the Program received 13,529,475 phone calls, 922,534 office visits, and 1,630,132 visits to our e-Services portal. The Program has launched a new customer service option, Web Chat. Web Chat offers customers the ability to contact the Program from any computer and allows the customer service agent to better assist by being able to co-browse with a customer online to help them find the information they need and educate them on how to more fully utilize self-service options.

   Why is it a new and creative approach or method? Florida’s Child Support Enforcement Program is the first child support entity to implement this customer service option on a statewide level. Additionally, the Program is customizing the web chat software to best meet the Program and the customers’ needs. Web chat is more efficient than a phone call or office visit because it allows staff to handle two to three customers simultaneously (even up to as many as five with an adept agent). More than ever, customers now rely on the convenience of electronic communication and have an expectation of engaging in electronic communications with us. Since the person being
assisted by a web chat agent is already connected to the internet that indicates it is their preferred method of interacting with the Department. Providing them with online quick, over-the-shoulder assistance promotes the use of the e-Services portal and will result in an overall reduction of calls to the Customer Contact Center and visits to local offices. As more offerings are provided via the e-Services portal, customers who have been helped by web chat will be more self-sufficient and will adapt easily to the changes to the portal.

What are the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order? Web chat provides another option for customer service and helps promote self-service as agents are able to help customers find information they are looking for on their case reducing the number of customers who need to call or walk-in to our offices in order to find routine case information.

Is it effective? The goal of web chat is to reduce the volume of calls to the Customer Contact Center by offering customers the ability to communicate with us with greater ease than being on the phone. Additionally, our call center agents are able to help customers learn where to find necessary information and how to better utilize our self-service options online to handle their routine case questions. Web chat increases the number of customers served, increases the level of customer satisfaction by providing a quick easy and convenient way to communicate with us, and decreases the number of customers waiting on hold or experiencing busy signals. Web chat is a convenient, alternative way to meet customer demand efficiently and improve customer satisfaction. Preliminary web chat performance statistics show that with up to 15 agents chatting with up to 5 customers each day for four hours a day, we anticipate increasing the number of customers served to be at least 700 daily. We plan to provide additional performance statistics as the project continues and is expanded.

3. Did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator’s name, present address, telephone number, and e-mail address. Web chat technology did not originate in Florida, and there have been other child support agencies using web chat in a limited way, but Florida is the first state to implement the customer service option for a child support program on a statewide level.

4. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ? Cuyahoga and Hamilton Counties in Ohio offer web chat to their customers, but Florida’s program has customized the technology to better support our customer base by providing a knowledge base of frequently asked (or chatted) questions and answers, offering pre-chat questions to quickly identify the case/chatter, providing estimated wait times to our customers so they can better prepare for the length of time waiting for an agent, among other things.

5. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter when attempting to adopt this program? Depending on state and Department requirements, offering a secure connection for customers and providing information across multiple firewalls could prove cumbersome or problematic.

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.
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.

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- Elections
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- Public Information
- Revenue
- Telecommunications

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- Health Services
- Housing
- Human Services

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- Management
- Personnel
- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

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- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
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- Water Resources

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