2007 Rooney Award

Nomination: Innovative State Human Resource Management
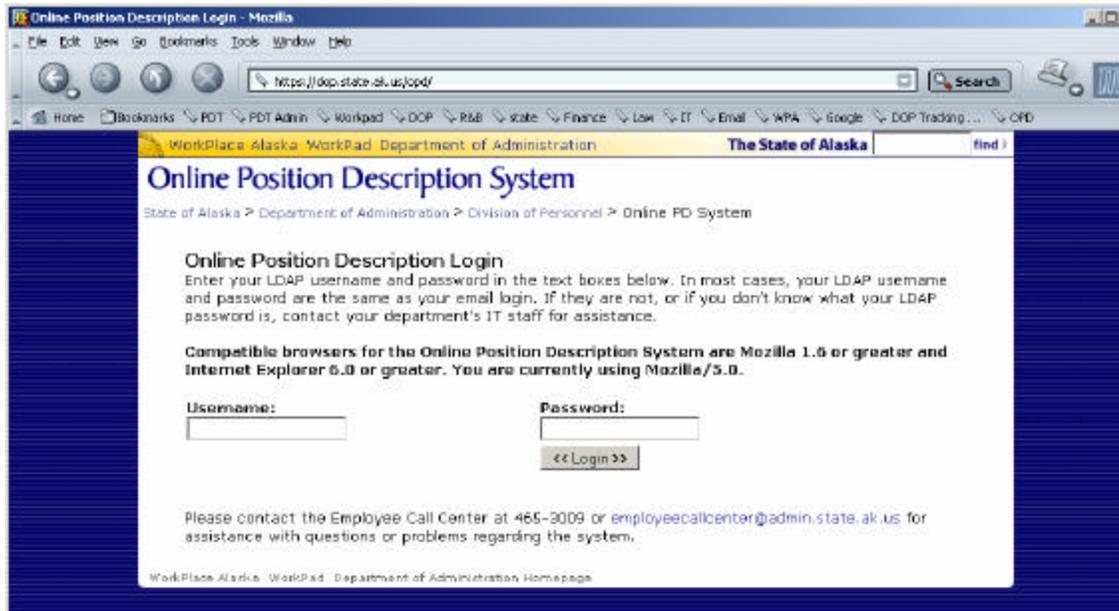
Program Title:	**Online Position Description (OPD) System**
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State of Alaska
Online Position Description System

The State of Alaska's Online Position Description (OPD) system was created in 2005 to improve client satisfaction with the classification process by providing a "one-stop" online center to process position descriptions, position control changes, and nonpermanent position requests. It was piloted in three departments from December 2005 until June 2006, when it was fully implemented in the remaining 12 departments of the Executive Branch.

This system was developed by the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations with a focus on simplifying the requesting, processing, and tracking of classification actions. It eliminated a paper-intensive process and replaced multiple electronic tracking systems.

OPD automatically routes classification actions, called "submissions," through the department and Division of Personnel & Labor Relations review and approval processes. It allows client users to easily track submissions for real-time status updates and information, and it emails users when submissions move forward. The system also contains a reporting feature and online instruction.

Overall, the system has simplified and helped demystify the classification process. Clients no longer have to guess where to send a form, can clearly see where their submissions are at any stage, and have immediate access to reports, guides, and position history. The system has been a positive change for our clients and the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations. It has improved communication and working relationships between the departments and the division.

1. Please provide a brief description of this program.
The Online Position Description (OPD) system is a web-based system that allows "one-stop" position management within the State of Alaska Executive Branch. OPD simplifies the creation and tracking of classification actions by eliminating multiple tracking systems, automatically routing submissions, and providing real-time reporting access all within one system. It includes reporting tools that allow users to track current and historical classification information.

2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?
The pilot program began with three departments in December 2005. Full implementation of all fifteen departments began June 2006. As of March 31, 2007, the system has been in operation a total of one year and three months.

3. Why was this program created? (What problem[s] or issues does it address?)
OPD was created to provide clients with a single, easy-to-use tool to process classification actions and obtain up-to-date information. Prior to OPD, clients' requests for classification actions were labor-intensive and were often misrouted in the multiple hardcopy routing steps. Clients were required to provide original signatures for the supervisor, division director, and department executive on virtually every action. The requests were routed through the mail and tracked manually in separate systems by the requesting department and the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations. Clients often did not know the status of a request and were frustrated with the processing time.
Now, our clients can easily create and track their requests online, and the OPD system automatically routes requests to the next step in the classification process, eliminating the client's need to "walk" a request through. Client satisfaction has increased overall with classification as questions concerning process and time delays are now at their fingertips.

4. Why is this program a new and creative method?
For the first time in State of Alaska history, the classification process has been made transparent to the client. OPD increases the accessibility of position information for state managers, supervisors, and employees, allowing 24/7 online access. Through the easy-to-use tracking feature and comprehensive online guides, OPD has provided an increased understanding of the classification process throughout the Executive Branch.

5. What was the program's startup costs? (Provide detailed information about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)
OPD was created in-house with no additional funding. Two existing staff members were devoted to its development over a two-year period. The routine work of these positions was divided amongst existing staff throughout the life of the project. All testing and training were conducted in-house with division staff. Existing equipment was used to develop the system, and no new equipment has been needed to keep OPD operational.

6. What are the program's operational costs?
On-going costs include one quarter of one FTE programmer (~$16,500.00 plus benefits) and one half of one FTE professional HR staff member (~12,000.00 plus benefits).

7. How is this program funded?

The Online Position Description system is funded through the Division of Personnel & Labor Relations' annual budget. Neither supplemental nor itemized budgets are required to keep OPD up and running.

8. Did this program originate in your state?

Yes. The system was created to address our particular client needs and statutory mandates.

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If yes, how does this program differ?

No, we are not aware of similar programs.

10. How do you measure the success of this program?

OPD's success is measured through client satisfaction and feedback, client ability to get needed information using OPD, classification client service standards, and accurate workload and workflow reports. The positive feedback we've received from clients has been tremendous. Many users have commented on how easy it is to use OPD and how pleased they are with the system's tracking and information retrieval features. Because OPD is more transparent, the Classification Section has seen an overall reduction in the number of complaints from users regarding the classification process itself.

Client service standards have been established for each type of classification action, and OPD has assisted the Classification Section in achieving and accurately tracking the achievement of these standards. Reporting features have also helped departments identify trends and patterns in their classification actions, allowing them to make more effective and informed classification decisions.

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

Minor enhancements have been made to the system as necessary. We anticipate a possible demand to include more types of positions in the future. The division's information technology long-term work plan includes a full-scale upgrade within the next five years, if needed. The system has a re-usable design (user interface), which has been successful in helping clients to easily utilize all of OPD's features. Because this design has been so successful, its basic structure is being used as a template to create additional human resource systems. This allows a uniform look and feel that makes the human resource systems easier to learn, use, and understand.