NOMINATION

for the

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE PERSONNEL EXECUTIVES'

ROONEY AWARD

in the Field of

INNOVATIVE STATE HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Program Title:	Classification Support System (CSS)
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PROGRAM SUMMARY

The most frequent classification method currently used in human resource organizations is the comparison of a duties questionnaire to a job class specification. In this method, an analyst compares the duties described in an open free-form questionnaire to a series of job class specifications to determine what job class (title) this individual position best matches. In many cases, the classification scheme is hierarchical, that is going from broad to narrower classifications. New Jersey's title-driven system is no different, beginning with the broad occupational category (OC), followed by occupational group (OG), and then narrowing to occupational family (OF). All titles in state government are classified into this hierarchy.

The new, automated Classification Support System (CSS) compares individual responses to a closed-end questionnaire – the most reliable method of obtaining job information – to a set of standard title profiles. To compile these, a mass survey of all state employees was conducted wherein all employees with titles within an OG responded to the same questions related to education and experience, specific licensing requirements, job duties, level of responsibility and independence. The responses from all employees working in a particular title were then averaged to create the profile for that title. New requests for position classification can therefore be evaluated by having the requestor complete the same questionnaire originally created for that OG's mass survey, and then comparing the responses statistically to the profiles for all titles within that OG. This comparison of an individual case to a standard conforms to the classification method.

The responses are converted to numerical scale values that are compared against the arithmetic mean and standard deviation of the responses of the original sample of employees in the title. When the individual's response to a question is within an acceptable range of variation of the sample then it is considered a match on that question. To be considered an acceptable match to a title profile, at least 85 % of the individual's responses must match the questions in the profile within the established variation.

Answers to Questions Posed by the Nominations Committee

1. Please provide a brief description of this program.

The Classification Support System (CSS) Online is an automated method for determining the validity and appropriateness of position classifications within state government agencies. By employing a complex decision matrix program, determinations can be made instantly as to which classification requests may be approved as requested and which will require review, thus reducing drastically the need for human intervention, speeding up the process and saving on labor costs.

Most classification reviews can be handled via self-administered online questionnaires, the responses to which are compared against established profiles for each title in the appropriate occupational group to determine the fitness of each match to desired titles. In those infrequent cases where manual review must still be performed, determinations can be implemented immediately online either by disapproving the request or by approving it and sending it on electronically to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

2. How long has this program been operational (month and year)?

CSS Online went live and has been functioning continuously since June of 2006.

3. Why was this program created? (What problem[s] or issues does it address?)

The Department of Personnel (DOP) must determine the proper classification of all positions within state government. Presently, there are approximately 4,400 active titles to which positions may be classified. Prior to CSS Online, the classification review process was lengthy and rather labor-intensive. Paper forms had to be completed and mailed from requesting agencies to DOP, where each was reviewed manually. If

there were errors or information was incomplete, the package had to be sent back to the agency and then re-sent to DOP for approval. Once approved, it went to the state's Personnel Management Information System (PMIS), where it was assigned a request number and then sent on to OMB for entry into the position file. The process could take weeks or even months, and there were several points in the process where papers could be misplaced, causing further delays. The new system allows the agencies to enter requests directly into an application for DOP review and transmission to OMB. What previously took weeks can now be accomplished virtually overnight.

4. Why is this program a new and creative method?

The decision matrix program alone is an innovation that takes the guesswork out of determining which requests require review and which don't. For those that do require review, the matrix tells the user in real time what form that review will take (online questionnaire or manual review). In addition to classification review, the system is a "one-stop shop" for all other position activities, from simple account number changes to pay rate and range changes for temporary workers to creating new positions altogether.

5. What were the program's start-up costs? (Be specific)

This project was developed for DOP by another state agency, the Office of Information Technology (OIT). The original estimate for the project was $633,435. This estimate included funding for the following existing OIT resources: one full-time programmer, one part-time project manager and one part-time database analyst. Two new full-time consultants were hired by OIT for the online user interface development.

Additional costs included Oracle and HATS licenses and HATS hardware. Existing mainframe and Oracle database servers were used in both the production and test environments. DOP resources were not included in this estimate.

6. What are the system's operational costs?

CSS Online operational costs include both human and mainframe processing resources. One DOP resource serves as the full-time CSS Help Desk. This support is available 5 days a week during the normal business hours. There are two part-time OIT developers with a third OIT part-time developer who is brought in on an as-needed basis to support CSS Online while it is in maintenance mode. As new bugs, enhancements and work items are requested, these resources report the time expended on their assignments and OIT is reimbursed accordingly by DOP. In addition, there are mainframe processing charges which include batch, online, disk, tape and printing processing. These costs range from approximately $9500 per month to $14,500 per month. The Oracle database processing subsystem is currently not billed.

7. How is this program funded?

Since this application was developed specifically for DOP, DOP solely funded the project. OIT services were provided on a time and materials basis. Those costs incurred were billed to DOP at the negotiated rates using the OIT billing application. Each OIT billable resource reported the time expended on the project using a billing number. Funds were transferred from DOP to OIT via an account that was set up specifically for that purpose. Consultant resources were secured through a contract. DOP pre-paid an agreed-upon lump sum for each consultant. The lump sum was based upon the hourly rate and the estimated hours to be worked in a certain timeframe.

8. Did this program originate in your state?

Yes, New Jersey is the first state to use this automated system, which was the career-capping achievement of our former head of classification management.

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

We are not aware of any similar programs in other states; we believe this to be unique among state human resources organizations.

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

The success of this program is measured fiscally by the reduction in average man-hours required to complete requests for position classification. It is measured culturally by the degree of acceptance and compliance shown by our customers, the individual state agencies.

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

The essentials of the program are unchanged, but we have added enhancements in response to customer comments and requests. For instance, our main inventory screen, from which each agency can view its own requests (but no one else's), has been enhanced to allow greater flexibility in sorting, filtering and searching for specific requests. In addition, we have changed some of our original status codes to be more meaningful to the user, and we are currently in the process of adding a new screen to allow agencies to change the funding source of existing positions. Finally, we are embarking on a project to make the entire system accessible to the blind and visually impaired.