

Title of Nomination: Vital Records Ordering

Project/System Manager: Dr. Alvin Onaka

Title: Department of Health State Registrar

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CATEGORY: Digital\_Government\_G\_to\_C

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**2003 NASCIO Awards: Digital Government:  
Government to Citizen  
State of Hawaii  
Department of Health: Vital Records Ordering**

In July of 2002, the Hawaii Department of Health, working with the eHawaiiGov portal, launched an application that allows citizens to order certified copies of their birth and marriage certificates online. The Vital Records Ordering application is especially important to the State of Hawaii because of our largely transient community. Due to the large military population in the State, as well as Hawaii's popularity as a tourist destination, a large number of people are born or married in the State, and then move on to other locations.

Because Hawaii State law allows only specific individuals with a tangible interest to have access to these records, several validation steps were necessary to ensure certified copies are only sent to people authorized to receive them. For this reason, an individual can only order a certified copy of a birth or marriage certificate for themselves, their child, or relative. An electronic verification system will only process the request if the name on the certificate correlates with the name on the credit card being used to submit payment. Previously, requests for certified copies of marriage and birth certificates could only be made by mailing the correct forms to the Department of Health, or by visiting their office personally.

When asked about the value of the system, Dr. Alvin Onaka, Department of Health State Registrar said, "By having online ordering, we hope to improve our service not only to Hawaii residents, but also to the over 14,000 visitors to Hawaii that get married here every year." In 2002, 2565 requests were processed online, and as of May 8, 2003, over 2,180 requests have been processed for the year.

The most important benefit of the Vital Records Ordering application, is the speed and convenience it brings to its many users. Over the last year, the site has received much positive feedback, including these samplings:

- *"This is a great site! Beautifully done!"*
- *"Thank you. This made it VERY easy to order additional copies of my Marriage Certificate!"*
- *"Thank you for automating this process. I was concerned about not finding and submitting the appropriate forms; so I was glad there was an internet site that requests all the appropriate information. The convenience of the service provided merits the additional expense of the electronic processing fee."*
- *"This is a very well-designed web site. I can't wait to get my birth certificate in the mail! Thanks!!!!!"*

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**Description**

Launched in July of 2002, the Vital Records Ordering application allows users to order certified copies of their birth and marriage certificates online. The requests are processed online through three levels of verification prior to being electronically submitted to the Department of Health for fulfillment. Citizens pay for the documents online using a credit card and the Department of Health completes the order by mailing the certified documents to the requestor.

**Significance**

The Department of Health processes approximately 120,000 requests for Certified copies of Birth and Marriage certificates annually. In 2002, the 2,565 requests were processed online and as of May 8, 2003, 2,183 requests have been processed online. Requests not processed online are done by either mail or in person. As citizens have become aware of the option to request their documents online, and the application has become more popular, the workload for the Vital Records Division of the Department of Health has decreased. Their service personnel are receiving less foot traffic, allowing them to concentrate their efforts on other tasks and process requests in a more timely and efficient manner.

**Benefits**

For the State of Hawaii, allowing vital records to be ordered online is an important improvement to Government process. Hawaii has a large transient population due to the many military installations located on the islands, as well as its status as a major tourist destination. For this reason, many individuals are born in the state or get married in the state, and then move on to other locations. Allowing these citizens to access their vital records online is a great benefit to them, and allows for more efficient, smoother communication between State Government and citizens. Users have submitted comments saying, *"Yes It was fun & easier than driving 2.5 hours to Hilo"* and *"I love it when I can do things like this online! It removes a lot of barriers to acquiring essential records from 5000+ miles away."*

**Return on Investment**

The following chart illustrates Hawaii's Return on Investment for the Vital Records Ordering application.

Hawaii ROI Checklist	Description
<b>Operational Efficiency</b>	
Reduce Overall Program Costs	Reduced manual paper processing of request forms and checks
Redirect Manpower to Other Areas	Staff saves time due to less over the counter support required. Additionally, the system locates the actual file number of the documents requested, making it possible for DOH staff to simply pull up the requested document.
Achieve Policy Objectives	
Privatize a Govt. Responsibility	Developed at no cost by the private sector portal contractor
<b>Constituent Service</b>	
Add Constituent Value	Allows constituents to instantly determine if their vital record is in the database. Improved convenience by eliminating paperwork and drive time.
Lower Constituent Cost	Citizens are saved time and effort by placing their orders online, allowing them to concentrate on other tasks important in their lives.
Greater Service Availability	Provides 24/7 accessibility and off-island access for large transient population in Hawaii.
Constituent-Centricity	The application is designed for ease of use rather than compliance with governmental paper format.
Fewer Interactions with Staff	Eliminated the need to call DOH staff with questions, request forms, etc.
<b>Political Return</b>	
Greater Participation via Easier Access	
Area Economic Impact	
Greater Public Transparency	Improved access to the vital records necessary for many important life events.
Greater Accountability/Better Data	
Improve Decisionmaking/ Policymaking	Allows citizens to complete an online evaluation form and rate the quality of the service. DOH monitors this feedback and makes revisions to programs and policies accordingly.
This checklist was adapted from material in "Creating a Case for a Government IT Project", by J. Kost and A. Di Maio, January 6, 2003, Gartner, Inc.	

**Link**

Live: <https://www.ehawaii.gov/doh/vitrec/exe/vitrec.cgi>