

Title of Nomination: License Renewal Service
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NASCIO 2003 Recognition Awards Entry
Discovering Montana's License Renewal Service
Executive Summary

Description of project

Licensed professionals nationwide can now renew their Montana license in a matter of minutes. The License Renewal Service allows more than 60,000 individuals to renew their licenses online. The application is built to accommodate new boards as they become ready. Licensed professionals can renew by simply entering their current license number, social security number, a pin number, and payment information. A license can be instantly printed for the professional's records and the licensee information is updated in real time.

DiscoveringMontana.com, the official state website, in conjunction with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, launched the License Renewal Service in October 2001.

Significance to the improvement of the operation of government

The online renewal service has saved so much time for the Department of Labor and Industry that for the 2002 fiscal year, the application will fulfill the requirements of one full time employee for just one board alone. The development of one universal form, as opposed to several, has significantly reduced paperwork for the Department allowing the staff to focus on other responsibilities.

Benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, agency or state

Professionals renewing their licenses in Montana were only able to do so by sending their renewal paperwork into their Board via the U.S. mail. The time spent filling out renewal forms could take up to an hour. Montana Boards would then have to spend countless hours reviewing the paperwork and renewing the licenses. Calls from professionals would consistently be flooding the Department of Labor and Industry to check on the status of their renewal forms. The Department of Labor and Industry, Business Standards Division found their staff time being heavily concentrated on renewal activities for months.

It was important to put a system into place that allowed for Montana licensed professionals to receive instant knowledge of their license renewal; along with Boards gaining the ability to immediately update their licensee database and save staff time. The online License Renewal was put in place and is now available for over 60,000 licensed professionals to use saving time for both Montana professional license holders and state staff.

Return on investment

The License Renewal Service allows more than 60,000 individuals to renew 47 different professional licenses from 17 Boards online. Over 37,000 users access the site each month. Adoption rate continues to increase with Boards that have had two consecutive renewal years online. In the first year, 2,331 nurses renewed online. Nursing renewals in the second year almost doubled with the number increasing to 4,124 licenses renewed online. The Board of Realty Regulation had a 40% adoption rate from their licensees using the online service to report completed continuing education requirements. Adoption rates will continue to increase for each Board and more and more Boards are looking to add their renewal process to the online site as soon as possible.

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1. Description of project, including length of time in operation.

Licensed professionals nationwide can now renew their Montana license in a matter of minutes. The License Renewal Service allows more than 60,000 individuals to renew their licenses online. The application is built to accommodate new boards as they become ready. Licensed professionals can renew by simply entering their current license number, social security number, a pin number, and payment information. A license can be instantly printed for the professional's records and the licensee information is updated in real time.

DiscoveringMontana.com, the official state website, in conjunction with the Montana Department of Labor and Industry, launched the License Renewal Service in October 2001.

Montana is one of the first states to offer an immediate printable license upon completion of the application. The renewal service produces an Adobe PDF document that represents the professional's official license with current information. An additional innovation to this service is that it allows licensees to print off unlimited copies of their license throughout the current year. This is a boon to users because prior to this, licensees were charged for replacement licenses. We were able to provide this additional service by generating postscript files on the fly. This allows for the security necessary to assure that licenses cannot be altered.

The renewal service will automatically notify the Department of Labor and Industry to mail a copy of a license if the licensee cannot print one.

The license renewal service has combined professional boards' renewal paperwork into one universal online form. Two simple steps allow an individual to renew their license in a matter of minutes. Professionals can renew their licenses when it's convenient for them, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

By not paying development costs for the service, the Department of Labor and Industry's office saved over \$224,000. Maintenance and enhancements to the service are also provided with no charge.

The Department has chosen to absorb the small convenience fee because the application generates a cost savings. The system is available to renewing professionals at no additional cost.

The online License Renewal was developed and maintained without the use of tax dollars or a general fund appropriation. This is possible through a public/private alliance between the state of Montana and DiscoveringMontana.com.

Our privacy and security policy is clearly published on the website.

DiscoveringMontana.com works closely with all of the professional boards to standardize the applications enabling end users simplicity and convenience when renewing online. A feedback mechanism is also included with this application that allows us to constantly improve the service.

The online License Renewal Service runs on our production web server, with the following specifications:

IBM ASCII Monitor/Console (shared between the 4 AIX boxen)
IBM p640 Web Server (B80)
375MHz POWER3-II
1GB RAM
2 - 18.2GB SCSI drives - mirrored
AIX 4.3.3 Operating System
IBM_HTTP_Server/1.3.12 Apache/1.3.12 (Unix)
Backup performed daily via Harbor

2. Significance to the improvement of the operation of government.

The online renewal service has saved so much time for the Department of Labor and Industry that for the 2002 fiscal year, the application will fulfill the requirements of one full time employee for just one board alone. The development of one universal form, as opposed to several, has significantly reduced paperwork for the Department allowing the staff to focus on other responsibilities.

The Department has found the service so efficient that it has set up terminals in the main office to assist professionals in renewing their licenses online when they come in for renewal assistance. All professionals can now renew in less than five minutes without having to complete or mail in any paperwork.

3. Benefits realized by service recipients, taxpayers, agency or state.

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Comments from customers:

“This just simplified the whole process immeasurably. Thanks. Keep up the constructive work.”
J. Gilmar

“I just wanted to let you know how easy and effective your online renewal service is.” David S.
Thain, DVM, Reno, Nevada

4. Return on investment, short-term payback (include summary calculations). Projects must exhibit measurable operational benefit.

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