STATE OF INDIANA

Nominations for NASCIO's 2007 Recognition Awards for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Information Technology, Business Continuity, & Disaster Recovery

IN.gov: Funding Projects that Lower the Cost of Doing Business With and Within Indiana's State Government
IT Project and Portfolio Management

With its hundreds of online services that run both deep into and far across the internal organizational boundaries in state government and more than 350,000 web pages, the State of Indiana has long been recognized as a leading state in the area of web portals. Despite this, in 2006, Indiana fundamentally changed the way it selects proposed projects for developing online services for IN.gov. In so doing, Indiana's IN.gov Program (a division of the Indiana Office of Technology) shifted from building on a first come, first served basis, to a process that funds the best projects that lower the cost of doing business with and within Indiana's state government.

Indiana has long enjoyed a "self-funded" website, where a few online services have a fee associated with them to support the hosting off all web content and the development, hosting, and maintenance of online services at no cost. With the funds budgeted for new development though, such funds usually went to a small group of agencies that were regular users of the IN.gov program. The expectation became: "they will develop whatever we want for free." With that expectation, few complete/"one stop" solutions were developed because there was no incentive to compete for funds.

In the third and fourth quarters of 2006, the IN.gov Program reestablished its mission and vision.

- **Mission.** To be the single online source of up-to-the minute state government information and trusted, easy-to-use, "one stop" state services that reduce the cost of doing business with and within state government.

- **Vision.** To shift, by the end of 2008, to be a measurably customer-centric portal of state information and services.

To delivers to its mission and vision, IN.gov:

- Provides secure, reliable utility services (web hosting, payment processing, content management solution) across IN.gov for the benefit of all state government entities.

- Upholds the value of the trusted IN.gov brand with clear, balanced, and enforced web standards.

- Provides an easy-to-understand process for state government entities to update web content and secure web development assistance.

- Responds to requests, and deliver approved requests, on time with high customer satisfaction.

- Using available IN.gov funds to develop "one stop" customer-focused government services.

It is that final bullet point upon which a straightforward process, based on the Activity Based Costing (ABC) approach, for selecting projects has been founded. Resources online about this approach abound, but, in a nutshell the goal is to determine the true cost of an activity and find the break even point to determine whether the online service is worth the investment. To be sure, this is more easily achieved when addressing reduction of headcount in state government or even when estimating time saved from the automation of a previously manual process, than it is when determining the costs associated with increasing the transparency of government (by, for example, providing public records online.)

That said, the model has also identified projects that might not have been selected. Several projects proposed by agencies that would in the past have automatically gone onto the project list for development have now been reviewed through the ABC approach and rejected. One agency wanted to develop, at the cost of more than $500,000, a service that would serve little more than a couple of hundred users who could not be expected to pay for the service. It was plainly obvious, especially when compared against other proposed projects, that the IN.gov Program should not fund the project and that same information was used to persuade the agency to cancel the project. Other projects have been successfully ramped up through the approach as well, including the State's successful income tax filing and business registration systems.