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2006 INNOVATIONS AWARDS WINNERS ANNOUNCED

***Seven Outstanding Government Programs Earn Harvard Prize
Local, State and Federal Efforts Win \$100,000 for Innovation, Creativity and Results***

Cambridge, Mass., – July 12, 2006 – Seven exceptionally creative and effective government initiatives will be named winners for the prestigious Innovations in American Government Awards on Monday, July 10th, 2006 during an awards dinner in Washington, DC. The Innovations in American Government Awards, founded in 1986, is a program of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. The award is administered in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government.

More than 1,000 government programs from across the country submitted applications to compete for this year's Innovation in American Government Awards. Applicants who demonstrated that their initiative is truly creative, measurably effective, meets a significant need, and can be transferred to other jurisdictions made it to a group of 18 finalists. Those finalists' programs were visited and evaluated by experts, and their representatives went to Cambridge, Massachusetts to field questions from a selection committee headed by the Kennedy School's David Gergen.

“Each of these winners are without question the best and brightest, and represent government's great capacity for creating positive change and achieving results,” said Gowher Rizvi, Director of Harvard's Ash Institute. “Each takes a creative approach to a significant problem and demonstrates that their solution works.”

Stephen Goldsmith, Director of the Innovations in American Government Awards at the Ash Institute said, “The determination to make government a force for good and a force for change, and the range of problems tackled by each of these initiatives, should renew our confidence in the

quality and commitment of our public servants. By shining a bright light on these innovators, these awards help encourage others in government to follow their amazing lead.”

The prize money is awarded specifically to support winning programs in the teaching of their model to other jurisdictions. “By celebrating and disseminating this kind of creative thinking at all levels of government, the awards program helps turn innovative ideas into commonly accepted practices,” said Patricia McGinnis, President of the Council for Excellence in Government. Each winner takes a unique approach to meeting community needs and achieving real results. Because each of these programs is a model for government's capacity to do good, and do it well, the \$100,000 prize specifically supports dissemination to other jurisdictions.

The seven winners include two federal, two state, one county, and two city programs:

Gay and Lesbian Liaison Unit in Washington, D.C. 's Metropolitan Police Department – is the first in the nation to redefine “community policing” by coupling community outreach with traditional crime fighting in the often invisible gay and lesbian communities. Moving beyond geographic, racial, and other artificial boundaries, the unit is educating law enforcement and protecting a traditionally marginalized group.

Grass Roots Conservation Program at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – rewards voluntary conservation of habitats for wolves, trout, grizzlies, and other wildlife in the Blackfoot Watershed through cooperative, community-based partnerships.

Health Information Technology at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VistA) – maintains a patient's electronic health care history that substantially improves efficiency, reduces costs and demonstrably improves clinical decision-making. Patient files are readily available, easily searchable, and proactive in that they alert providers to vital patient information.

Mayor's Charter Schools Initiative in the City of Indianapolis, IN – leverages the power of his office and his accountability as a highly visible, elected individual , to make the Mayor of Indianapolis the only U.S. Mayor authorized to create and oversee charter schools designed to meet needs not currently met by the city's school districts.

Supportive Housing Pilots Initiative in the State of Connecticut – invests in housing and services for families and individuals experiencing homelessness, especially those suffering from addiction or mental illness. It implements a cost-effective model that demonstrably cuts clients' dependence on medical, mental health, criminal justice and other public services. (Winner of the special Fannie Mae Foundation Innovations Award in Affordable Housing).

Teaming in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts – is a groundbreaking child welfare practice aimed at solving the problem of front line social worker isolation, and providing more effective services to families in times of crisis. The program creates teams of social workers who collaborate on a group of family cases, reducing isolation and improving communication between clients and the Social Services Department. (Winner of the special Annie E. Casey Innovations Award in Children and Family System Reform).

Urban Academies Program of the School Board of Broward County, FL – tackles the costly and debilitating teacher retention problem in predominantly poor and minority hard-to-staff schools. The Academies recruit aspiring educators in these communities' high schools, provide specialized training for college students already committed to education, and work with practicing teachers, providing all three groups with the skills and confidence to carry out the program's growing success in giving children in these communities the education they deserve.

Each of the winning programs' May 25, 2006 presentations to the National Selection Committee, chaired by David Gergen, at Harvard's Kennedy School can be seen at the Ash Institute's website: <http://www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu/Ash/news.htm> . A short film showcasing each of the initiatives is also available there. For more information on the Innovations in American Government program and this year's winners, visit www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu .