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SIX PUBLIC SECTOR PROGRAMS WIN GOVERNMENT AWARD FROM HARVARD

Government's Best Honored with Prestigious Award

Cambridge, Mass., – July 27, 2005 – Six groundbreaking government initiatives – ranging from a program that ensures safe housing in Los Angeles to a rating system that assesses every federal program's purpose and design – have won the Innovations in American Government Award. The Innovations in American Government Awards are a program of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, administered in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government.

Each of the six winners will receive a \$100,000 grant to support replication activities of their significant and creative efforts.

“These ground-breaking efforts represent the shining stars in government innovations,” said Gowher Rizvi, Director of the Ash Institute. “Each takes a creative approach to a significant problem and it is our honor to bring them well-deserved recognition and to encourage other government entities to replicate them.”

“Government innovation is alive and flourishing at every level of government,” added Stephen Goldsmith, Director of the Innovations in American Government Awards. “These six programs are a testament to that – as well as a testament to the creative, hard working public servants who make them happen.”

The six winning programs are:

Charter Agencies in the State of Iowa--redirects energy from bureaucratic requirements into innovation. The agencies volunteer to be accountable for measurable customer benefits and contribute savings/revenues in return for exemption from many state requirements.

Program Assessment Rating Tool at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget--assesses every federal program's purpose, design, management and results to determine effectiveness. The uniform assessment is used to improve management and to make informed budget decisions. www.whitehouse.gov/omb/part/

SEED School of the D.C. Public School District--the nation's first urban public boarding school, provides integrated academic and boarding services to help students in grades seven through twelve achieve their academic and social potential. www.seedfoundation.com

State Forensic Program of Allegheny County, PA--reintegrates individuals with behavioral health diagnoses upon release from state penitentiaries into the community and provides assistance with basic needs and mental health services to help participants become productive members of society.

Youth Civic Engagement in Hampton, VA--a comprehensive youth engagement strategy that gives young people authority to be equal players in city decisions. Youth have a "place at the table" in city government and play an active role in directing city services, schools and neighborhoods. www.hampton.va.us/foryouth/index.html

Systematic Code Enforcement Program of Los Angeles, CA (winner of the Fannie Mae Foundation Innovations in American Government Award in Affordable Housing)--proactively inspects more than 760,000 rental units in Los Angeles for habitability and enforces state health and safety codes. www.lacity.org/lahd

The six winners were selected from among eighteen finalists and more than 1,000 applicants for the awards, which were presented in Washington, D.C. today at the Excellence in Government Conference.

For 18 years, the Innovations in American Government Award has recognized quality and responsiveness at all levels of government, honored government efforts that are creative, effective and address significant problems, and has fostered the replication of innovative approaches to the challenges facing government. The award is a program of the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and is administered in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government.

The Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation (www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu) at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government fosters excellence in government in order to generate and strengthen democracy. Through its awards program, research, publications, curriculum support, and global network, the Institute champions critical milestones in creative and effective governance and democratic practice.

The Council for Excellence in Government (www.excelgov.org) is a national, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to improve government performance by strengthening results-oriented management and creative leadership in the public sector, and to build understanding by focusing public discussion on government's role and responsibilities.

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