The Southern Office of The Council of State Governments (CSG) is now accepting applications for its 2017 State Transformation in Action Recognition (STAR) award for innovative state government programs and services. The deadline for submitting your program for consideration is May 26, 2017.

The CSG Southern Office recognizes that state employees work hard, not only to provide outstanding services, but also by striving to develop and adapt new and improved programs to make their states a better place to live and work. Such efforts should be recognized, and innovative ideas should be shared among colleagues.

For nearly 40 years, CSG has identified and promoted exceptional state government programs. Through the STAR award, the Southern Office recognizes impactful, creative, effective and transferable state government solutions. Innovative program submissions are accepted from a wide array of state agencies, departments and institutions operating within the executive, legislative and judicial governmental branches.

Following an initial review process, five finalists will be invited to present their program to the STAR judges panel—comprising state legislators, legislative staff and policy experts—convening on August 1, 2017, at the 71st Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi. There, two exceptional programs will be selected as models of efficiency and effectiveness in state governments in the Southern region.
The Southern Office of The Council of State Governments is now accepting applications for its 2017 State Transformation in Action Recognition (STAR) award. The deadline for submissions is Friday, May 26, 2017.

The CSG Southern Office welcomes applications from a wide array of state agencies, departments and institutions operating within all branches of state government. Following the application review process, five finalists will have the opportunity to present their program to the STAR judges panel on Tuesday, August 1, 2017, at the 71st Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi. Two exceptional programs will be selected by the judges panel as models of efficiency and effectiveness for state governments in the Southern region, and the implementing agencies and representatives will be honored at the capstone State Dinner on that evening.

The STAR award represents an opportunity to highlight successful programs implemented within your state, especially those with the potential for adaptation across state lines.

State programs are evaluated and graded by the following criteria:

» **Impact:** How far-reaching are the benefits and solutions of the program?

» **Creativity:** Does the program represent a new and creative approach to solving common problems or issues?

» **Effectiveness:** To what extent is the program successful at addressing an issue, and how efficiently does it operate?

» **Transferability:** From a logistical and fiscal standpoint, could the program or practice easily be transferred to other states?

We encourage you to submit one or more of your state programs for consideration. More information is available at www.slcatlanta.org/STAR or by calling Nick Bowman in our office at (404) 633-1866.

We look forward to reviewing your application.

Sincerely,

Colleen Cousineau
Director
Southern Legislative Conference
Director
Southern Office of
The Council of State Governments

Nick Bowman
Research and Publications Associate
Southern Legislative Conference
Southern Office of
The Council of State Governments
HOW TO APPLY FOR THE STAR AWARD

INSTRUCTIONAL OVERVIEW

You may submit an application for the STAR award either online, at www.slcatlanta.org/STAR, or by mailing the form on the back of this page. To qualify for initial review, applicants must submit answers to the program questions (see text box on right) along with the application form.

In addition to the application form and program questions, you may also submit supplementary materials, such as videos, reports or presentations. The SLC reserves the right to use or publish the information provided in this application in other SLC products. If your agency objects to this policy, please advise us in a separate attachment.

PROGRAM QUESTIONS (ANSWERS MUST BE SUBMITTED FOR CONSIDERATION)

1. How long has the program operated? What was the month and year of initiation? Has the program been in operation for nine months to three years? (Note: to qualify, the program must be between nine months and three years old as of May 26, 2017. Older programs will be considered if there has been a significant update in the same time period.)

2. Why was it created? What problems or issues was the program designed to address?

3. What are the specific activities and operations of the program? (Please list in chronological order, if applicable.)

4. What equipment, technology and/or software (if any) are used to operate and administer the program?

5. What are the annual operational costs of the program? How is it funded?

6. Has the program been effective at addressing the problem or issue? Please provide tangible results and examples.

7. What measurable impact has the program had? Has it created significant change in your state?

8. Did the program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator’s name, present address, telephone number and email address.

9. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does your program differ?

10. Is the program transferable to other policy areas or states? What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter when attempting to adopt this program?
STAR Finalist Presentations

Following an initial review process, five finalists will be invited to present their program to the STAR judges panel—comprising state legislators, legislative staff and policy experts—convening on August 1, 2017, at the 71st Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference in Biloxi, Mississippi. There, two exceptional programs will be selected as models of efficiency and effectiveness in state governments in the Southern region.

Last year, judges reviewed programs from Georgia, Louisiana, North Carolina and Virginia representing the policy areas of transportation, government operations, government technology and corrections. The two programs selected as winners in 2016 were: 1) American Council on Education Accreditation by the Virginia Department of Corrections’ Division of Education, and 2) Smart Scale, a collaboration between the Virginia Department of Transportation and Department of Rail and Public Transportation.

American Council on Education Accreditation
Virginia Department of Corrections, Division of Education

In order to reduce recidivism, the Virginia Department of Corrections, Division of Education (VDOC, DOE) offers career and technical education (CTE) courses to inmates. These courses are designed to provide inmates with the skills required to succeed in today’s workforce. In 2014, the VDOC, DOE received college accreditation for five CTE courses through the American Council on Education. Virginia is the only state in the nation to offer college accredited courses to its inmates. Upon release, ex-offenders may submit an accredited transcript to higher education institutions for potential transfer credit in a degree program. Research shows that ex-offenders who have acquired college credit while incarcerated have lower recidivism rates.

Smart Scale
Virginia Department of Transportation and Department of Rail and Public Transportation

In 2014, Virginia became the first state to pass legislation establishing a scored ranking system to evaluate transportation projects based on project outcomes and across modes with their Smart Scale program legislation, which established a statewide prioritization process for transportation projects that improve the efficiency of the commonwealth’s transportation network.

In June 2016, Virginia’s Commonwealth Transportation Board approved $1.7 billion in funding to build 163 transportation projects that were selected through the Smart Scale process. These projects are fully funded through all phases of project development and construction. The Virginia Department of Transportation has been working with other states interested in replicating their success.
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**Example Policy Areas**

- **Agriculture and Natural Resources**
  - Agricultural Education
  - Conservation and Land Use
  - Land Preservation
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Natural Resources
  - Trade
- **Economic Development, Fiscal Affairs and Transportation**
  - Business and Commerce
  - International Trade
  - Revenue
  - Transportation Infrastructure
  - Tourism
  - Public-Private Partnerships
- **Education**
  - Administration
  - Management
  - Personnel
  - Training and Development
  - Workforce Development
- **Energy**
  - Efficiency
  - Transmission
  - Infrastructure
- **Health and Human Services**
  - Aging
  - Children and Families
  - Health Services
  - Housing
  - Human Services
- **Government Operations and Technology**
  - Administration
  - Elections
  - Information Systems
  - Public Information
  - Telecommunications
- **Public Safety and Corrections**
  - Corrections
  - Courts
  - Criminal Justice
  - Substance Abuse
  - Emergency Management
  - Public Safety

Submit your application:

**Online:**
www.slcatlanta.org/STAR

**Mail:**
STAR Award
Southern Legislative Conference
P.O. Box 98129
Atlanta, Georgia 30359

For more information, contact:

Nick Bowman
Research and Publications Associate
Southern Legislative Conference of
The Council of State Governments

Email: star@csg.org
Phone: (404) 633-1866
Fax: (404) 633-4896

Application Deadline:
May 26, 2017
Founded in 1933, The Council of State Governments (CSG) is our nation’s only organization serving all three branches of state government. Regional by design, CSG is a national community with six offices across the United States. This structure invites participation from members on a more intimate, regional level, while also providing unparalleled national and international opportunities to network, collaborate and form professional partnerships.

Opened in 1959, the Southern Office of CSG fosters intergovernmental cooperation among its 15 member states, predominantly through the programs and services provided by its Southern Legislative Conference. Legislative leadership, members and staff utilize the SLC to identify and analyze government policy solutions for the most prevalent and unique issues facing Southern states. Meanwhile, SLC member outreach in state capitols and coordination of domestic and international delegations, leadership development and staff exchange programs, meetings, and fly-ins support state policymakers and legislative staff in their work to build a stronger region.

Established in 1947, the SLC is a member-driven organization and the largest of four regional conferences of CSG, comprising the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. The Annual Meeting of the Southern Legislative Conference, convened as the focal point and apex of its activities, is the premier public policy forum for Southern state legislators and the largest regional gathering of legislative members and staff. The Annual Meeting and a broad array of similarly well-established and successful SLC programs—focusing on both existing and emerging state government challenges—provide policymakers diverse opportunities to ask questions of policy experts and share their knowledge with colleagues.