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Quality and Productivity Commission
29th Annual Productivity and Quality Awards Program
Champions of Change: Together We Make a Difference

2015 APPLICATION

Title of Project (Limited to 50 characters, including spaces, using Arial 12 point font):

NAME OF PROJECT: WELCOME TO OUR LOBBY: SSIR

48279+

DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION/ADOPTION: DECEMBER 16, 2013
 (Must have been implemented at least one year - on or before July 1, 2014)

PROJECT STATUS: Ongoing One-time only

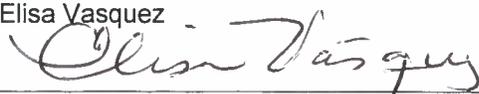
HAS YOUR DEPARTMENT PREVIOUSLY SUBMITTED THIS PROJECT? Yes No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Describe the project in 15 lines or less using Arial 12 point font. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made.

1 With an average of 80,000 visitors annually, the Housing Authority of the County of Los
 2 Angeles (HACoLA) designed the Self Service Interactive Receptionist (SSIR) to
 3 accommodate its heavy lobby traffic and eliminate the need for additional receptionists.
 4 Clients arriving to the lobby are directed to the SSIR system, an application available
 5 through three iPad stations. Clients are prompted to push touch-screen buttons that
 6 navigate them through a series of questions until the desired service or employee is
 7 selected. SSIR generates an e-mail message to the intended employee, announcing
 8 their guests' arrival. Clients view their status on a queue system in the waiting area,
 9 and are seen within 15-minutes of check-in. To ensure the 15-minute expectation is
 10 met, a timed e-mail escalation process is activated. If the client is not assisted within the
 11 timeframe, an e-mail is sent to the employee's superiors notifying them of the delay.
 12 Having exceeded expectations, SSIR's automation of the manual check-in process has
 13 allowed HACoLA to organize its lobby traffic flow, ensure timely responses to office
 14 visitors, and as a bonus, reduce lobby staff from five full-time positions to three.
 15

(1) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST AVOIDANCE	(2) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	(3) ACTUAL/ESTIMATED ANNUAL REVENUE	(1) + (2) + (3) = TOTAL ANNUAL ACTUAL/ESTIMATED BENEFIT	SERVICE ENHANCEMENT PROJECT
\$ 96,558	\$	\$	\$ 96,558	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

ANNUAL = 12 MONTHS ONLY

SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT NAME AND COMPLETE ADDRESS Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles ASSISTED HOUSING DIVISION 700 W. MAIN STREET. ALHAMBRA, CA. 91801		TELEPHONE NUMBER (626) 262-4510
PROGRAM MANAGER'S NAME Margarita Lares, Director		TELEPHONE NUMBER (626) 586-1670 EMAIL Margarita.Lares@hacola.org
PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME AND SIGNATURE <small>(PLEASE CALL (213) 893-0322 IF YOU DO NOT KNOW YOUR PRODUCTIVITY MANAGER'S NAME)</small> Elisa Vasquez 	DATE 7/9/15	TELEPHONE NUMBER (626) 586-1762 EMAIL Elisa.Vasquez@lacdc.org
DEPARTMENT HEAD'S NAME AND SIGNATURE Sean Rogan 	DATE 7/10/15	TELEPHONE NUMBER (626) 586-1500

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1st FACT SHEET – LIMITED TO 3 PAGES ONLY: Describe the **Challenge, Solution, and Benefits** of the project. State clearly and concisely what difference the project has made. Use Arial 12 point font

Challenge:

As one of the largest Section 8 subsidized rental assistance programs west of the Mississippi, the Housing Authority of the County of Los Angeles (HACoLA) Assisted Housing (AH) Division provides housing assistance to approximately 24,000 low-income households through partnerships with over 11,000 landlords within the Los Angeles County area. Additionally, HACoLA maintains a waiting list of over 40,000 families seeking the opportunity to receive rental housing assistance.

On any given day, there are as many as 300 visitors (nearly 80,000 annually) arriving to HACoLA's lobbies in Alhambra and Palmdale. Visitors include applicants seeking their status on the waiting list; clients with an appointment to see a program specialist; as well as landlords and related associates arriving to conduct business. This high volume of foot traffic, coupled with an outdated manual check-in process, resulted in long lines, high noise volume, and frustration for both visitors and staff – especially for the five full-time lobby receptionists.

Solution:

Recognizing the need to transition to the next phase of customer service, HACoLA's management team sought options that could utilize current technological advances to assist visitors in a familiar, yet expeditious manner. After quickly realizing that there were no software applications of this nature in the market that could address the specific concerns of a large housing authority, HACoLA's AH Division tasked its internal Information Technology personnel with developing a cutting edge system that would provide a customer service experience similar to those being utilized in private sector businesses, but tailored to the agency's needs.

With SSIR, clients arriving to the lobby are directed to the system available through iPad stations prominently located in both lobbies. Clients seeking business with the AH Division, complete their check-in process through the SSIR system. Here's how it works: when clients walk up to the SSIR station, they are prompted to push touch-screen buttons that navigate them through a series of questions, which are available in multiple languages, until the service or employee sought is selected.

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For those clients seeking a particular employee, SSIR automatically generates an e-mail message to the intended employee, announcing their guest's arrival and check-in. Clients are expected to be seen within 15 minutes of check-in. To ensure the 15-minute expectation is met, a timed e-mail escalation process begins at check-in, and when the client is not assisted within the required 15 minutes, the employee's Supervisor, then the Assistant Manager, and finally, the Manager, are notified. Clients view their placement status against other clients on a visual queue displayed on monitors located in various waiting areas of each lobby.

Results:

HACoLA officially launched SSIR on December 16, 2013, and its implementation automated the manual process that consisted of long lines, phone calls, and e-mails between the lobby receptionists and employees. SSIR's ability to automate and streamline the link between clients and their program specialist stems from a very comprehensive built-in logic that not only interfaces with the agency's operation software systems, but has also improved the way business is conducted with the tracking of customer service delivery. Prior to SSIR, HACoLA could not accurately track lobby wait times; however, since SSIR's launch, lobby wait times have been confirmed via SSIR's tracking mechanisms, to be on average of a mere 13 minutes. SSIR's automation of the manual process has allowed HACoLA to optimize its lobby traffic flow. As a bonus, SSIR's efficiency reduced lobby staff from five full-time positions to three full-time positions. The elimination of two lobby staff positions created a cost avoidance of \$96,558 in personnel expenditures geared toward lobby management.

We are proud that SSIR is unique among public housing agencies, and showcases HACoLA's ability to harness "smart" technologies to provide optimal service delivery in an environment of decreased fiscal resources. SSIR has become a very welcomed asset to our lobbies.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN (DETAIL IS REQUIRED FOR COUNTY DEPARTMENTS): Use Arial 12 point font

Not applicable as HACoLA is not a County Department.

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COST AVOIDANCE, COST SAVINGS, AND REVENUE GENERATED (ESTIMATED BENEFIT): If you are claiming cost benefits, include a calculation on this page. You must include an explanation of the County cost savings, cost avoidance or new revenue that matches the numbers in the box. Remember to keep your supporting documentation. Use Arial 12 point font

Cost Avoidance: Costs that are eliminated or not incurred as a result of program outcomes.

Cost Savings: A reduction or lessening of expenditures as a result of program outcomes.

Revenue: Increases in existing revenue streams or new revenue sources to the County as a result of program outcomes.

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\$ 96,558	\$	\$	\$ 96,558	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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Each full-time lobby position costs HACoLA approximately \$48,279 annually in salary and benefits. The elimination of two full-time lobby positions has resulted in an overall annual salary savings of \$96,558.