



Inclusion Through Diversity

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Tompkins County Shared Services Electronic Records Repository Recognized as 2015 Harvard Ash Center Bright Idea in Government

The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, recognized today the Tompkins County Shared Services Electronic Records Repository as part of the 2015 Bright Ideas program. This year's cohort includes 124 programs from all levels of government—school districts; county, city, state, and federal agencies; as well as public-private partnerships—that are at the forefront in innovative government action.

“Unlike larger governments, small local governments in New York State often do not have the resources to implement and support high-level uses of technology within their records management programs. Often, the best alternative is to pool resources and collaborate with other like governments, in order to provide access to technological efficiencies and eliminate redundancies,” notes Maureen Reynolds, Tompkins County Clerk. “In 2009, Tompkins County implemented a digital archiving records program (Laserfiche) and for the past three years has been able to support a hosted solution within the system for use by other local government agencies via a secure Internet connection, or other locally managed direct network connectivity.

“The shared services cost savings and advantages to the smaller municipalities through the Tompkins Shared Services Electronic Records Repository (TSSERR) include: the sharing of our records management and IT knowledge, IT infrastructure, hardware, software, user support, disaster recovery solution, backup, improved process efficiencies, and the TSSERR user consortium. Through the Repository, services are shared with all 16 of the other municipalities located within Tompkins County.”

“The Bright Ideas program demonstrates that often seemingly intractable problems can be creatively and capably tackled by small groups of dedicated, civic-minded individuals,” said Stephen Goldsmith, director of the Innovations in Government Program at the Ash Center. “As exemplified by this year's Bright Ideas, making government work better doesn't always require massive reforms and huge budgets. Indeed, we are seeing that, in many ways, an emphasis on efficiency and adaptability can have further-reaching effects than large-scale reforms.”

This is the fourth cohort recognized through the Bright Ideas program, an initiative of the broader Innovations in American Government Awards program. For consideration as a Bright Idea, programs must currently be in operation or in the process of launching and have sufficient operational resources and must be administered by one or more governmental entities; nonprofit, private sector, and union initiatives are eligible if operating in partnership with a governmental organization. Bright Ideas are showcased on the Ash Center's [Government Innovators Network](#), an online platform for practitioners and policymakers to share innovative public policy solutions.

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About the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation

The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation advances excellence in governance and strengthens democratic institutions worldwide. Through its research, education, international programs, and government innovations awards, the Center fosters creative and effective government problem solving and serves as a catalyst for addressing many of the most pressing needs of the world's citizens. For more information, visit www.ash.harvard.edu.

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