

IOWAccess Project Concept Paper

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Project Name: Citizen Incident Input and Tracking Portal

Requesting Governmental Entity: City of Dubuque

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Project Sponsor: City of Dubuque

Goal:

To provide citizens an easy to use portal for the purpose of reporting incidents and complaints.

Project Purpose:

To provide citizens a web-based portal to input information regarding a complaint or inquiry and to automatically route that complaint or inquiry to the proper City department. The complaint or inquiry would show a recorded history of actions with notification to citizens as actions are taken on the complaint or inquiry.

Background:

Many times citizens need to report a complaint or incident to a City department outside of the normal Monday – Friday 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. hours of operation. Citizens often have no idea what department is responsible for the complaint they are contacting the City about. Citizens are often reluctant to call the City to complain about an issue and wish to maintain the anonymity that the internet provides. The current trends in society shows an individual or business more likely to approach doing business on the internet than in the past.

The City currently utilizes an internal incident tracking system created and hosted by Mission Creative from Dubuque, Iowa. It is desired to take this system and create a “front-end” application for use by citizens through a secure web portal. The interface created must be intuitive and provide guidance and help to the novice user. Information explaining the data shown on all query screens should be available by “mouse over” quick information and links to more detailed information about detail shown on the pages.

Citizens would be guided through the process of entering a complaint or inquiry using a series of drop down menus using common language and not technical jargon. Citizens would have an option of receiving a call back or return e-mail regarding the incident. Citizens could also login and view the status of their incident or query. Citizens would be informed as the status of their incident changed or actions were taken.

On the “back-end” of the application, City staff would view and respond to incidents as they do now using the current internal incident tracking system.

The interface must be created so that a high speed internet connection is not required since over 50% of the internet users in the Dubuque community still utilize a dial-up connection. The interface must be capable of use by those that have physical disabilities.

It is recommend that citizen input from individuals likely to use the services of a web-based incident tracking portal be gathered during the design, implementation and testing phase of the project to get an accurate idea of what is needed.

In order to maintain the security of the data used for this application, access by software programs must be granted only after authentication with credentials. The credentials used for this authentication must not reside in the main, executing body of the program's source code in clear text. Database credentials must not be stored in a location that can be accessed through a web server. The application must implement the use of “strong passwords” and security standards for e-commerce as defined by security organizations such as SANS and CERT. (Further security needs will be specifically determined during project design).

Expected Results:

It is anticipated that citizens will utilize this portal to report incidents, request information and later track their input. The benefit for citizens is a convenient method to record information. The benefit for the City would be more information and an ability to better respond to the needs of the citizens.

Request:

The City of Dubuque requests \$15,000 to add this enhancement to the City’s existing Incident Tracking System. The City would be responsible for the “on-going” costs for this project which would include maintenance, hosting, software licensing and any charges for new or customized features that may be outside of the scope of the initial project description.

It is preferred that a hosted model for this application be utilized whereby data, applications, user and administrator access, payment processing and all hardware be maintained and housed at the application service provider’s site. The City would be responsible for sending and receiving data to/from the

application via a secure file transfer protocol and mutually agreed upon file format. It is assumed that the transfer would take place in a mutually agreed upon manner either “attended” by operators or “unattended” happening automatically.

The City would also be responsible for securing and maintaining any domain names associated with the application. All data would remain owned by the City of Dubuque regardless of where the data resides.

Cost Avoidance:

The City would avoid extra hours of operation by providing the web portal. Using a hosted application allows the City to not have the responsibility of purchasing hardware, maintaining programming or acquiring additional T-1 lines for connection to the application.

This application could be scalable and used for many different types of incidents for many different cities by using standard templates for query of data and design of the portal pages.

Interested Parties:

Citizens and City staff.

Some of the Recipients of this Service:

Citizens and City staff.

Statewide Impact:

The City of Dubuque intends for this project to serve as a template for other Iowa cities and counties. Upon completion of the project, project details will be shared with any local government entity that is interested in applying these functions to their organization.