

**Federation of
Tax Administrators**

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**News
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**WISCONSIN CO-WINNER OF
2014 FTA AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING TECHNOLOGY APPLICATION
Washington State given honorable mention**

WASHINGTON, D.C. (APRIL 21, 2014). The [Wisconsin Department of Revenue](#) is one of two winners of the 2014 FTA Award for Technology. New York's winning program, Fraudulent Refund Prevention, was featured last week. Wisconsin's winning entry is a collection of "small applications," specifically a **revenue mobile app** and an electronic receptionist that allow the taxpayer to self-serve while improving customer interactions and agency efficiency.

Technology Award judges also wanted to draw special attention to a program in [Washington State](#), awarding an honorable mention to the Property Tax Geographic Information System.

Awards will be presented at the [FTA Annual Meeting](#), June 8-11 in St. Petersburg, Fla. The winning agencies have been invited to present the details of their programs during the Technology breakout.

Judges were John Vranna, retired tax administrator; Steve Miller, retired tax administrator; and Karla Hulett, American Trucking Association.

Wisconsin's mobile app is designed for citizens who interact with the agency on a regular basis. It connects to the most popular online services, including refund look-up, estimated tax look-up, free tax help site locations, how-to videos, news updates, contact info and the agency's Twitter feed. Thirteen percent of all refund inquiries now come through the app. A governance group met quarterly as components were rolled out to evaluate them and discuss modifications. A withholding calculator and sales tax rate lookup are in the works.

The electronic receptionist was designed to improve a walk-in problem at the Milwaukee office, which handles tax questions, delinquency resolution, permitting and redeems winning lottery tickets.

Citizens who enter the small office can choose Spanish or English, and they electronically enter a name and reason for visit (choosing from a list). The information goes to work queues. When a person with the necessary expertise is available, that person will assist the next person in the queue.

Supervisors can monitor traffic and call for backup assistance when necessary, and they have data that helps them make other management decisions. The check-in line has disappeared, so taxpayers can spend their waiting time in chairs. Because of security and infrastructure constraints, the agency locked an iPad to a portable stand (also locked). The iPad is moved and charged overnight. The agency bought off-the-shelf software, a product from Check In Systems Inc.

Judges felt that these two developments demonstrated thinking that is "out of the box" and involves innovative development that employs modest and easily achievable applications of technology. In particular, the Electronic Receptionist initiative enables quick-assistance triage decisions through improved data gathering and taxpayer self-service and represents a direction that all states should consider.

The Federation of Tax Administrators is a nonprofit organization composed of taxation and revenue departments of the fifty states, District of Columbia, New York City and Philadelphia. Its mission is to improve the standards and methods of tax administration

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