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## Best of Kentucky IT Awards Winners Announced

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### AGENCY CONTACT MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Agency IT Leadership, Technical Contacts

**FROM:** Ruth Day, CIO

**DATE:** July 16, 2021

**SUBJECT:** Best of Kentucky IT Awards Winners Announced

For over a decade, state and local government agencies in the Commonwealth have had the opportunity to gain recognition for innovative IT initiatives through the Best of Kentucky IT Awards. Held in conjunction with the Kentucky Virtual Digital Government Summit, this annual celebration provides much deserved recognition for agencies and their employees as they continue to develop better, more cost-effective, and secure solutions for delivering services to citizens.

On June 24, the Commonwealth's Chief Information Officer (CIO) Ruth Day, presented awards to recipients in two categories: the Best Application Supporting the Public and the Best IT Collaboration among Agencies.

Winning the award for the *Best Application Supporting the Public* is a team from the Public Protection Cabinet, Office of Information Technology, which developed the Team Kentucky Healthy at Home Eviction Relief Fund (HH-ERF). HH-ERF provides rental assistance to individuals at risk of eviction during the COVID-19 pandemic. CARES Act monies were designated by Governor Beshear to provide this assistance. The Public Protection Cabinet, Office of Information Technology led by Satish Akula, created the application portal to accept information from both renters and landlords to distribute these monies and keep vulnerable Kentuckians housed during the pandemic. The Public Protection Cabinet partnered with the Finance and Administration Cabinet and the Kentucky Housing Corporation to complete this program. Through the portal, 4,140 households were provided rental assistance in the Commonwealth, totaling \$14,672,612 in rental assistance. Just over \$13,000,000 was provided to the most vulnerable Kentuckians - those making 50% or less of area median income. The program was so successful that following the conclusion of HH-ERF, more monies were allocated for rental assistance, and the application was so effective that it is still being used to collect applicant data. is placeholder text.



*Ruth Day, CIO, presents the Best Application Supporting the Public Award to the Public Protection Cabinet (PPC) Office of Information Technology. Pictured left to right: Matt Miles, Jennifer Franklin, Ruth Day (CIO), Satish Akula, Praveen Adabala, Shamshad Shaik*

**Best IT Collaboration among Organizations** was awarded to the Kentucky Emergency Management GIS/IT Workgroup. This group consists of individuals from the Commonwealth Office of Technology (COT) Division of Geographic Information, Kentucky Emergency Management (KyEM), Kentucky Transportation Cabinet (KYTC) Office of Information Technology, the Cabinet of Health and Family Services (CHFS) Office of Health Data and Analytics and Department of Public Health, and the Kentucky Infrastructure Authority (KIA). When Governor Beshear declared an emergency to address the spread of COVID-19 in the Commonwealth, the need for current, reliable data to assist the Governor with making informed, evidence-based and timely decisions became immediately apparent. The leadership of KyEM quickly began seeking sources of data expertise from all areas of state government, and access to data sets. The resulting collaboration and resource sharing resulted in the development of dashboards tracking economic impact of COVID-19 across the Commonwealth. The team also rapidly added collections of other maps, including COVID-19 county-based statistics and infographics. The rapid delivery of results from a generally decentralized information technology community was impressive and effective. The project succeeded in developing specifications for needed data sets and rapidly dissolved disparate agency boundaries. The project not only delivered the needed graphic representation of the extent of the pandemic in Kentucky, it also achieved a high level of cooperation in the information technology community of state government. The technology outputs were accurate and visually impressive, and the collaboration and partnerships established between the agencies and agency personnel demonstrated a stellar effort by all parties to support the successful delivery of data to the citizens of the Commonwealth. In addition to continuing to support data needs of the COVID-19 response, this team is also providing leadership for a new initiative to build upon the lessons learned and expand data resources available within the Commonwealth. Click to edit this placeholder text.



*Ruth Day, CIO, presents the Best IT Collaboration Among Organizations award to the Kentucky Emergency Management GIS/IT Workgroup. Pictured left to right: Emily Bartee (KYTC), Mitchell Masarik (KYTC), Doug Eades (KyEM), Ruth Day (CIO), Will Holmes (KYTC), Bryan Bunch (KIA), Jon Croley (KyEM), and Kent Anness (COT). Not pictured: Maik Schutze (CHFS) and Benjamin Scott (CHFS)*

After the awards presentation CIO Ruth Day expressed, "It was my pleasure to present the token of appreciation to these innovators. In congratulating them, we asked the award winners to share a bit about their work and it was such a delight to see their enthusiasm for the project, the results in service to the citizens of the Commonwealth, and their sincere appreciation for their teammate's contributions. Thanks again to these dedicated IT leaders and to those who nominated them."

Nominations for the 2022 Best of Kentucky IT Awards will begin in March 2022 and include five categories: Visionary Award, Best Application Serving the Public, Most Innovative Use

of Technology, Best IT Collaboration Among Organizations, and Best IT Security Innovation. Click to edit this placeholder text.

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