



Awards for Excellence

IN GOVERNMENT FINANCE

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Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Awards for Excellence in Government Finance recognize innovative programs and contributions to the practice of government finance that exemplify outstanding financial management. The awards stress practical, documented work that offers leadership to the profession and promotes improved public finance.



City of Seattle

2018 Winner for Creative Solution to Common Challenge:

CITY OF SEATTLE, WA

FILELOCAL - A CROSS JURISDICTIONAL TAX PORTAL FOR BUSINESS

FileLocal

Your one stop for local business licensing and tax filing

www.filelocal.org

The City of Seattle led the effort to create a new online, multicity, one-stop tax portal (FileLocal) that dramatically simplified the filing and paying of city taxes, especially for firms that conduct business in multiple cities. In addition to Seattle, the development of the project included some of Washington's largest business and occupation (B&O) tax cities - Tacoma, Bellevue and Everett - together collecting the majority of the tax across the state.

All four participating city councils agreed to, and the mayor or city manager for each participating city signed, an interlocal agreement creating a municipal nonprofit corporation to run FileLocal. Since the launching the online tax filing portal, one more city has joined with several others in the process of finalizing the interlocal agreement to join FileLocal.

The project began as a way to simplify the registration of businesses and the filing of taxes for the business community through a single tax filing system. This project was done against a backdrop of the potential for shifting administration of B&O taxes to the state's Department of Revenue. As the FileLocal effort was already underway the proposal to shift administration was unsuccessful and work continued to build the online tax filing portal.

The common challenges the FileLocal implementation helped solve were:

- Ease the burden associated with license and tax filing for businesses
- Optimize customer service
- Exchange common data
- Reduce administrative costs

Since FileLocal was implemented, over 30,000 accounts have been created and used by businesses for monthly, quarterly and year-end registrations and filings. The cities of Bellevue and Tacoma use FileLocal as their primary electronic filing system and have seen great improvements in business license registrations and filings. Momentum continues for both business and local cities to continue to improve the customer experience through FileLocal.

