



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 29, 2002

2002-25

GovBenefits Web Site Officially Launched

[WWW.GovBenefits.gov](http://www.GovBenefits.gov) Provides Easy Access To Benefit Information; Streamlines Bureaucracy

WASHINGTON – Deputy Secretary of Labor D. Cameron Findlay and Office of Management and Budget Associate Director for Information Technology and E-Government Mark Forman today officially launched the GovBenefits Web site (www.GovBenefits.gov), the first of President Bush’s e-government initiatives to make the government more citizen-centric. A one-page summary of the Web site follows this release.

“GovBenefits gives people easy access to the information they need about government programs to help them when they need it most,” Findlay said. “This new Web site harnesses the power of e-government to better serve citizens across the country.”

“GovBenefits is a great example of what the President meant when he talked about ‘citizen-centered’ government. This is a start on reducing the confusion of the welfare bureaucracy. It should not be necessary to wade through the morass of paperwork, forms, and organizations just to get help when in need. Equally important, those who help the needy, whether in government or non-profits, will be able to identify more easily if a Veteran is better served by the Veterans Affairs Department or some other program,” said Forman.

GovBenefits is the new government Web site that will serve as a single, online information source for information on government benefits. It will help users access eligibility information through an easy-to-use online screening tool that asks basic questions about items such as income, marital or employment status, and family size. Based on user responses, information is then provided about the programs for which users may be eligible. The site also provides general descriptions and contact information for federal benefit programs.

The site currently offers information on about 55 programs. More programs will be added to the site in the future.

E-government is an integral part of the President’s Management Agenda to make it easier for citizens and businesses to interact with the government, save taxpayer dollars and streamline citizen-to-government transactions.

###

Expanding E-Government: GovBenefits Initiative

“Simply put, our goal is to make your government more accessible to all Americans.”-- President George W. Bush, March 2002

In his February 2002 budget submission to Congress, President Bush outlined a management agenda for making government more focused on citizens and results, which includes expanding Electronic Government – or E-Government. E-Government uses improved technology, including the tools of the Internet, to make it easy for citizens and businesses to interact with the government, save taxpayer dollars, and streamline business-to-government transactions.

The President’s E-Government Strategy, released by the Office of Management and Budget, has identified 24 high-payoff, government-wide E-Government initiatives to integrate agency operations and information technology investments. These initiatives will eliminate redundant systems and significantly improve the government’s quality of service for citizens and businesses at a savings to taxpayers.

GovBenefits

Over 80 million people receive government benefits through Federal programs (e.g., Social Security) and federally funded programs managed by state and local governments (e.g., unemployment insurance). Yet, there is no single source that citizens or caseworkers can access to determine which services best meet their needs. Even citizens who know the programs for which they are eligible must currently navigate a maze of agency Web sites, call centers, and offices to obtain relevant benefit information. The system is mired in confusing paperwork and procedures that ensure government social service programs are neither efficiently nor effectively delivered to those in need.

Ultimately, GovBenefits will provide potential beneficiaries instant access to information for all government benefit programs and services through a single Web site – www.GovBenefits.gov. The initial site released in April 2002 features an easy-to-use online screening tool to help individuals or caseworkers determine eligibility for a range of government programs. By answering basic questions about items such as income, marital or employment status, and family size, users are guided to a list of benefits they may be eligible to receive. Program descriptions and contact information are provided for each benefit program.

The first release of GovBenefits features more than 50 programs administered by 10 federal agencies. Future releases will expand to eventually include all government benefit programs. The long-term vision for the site is to enable individuals to apply for benefits online through a streamlined application process. Other features under consideration include the ability for site users to create personalized profiles through which they can review the status of applications and claims, and receive important information about benefit program enhancements and changes.

GovBenefits will significantly reduce the amount of time individuals spend trying to identify and access relevant information about government benefit programs that match their specific needs. GovBenefits will improve the ability of government agencies to assess program performance and pinpoint duplicative or redundant services, which will create new opportunities for more efficient resource allocation. GovBenefits will allow local government or faith-based caseworkers to quickly identify and match alternative programs with the circumstances of someone in need.

FAST FACT

Over 80 million people receive government benefits through hundreds of federal domestic assistance programs and federally funded programs managed by state and local governments. Currently, information about these programs is spread across 31 million federal government Web pages.