



# GovBenefits.gov

An E-Gov Success Story

# What is GovBenefits.gov?



- **GovBenefits.gov is...**

- the official benefits website of the US Government...
- providing *all* US citizens...
- free information and eligibility prescreening services for more than 1,000 benefit programs...
- in both English and Spanish...
- as well as loan information through the sister site GovLoans.gov...
- and contact information for applying for the identified benefit and loan programs.



- **Benefit categories include:**

- Awards
- Counseling
- Disaster Relief
- Financial Assistance
- Grants / Scholarships / Fellowships
- Housing
- Loan / Loan Repayment
- Social Security / Pension
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Child Care / Child Support
- Disability Assistance
- Education / Training
- Food / Nutrition
- Health Care / Living Assistance
- Insurance
- Medicaid / Medicare
- Utilities



## Benefit Program Information on the Internet



- Prior to GovBenefits.gov, citizens seeking government assistance must:
  - Know which benefit programs existed
  - Know which agency could provide program eligibility and application information
- Though Government benefit information was available on the web, it was dispersed across more than 30 million Federal and State web pages

## Benefit Programs relevant to the individual



- To identify and obtain assistance through GovBenefits, the citizen **does not** need to:
  - understand the Federal government structure
  - know which benefit programs exist nor which agency hosts which program(s)

- **As of 2007, GovBenefits has...**

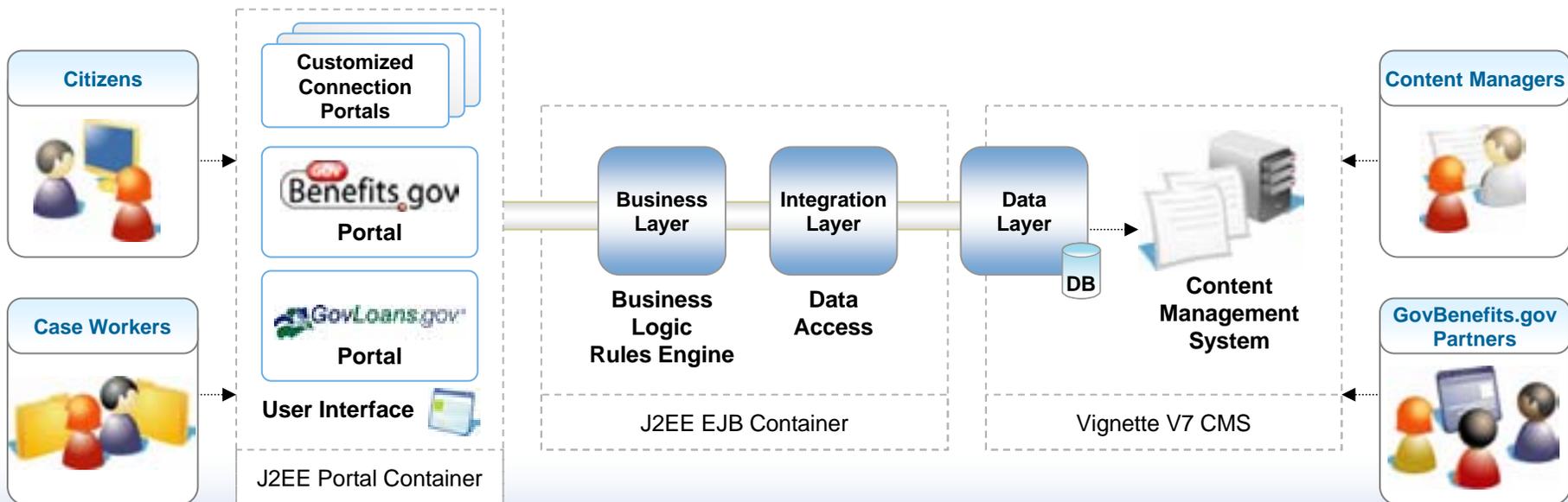
- Received more than 26 million total visits
  - Receives approximately 9,000 visitors per day
  - Receives approximately 250,000 visitors per month
- Referred more than 6.5 million visitors to agency benefit programs



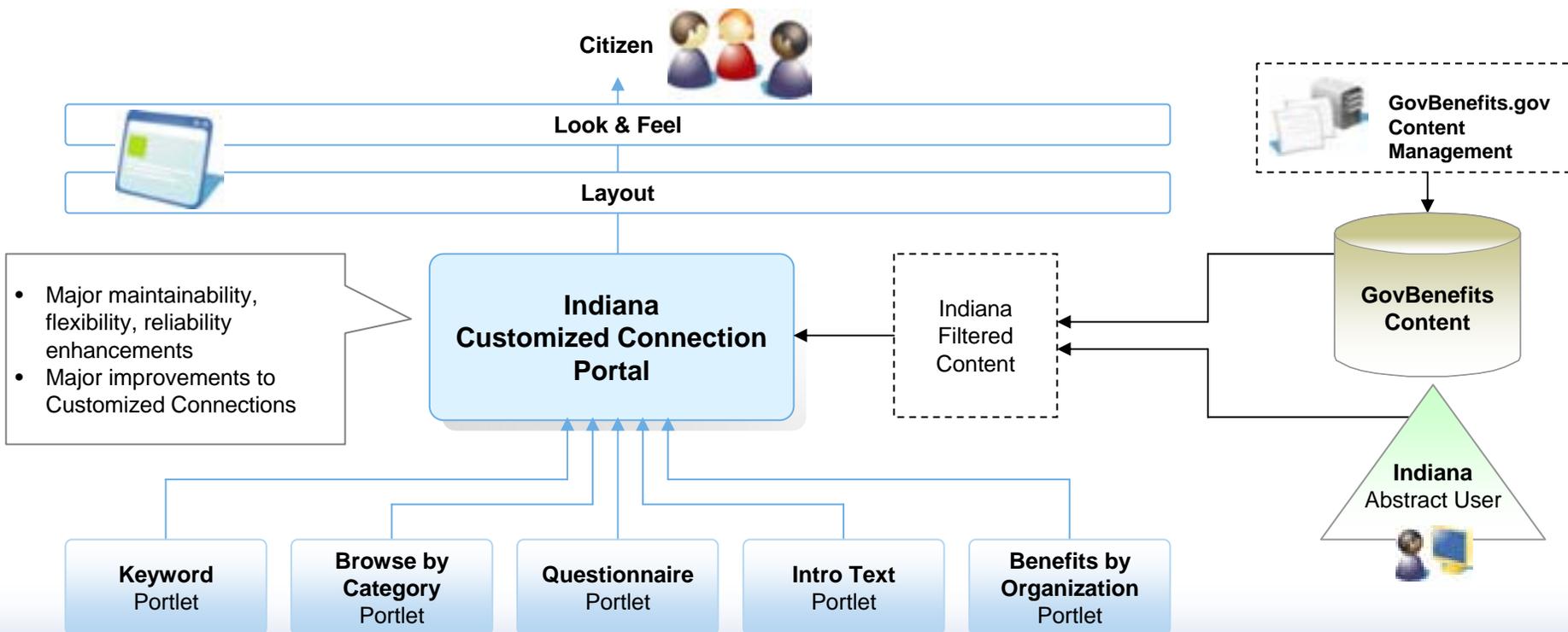
# What is the technology behind GovBenefits.gov?



- GovBenefits is a multi-tiered J2EE Portal application:
  - Uses BEA WebLogic 8.1 SP5 on a Solaris 10 platform, implemented in a horizontally scaled clustered environment.
  - JDBC layer uses the iBatis framework to translate all data-structure to XML objects, which are then utilized by EJB layer to manage and cache transactions for efficiency.
  - Oracle 9i database has Vignette CMS 7.3 managing content so partner agencies can make real time updates.

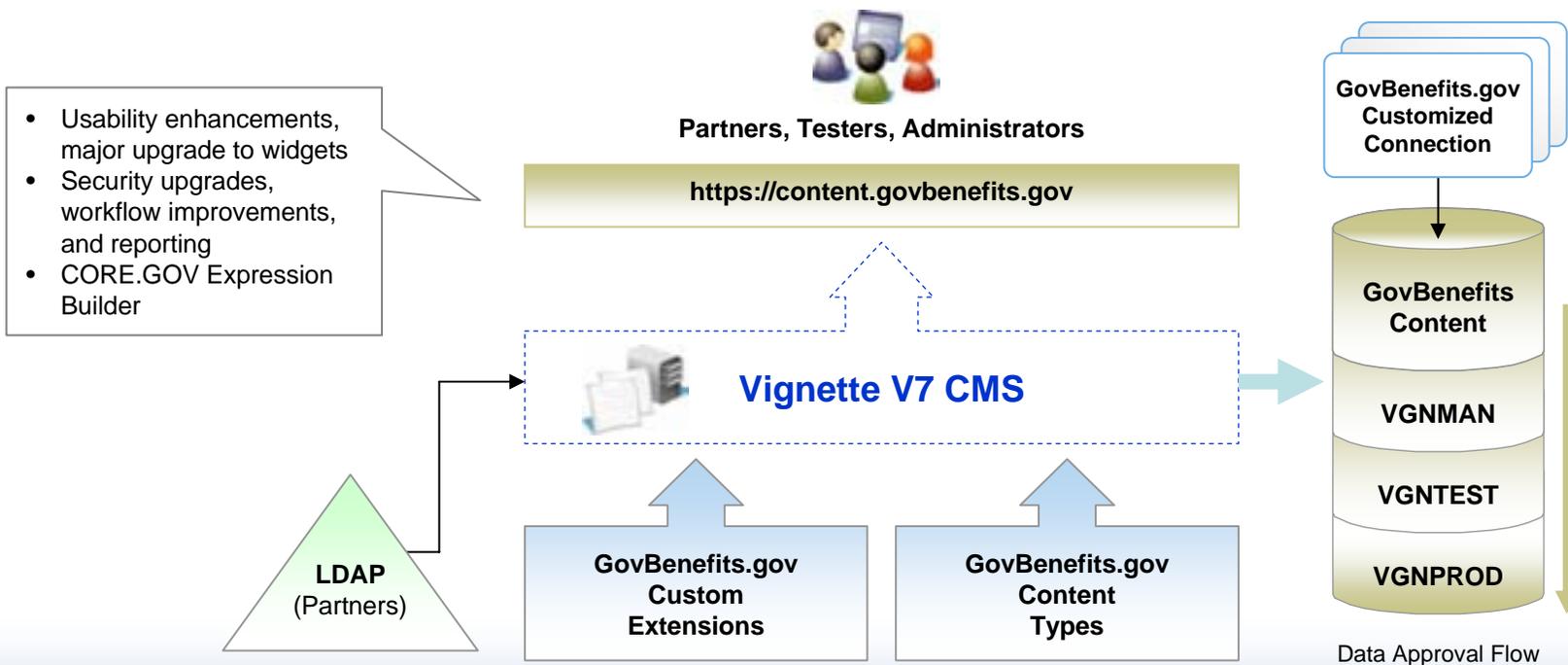


- J2EE Portal architecture (JSR168 compliance):
  - Pushes physical layout of website into XML skins and skeletons sections. Decouples presentation functionality from business logic.
  - Provides user and session management that enhance security and ensure correct scope for requested transactions.



- Vignette CMS architecture:

- Implements custom workflow for content entry, testing, mitigation, and ultimately publishing. Workflow can be tailored per user (i.e., federal partner, state partner, non-partner).
- Security managed through internal LDAP, where users, groups and privileges are assigned and maintained.

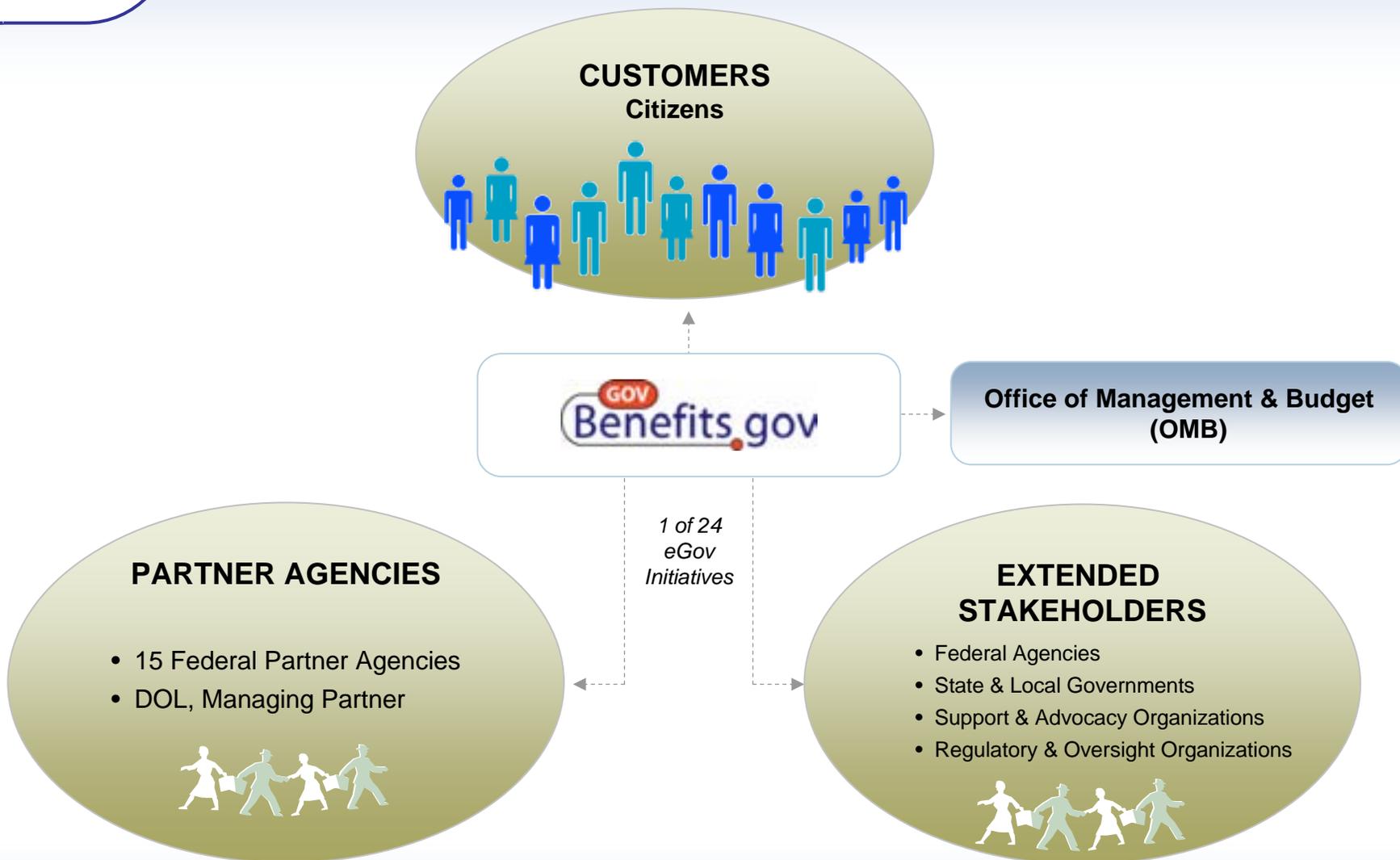


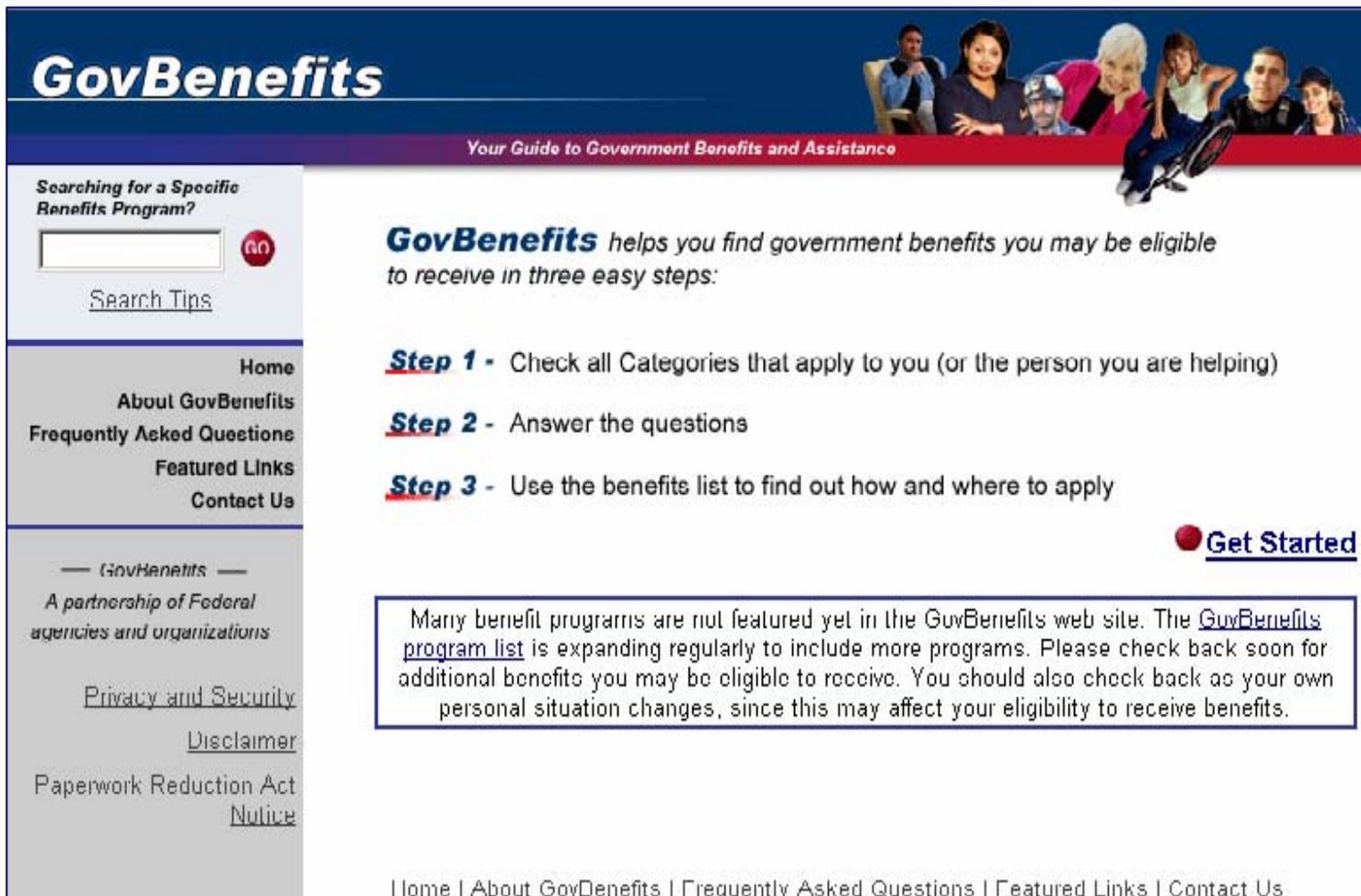


What is the history of  
GovBenefits.gov?

# GovBenefits is a partnership of 16 federal agencies...







The screenshot shows the GovBenefits website interface. At the top, the logo 'GovBenefits' is displayed in large white letters on a dark blue background, with the tagline 'Your Guide to Government Benefits and Assistance' below it. To the right of the logo is a photograph of a diverse group of people. Below the header is a search bar with the text 'Searching for a Specific Benefits Program?' and a red 'GO' button. Underneath the search bar is a link for 'Search Tips'. A navigation menu on the left side includes links for 'Home', 'About GovBenefits', 'Frequently Asked Questions', 'Featured Links', and 'Contact Us'. Below the navigation menu is a section with the GovBenefits logo and the text 'A partnership of Federal agencies and organizations', followed by links for 'Privacy and Security', 'Disclaimer', 'Paperwork Reduction Act', and 'Notice'. The main content area features a heading 'GovBenefits helps you find government benefits you may be eligible to receive in three easy steps:' followed by three numbered steps: 'Step 1 - Check all Categories that apply to you (or the person you are helping)', 'Step 2 - Answer the questions', and 'Step 3 - Use the benefits list to find out how and where to apply'. A red 'Get Started' button is positioned to the right of the steps. A text box at the bottom of the main content area contains a disclaimer: 'Many benefit programs are not featured yet in the GovBenefits web site. The GovBenefits program list is expanding regularly to include more programs. Please check back soon for additional benefits you may be eligible to receive. You should also check back as your own personal situation changes, since this may affect your eligibility to receive benefits.' At the very bottom of the page is a footer with navigation links: 'Home | About GovBenefits | Frequently Asked Questions | Featured Links | Contact Us'.

## GovBenefits

Your Guide to Government Benefits and Assistance

Searching for a Specific Benefits Program?

GO

[Search Tips](#)

Home  
About GovBenefits  
Frequently Asked Questions  
Featured Links  
Contact Us

GovBenefits  
A partnership of Federal agencies and organizations

[Privacy and Security](#)  
[Disclaimer](#)  
Paperwork Reduction Act  
[Notice](#)

**GovBenefits** helps you find government benefits you may be eligible to receive in three easy steps:

- Step 1** - Check all Categories that apply to you (or the person you are helping)
- Step 2** - Answer the questions
- Step 3** - Use the benefits list to find out how and where to apply

[Get Started](#)

Many benefit programs are not featured yet in the GovBenefits web site. The [GovBenefits program list](#) is expanding regularly to include more programs. Please check back soon for additional benefits you may be eligible to receive. You should also check back as your own personal situation changes, since this may affect your eligibility to receive benefits.

[Home](#) | [About GovBenefits](#) | [Frequently Asked Questions](#) | [Featured Links](#) | [Contact Us](#)

**GOV**  
Benefits.gov™  
Your Benefits Connection

Last Updated: 05/22/06

ABOUT ESPAÑOL FAQS PRESS ROOM CONTACT US

**KEYWORD SEARCH**

-- all states --

GO

search tips

**GET RESULTS BY QUESTIONNAIRE**  
Find a complete list of programs you may be eligible to receive. GO

**BROWSE BY CATEGORY**  
Get a list of GovBenefits.gov programs by category. GO

**DO YOU NEED BENEFITS BECAUSE OF A LIFE EVENT?** GO

- select life event -

**MOST POPULAR BENEFITS** GO

- select benefit -

**LOCATE BENEFITS BY STATE** GO  
Get a list of State programs on GovBenefits.gov.

**LOCATE FEDERAL BENEFITS** GO  
Get a list of Federal programs on GovBenefits.gov.

**Latest Information on Veterans Affairs Data Security.** Learn more at <http://www.firstgov.gov/veteransinfo>

**May 18, 2006:**  
**Find Active Duty and Veteran Benefits Using GovBenefits.gov**  
In recognition of Armed Forces Day (May 20) and Memorial Day (May 29), GovBenefits.gov honors all Active Duty and Veterans of the U.S. armed forces... >> [read more](#)

**May 18, 2006:**  
**GovBenefits.gov Highlights National Flood Insurance Program**  
As the saying goes, "April showers bring May flowers," GovBenefits.gov reminds visitors that flooding... >> [read more](#)

**April 20, 2006:**  
**Labor Department to Host Expert Panel on E-Government, Celebrate GovBenefits.gov Fourth Anniversary**

**GovLoans.gov**  
Private Right to Buy Act

**FIRSTGOV.gov**  
The U.S. Government's Official Web Portal

**E.GOV**

The screenshot shows the GovBenefits.gov website. At the top left is the logo with the text "GOV Benefits.gov Your Benefits Connection®". To the right is a search bar with the text "Search Benefits" and a "GO" button. Below the logo is a navigation menu with "Home", "Benefits", "About Us", and "Help". Underneath is a secondary menu with "Community Advocates" and "News".

The main content area features a large banner with a photo of a woman and two children. To the right of the photo is a call to action: "For All U.S. Residents. FREE. You can search over 1,000 benefit programs in GovBenefits! Need to find benefits? Start Here".

Below the banner, there is a welcome message: "Welcome to GovBenefits.gov, your source for locating benefits. Complete our questionnaire to identify benefit programs you may be eligible for and contact information for applying." This is followed by a "Highlights" section with two items: "Featured Benefit: GovBenefits.gov Highlights Medical Education and Research Programs for American Heart Month" and "Latest Event: GovBenefits.gov Honors Black History Month".

On the right side, there is a "Benefits Quick Search" section with a dropdown menu containing the following categories: Awards, Child care/Child support, Counsel/Counseling, Disability assistance, Disaster relief, Education/Training, and Financial assistance. A "Go" button is located below the dropdown.

At the bottom of the page, there are links for "Privacy & Terms of Use" and "Contact Us", and logos for "GovLoans.gov", "USA.gov", and "E-GOV".

- **2002**

- GovBenefits.gov was launched in just *96 working days*...
- ... making it the *first* of 24 E-Gov initiatives to go live

- **2003**

- GovBenefits incorporated all Federal benefit programs and benefit programs from all 50 states

- **2004**

- GovBenefits Governance Board and Change Control Board established
- GovBenefits UI revamped and launched in Spanish
- GovLoans.gov launched using GovBenefits technology, becoming the first “Customized Connection”

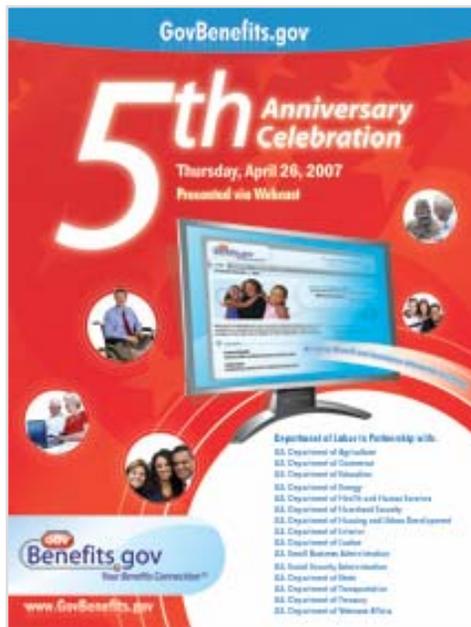
- **2005**

- Fee-for-Service funding model developed and approved
- Vignette Content Management System implemented

- **2006**

- Portal architecture implemented
- Site migrated from GSA to USDA
- ForeSee Results customer satisfaction tool implemented





- **2007**

- Redesigned GovBenefits.gov and GovLoans.gov sites unveiled
- 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrated via webcast
- SSA's BEST (Benefit Eligibility Screening Tool) adopts GovBenefits' Customized Connection technology
- GovBenefits partners with FEMA to create and implement a Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan per Executive Order request



- ✓ Excellence.gov Top 25 finalist ('04, '05, '07)
- ✓ Top 20 Finalist for Intergovernmental Solutions Award ('06)
- ✓ Computerworld Laureate ('06)
- ✓ E-Gov Pioneer Award ('03)
- ✓ FOSE Showcase of Excellence finalist ('03)
- ✓ Secure E-Biz Winner, Citizen Service, Federal CIO Council ('03)
- ✓ Overall Performance Award for Excellence in eGovernment, The Performance Institute ('02)
- ✓ Gracie Award for Excellence in Government, *Government Executive Magazine* ('02)
- ✓ "Hot Site!," *USA Today* ('02)

# How does GovBenefits remain successful?...



## Although GovBenefits serves all US citizens, marketing and outreach efforts focus on:

- Senior Citizens
- Veterans
- Low Income Individuals and Families
- Unemployed Workers
- Farmers
- Students
- Caseworkers serving at-risk populations



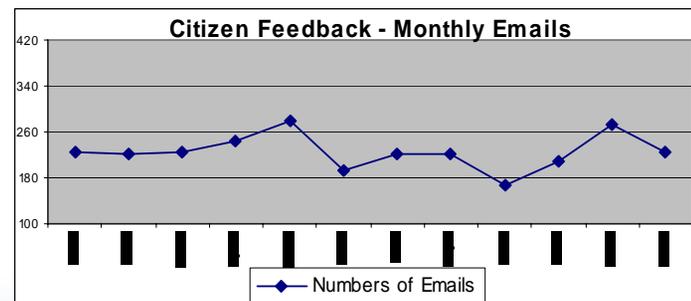
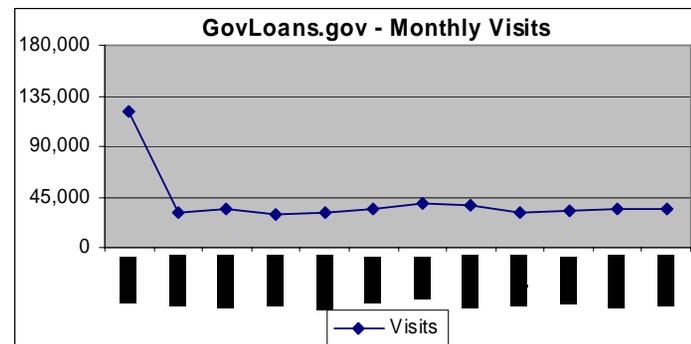
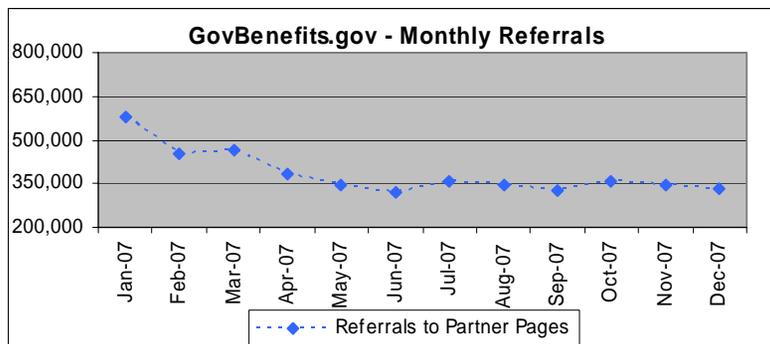
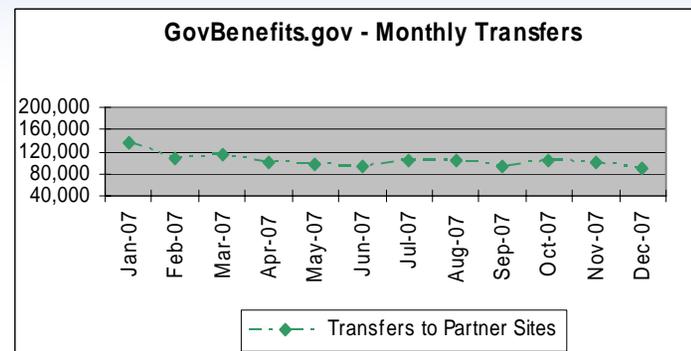
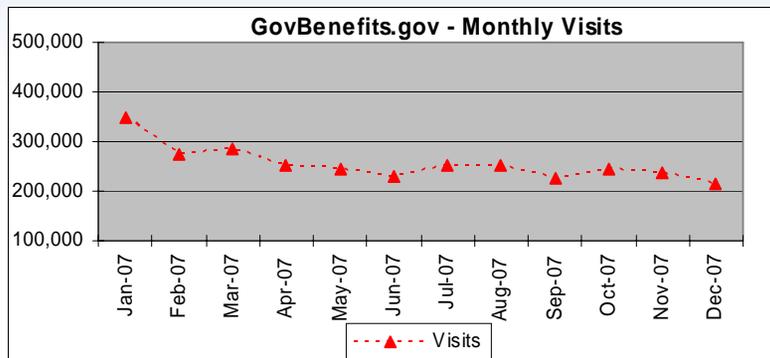
- **Online Marketing**

- Link acquisition – Linking to more than 3,000 sites currently
- Email and Direct mail campaigns – Achieving 130,000 impressions in FY 2007
- Aggressive outreach plan in FY08 will surpass 800,000 impressions
- Email newsletters – To agency partners and interested stakeholders

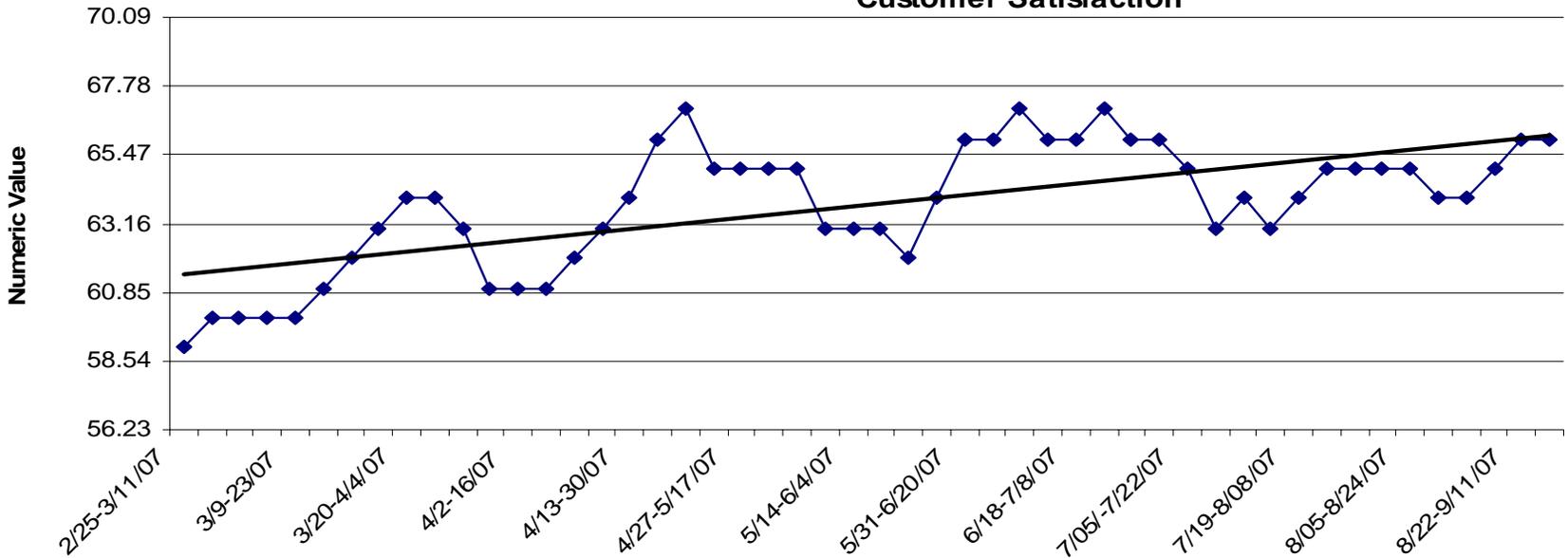
- **Offline Marketing**

- Public relations – Pitching stories to appropriate media outlets
- Media/advertising – Creating high-impact PSAs
- Direct marketing – Distributing more than 150,000 brochures/posters in 2007
- Event marketing – Attending 3-5 events per year, such as Public Service Week and FOSE

## Performance Metrics Charts

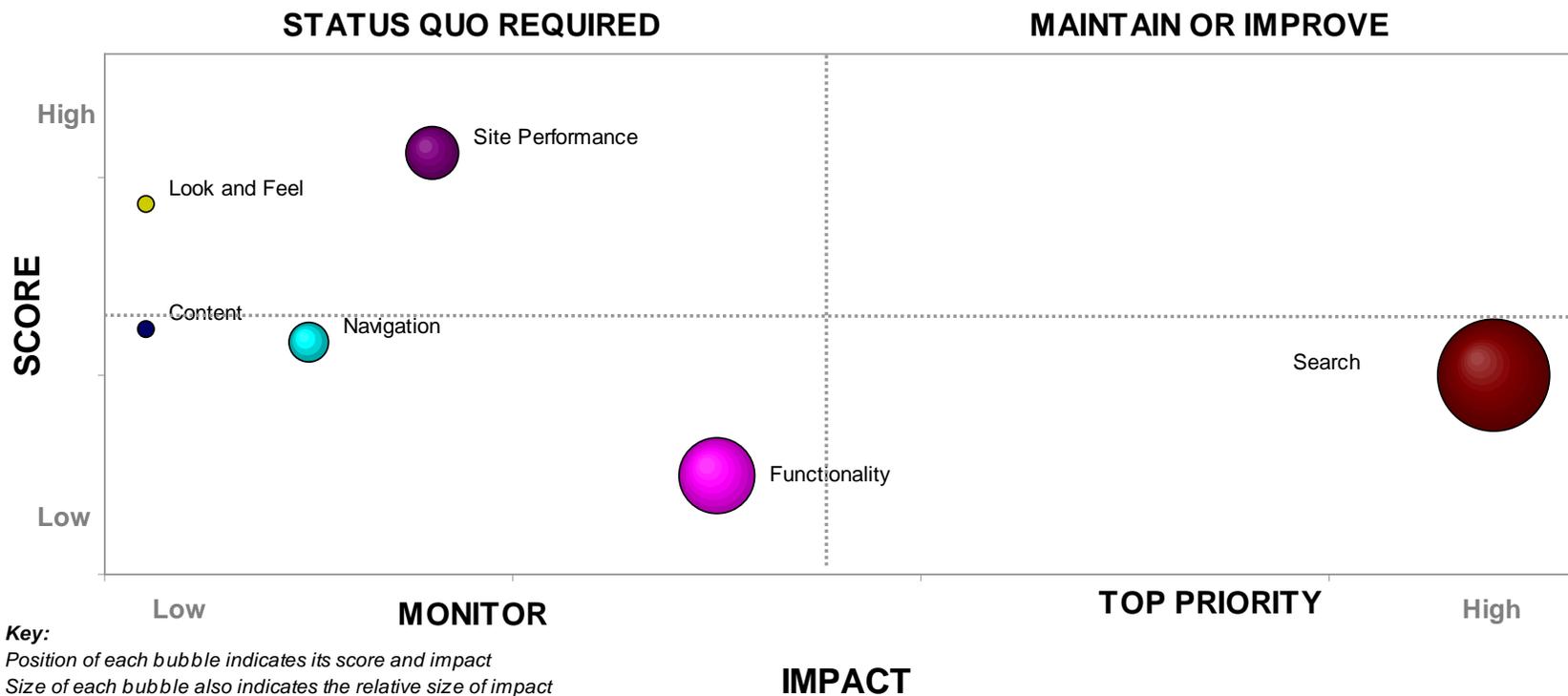


Customer Satisfaction





GovBenefits  
Priority Map  
August 01, 2007 - August 31, 2007



# How can GovBenefits provide increasing value?...



- GovBenefits currently provides value to citizens by...
  - Saving research time (the “citizen minute”) by consolidating information from thousands of web pages into one location
  - Ensuring that citizens are able to locate the benefit programs they are likely eligible for through prescreening
  - Providing contact information for program application
- GovBenefits currently provides value to partner agencies by...
  - Prescreening potential applicants to ensure only “A List” candidates apply for assistance, reducing costs to agencies of addressing applications for unqualified individuals
  - Providing information that precludes Tier 1 phone calls to agency call centers



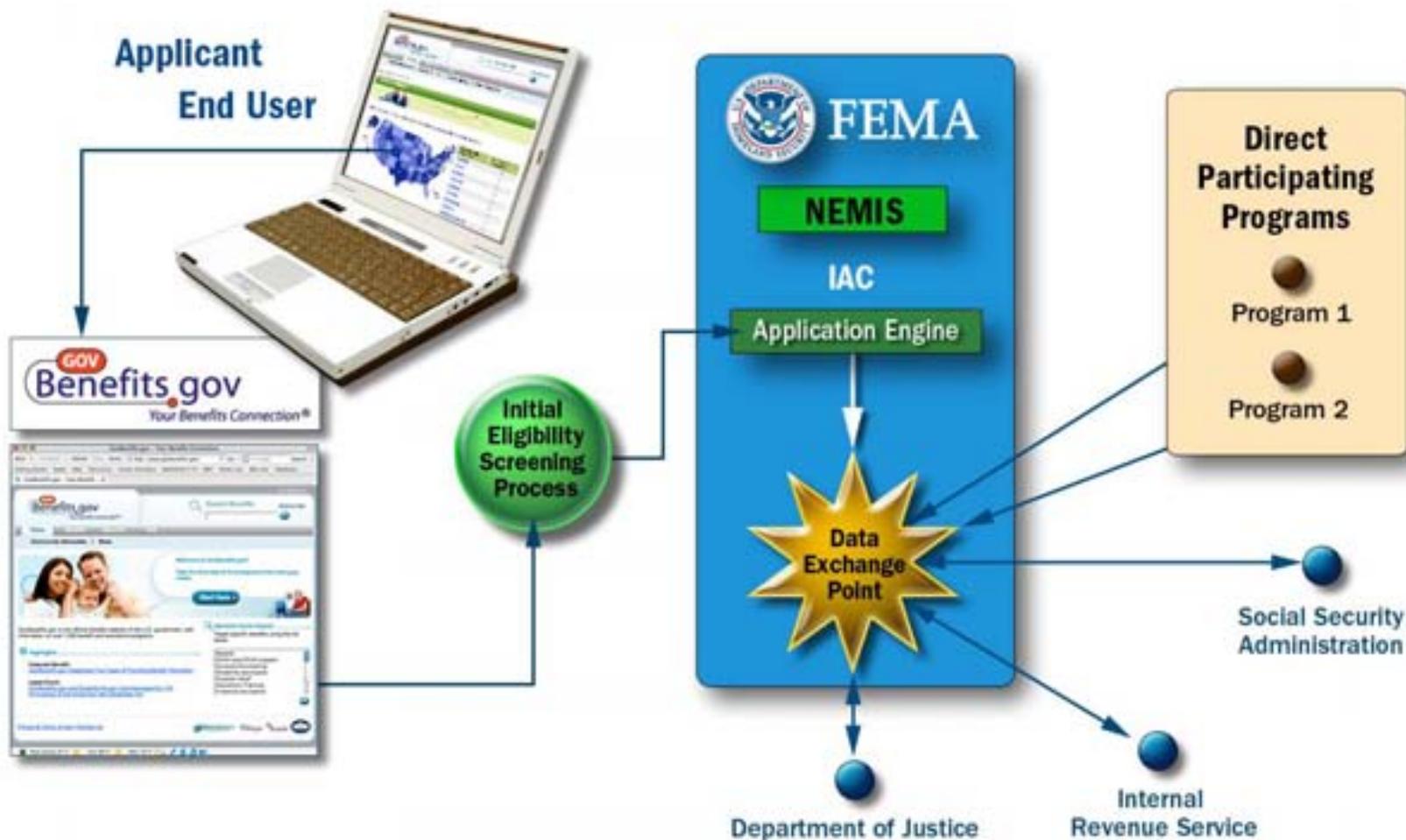
- **Program Awareness** – Learning that relevant benefit programs exist
- **Information Access** – Accessing benefit program information
- **Program Screening** – Identifying appropriate benefit programs
- **Benefit Application** – Applying for benefit programs
- **Benefit Adjudication** – Determining applicant eligibility
- **Benefit Consumption** – Receiving benefits



- GovBenefits currently narrows down available benefit programs to those the citizen is likely eligible for...
- ... and provides contact information for the citizen to apply for the identified programs.
- Citizens want to take the next step – applying online!

- Multiple hurdles exist on the path to taking online applications, including...
  - Internal DOL resistance to taking responsibility for PII
  - Substantial architectural modifications would be required
  - Agreements on data standards must be reached
  - Development and maintenance costs would skyrocket
  - MOUs and IAAs would become increasingly complicated
- *However*, the Disaster Assistance Improvement Plan that GovBenefits is undertaking with FEMA may provide just the proof-of-concept, and opportunity, to further this vision...

# Disaster Assistance Improvement Program



- **GovBenefits ...**

- ... is the official benefits website of the U.S. Government
- ... is for all US citizens
- ... features more than 1,000 benefit and assistance programs
- ... provides detailed program information and eligibility prescreening services
- ... allows searching by questionnaire, keyword, or category
- ... includes loan information via GovLoans.gov
- ... is available in English and Spanish, 24/7/365
- ... is soon-to-be the one-stop disaster assistance website
- ... is a one-stop resource for caseworkers
- ... provides free brochures and posters via request to [GovBenefits@dol.gov](mailto:GovBenefits@dol.gov)

# Questions?



Thank you!

***... and please help spread the word!***