



# FTA Awards Nomination/Entry Form

## Person who led this effort or project

**Name** Virginia Neslein  
**Agency Name** Alabama, Department of Revenue  
**Phone Number** (334) 242-3721  
**Email** virginia.neslein@revenue.alabama.gov

## About your program, idea, or project

**Name your program, idea, or project:** Barcode Tax App Project

### What is the problem that you wanted to solve?

Tax software vendors are required to test their tax form products with the department for form content and barcode approvals. Prior to TY23, this was conducted with a hand-held scanner resulting in delays and approvals not being completed in a timely manner for vendors. The Commissioner's Office was receiving unfavorable feedback from vendors and accounting firms on how long it took to get their forms approved.

### Who was involved in addressing the problem?

Barcode Tax App team members: Andre Hall, Courtney Mixson, Melissa Moncrief, Ameltria Tolliver, Franklin Wiggins,  
Manager - Ethelyn Williams,  
IT Project Manger - Virginia Neslein,  
Information Technology Division, Director, Rita Allen

### How did they go about finding a solution?

With much brainstorming, ITD Director Rita Allen was informed by another agency's IT director about the low-code solution using the Microsoft Power Platform that could develop a new application within a few days. May 2023, ITD contracted HSO, a global award-winning Microsoft partner to develop a low-code solution developed with a SQL database and application in less than two months, now known as the Barcode Tax App.

### Describe the outcome. What is the new idea, approach, program, or activity?

The Barcode Tax App Team received training on the new application which includes new technology "bells and whistles" to provide a history of all transactions, views to check the approval status within seconds, auto-generated error/expected results spreadsheets and outgoing emails, and ability to re-process the form submissions, have greatly improved this annual process.

### What has changed since this was implemented? How have your operations improved? Include any data, analytics or metrics that would show the value of your program. Don't forget management advantages such as improved morale.

During TY23, the team is now able to review the submissions within 30 to 45 minutes versus a day and a half reviewing one test scenario for Form 40 or 40NR. The testing season completed early March which greatly improved morale and pleased all involved.

### Is there any component of your program that makes it workable only in your state or city?

Everybody ought to be doing this.

**Is this an in-house project, or did you partner with an outside vendor or service-provider?**

Our idea, but we used a publicly available software or service for at least part of the implementation

**Additional information or comments about your usage of outside vendors or service providers.**

HSO, a global award-winning Microsoft partner, has been wonderful to work with. Their programming lead, training and on-site assistance has been crucial to developing the low-code solution .

**What comes next – will you be adding to your program, rolling it out more widely, trying additional approaches?**

Yes, we are currently developing (with HSO) a vendor portal called SAVI (State Approvals Vendor Interface). In the near future, vendors will be able to access this site to submit their forms for approval and receive feedback. This will eliminate the need for emails for back and forth communication regarding the form approvals.

**Additional Optional Materials**