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## GRANTS.GOV REACHES 200,000 APPLICATION SUBMISSIONS

On Monday September 22, 2008 Grants.gov received the 200,000th electronic grant application submission for fiscal year 2008, far exceeding a core program milestone in the fourth quarter. During the same period of fiscal year 2007, Grants.gov received 172,058 submissions, which reflects a 16 percent increase. This landmark achievement illustrates the institutionalizing of Grants.gov to find and apply for federal grants and shows the program eliminates the need for grant seekers to adapt with multiple agency systems and requirements. The result is a centralized environment for the grant community to find and apply government-wide for federal grants.

## ADOBE TRANSITION

### What Applicants and Agencies Should Know

The grant community has been very cooperative in all Grants.gov efforts, including our latest undertaking, the transition to the Adobe application system. Applicants and grantors have been taking the necessary steps to ensure the transition is a success. As of September 30, 2008, 21 of the 26 grant-making agencies have completed the transition to Adobe. The remaining five agencies are working with the Grants.gov Program Management Office (PMO) to set a schedule which accommodates these agencies' specific needs for the transition. All agencies are scheduled to be in Adobe by January 31, 2009.

## GRANTS.GOV CONTACT CENTER WORKING HARD TO SERVE YOU BETTER

The Contact Center is the Grants.gov helpdesk for the applicant community. Throughout fiscal year 2008, the Contact Center worked diligently to handle a total of 213,566 customer inquiries, a 1.1 percent increase over fiscal year 2007. The call volume peaked in July with 18,704 calls.

The Contact Center staff is able to provide detailed information about every aspect of Grants.gov, with their strong knowledge base and training based on past customer solutions. For every inquiry, the Contact Center documents the issue and solution for future training and reference. This fiscal year started off with 361 customer solutions built into the knowledge base. Through the continuous interaction with customers this fiscal year, 123 more solutions were added, for a total of 484 solutions available for Customer Support Representatives (CSRs) to assist customers.

As issues arise and system functionality changes, the customer solutions database is updated. The Contact Center modified 196 of these solutions throughout the year based on system enhancements or new business processes. The number one question from customers remains to be finding financial assistance. In fiscal year 2008 the Contact Center's customer satisfaction averaged 93 percent.

## MANAGING PARTNER



*Fulfilling the President's  
Management Agenda*

## CONTACT CENTER IVR SCRIPT UPDATE

### Contact Center Integrated Voice Response (IVR) Change

To assist customers in a more efficient manner the main script (IVR) used for the Contact Center was changed July 28, 2008. The change was made in response to call volume to improve the caller's experience. Three options are now available including, first time caller information such as those people looking for financial assistance, NIH specific inquiries, and other questions including registration and submission. This script separates general informational calls from the operational calls.

## GRANTS.GOV COMMUNITY OUTREACH

There is over 500 billion dollars in federal grants available and how to access these grants can be intimidating for new users. Throughout the year Grants.gov attends and hosts sessions directly relating the find and apply process for federal grants. In fiscal year 2008 Grants.gov held 67 free interactive presentations for the grant and congressional community.

The majority of the "Find and Apply" sessions are held remotely and streamed over the web; however there have been some special invitations to visit the location and be in direct contact with the audience. In both instances the presenter, a member of the Grants.gov Program Management Office (PMO), is available to answer questions, offer guidance and give real-life experience and anecdotes to provide the audience with a true sense of involvement in the Grants.gov process to find and apply for grants.

There have been many notable invitations; including the invitation to present at the Sixth Regional Leaders Issues Conference hosted by Congressman Ruben Hinojosa and presided by Speaker of the House, the Honorable Nancy Pelosi and the grant conference by Vice Presidential candidate senator Joseph Biden of Delaware. To read about these and other

"Find and Apply" presentations visit:

[http://grants.gov/aboutgrants/program\\_highlights.jsp](http://grants.gov/aboutgrants/program_highlights.jsp).

Anyone can request a free "Find and Apply" presentation. They are interactive and tailored for each audience. In addition, Grants.gov also provides free informational brochures upon request on the overall program and the registration process; this year alone Grants.gov distributed over 20,000 brochures. To request a presentation and/or brochures visit: <http://grants.gov/applicants/events.jsp>. Checkout the "Events" page for the pre-recorded version of the "Find and Apply" presentation.

## SPEED AND RELIABILITY UPGRADE

When there are multiple opportunity closings with deadlines on the same day, many applicants rush to submit their applications at the same time, which puts tremendous strain on the system and can cause submission delays. Currently the system can have up to 2,000 concurrent application submissions without transmission strain. After the "Speed and Reliability" upgrade is complete, the system capacity will be greatly improved and the capacity for application submissions will be 10,000 for any given day.

The "Speed and Reliability" upgrade has already begun and is scheduled for completion by the end of October. This upgrade will drastically improve the processing speed of the website and will ensure system stability. During the upgrade Grants.gov will make updates to its existing software and hardware as well as introduce new software and three brand new T-1000 servers. The T-1000 servers are extremely powerful and will fortify the existing system.

Although the upgrade will greatly boost system performance, Grants.gov still urges applicants to register and submit application packages earlier to prevent any and all possible delays.

## MORE SYSTEM ENHANCEMENTS - BUILD 2008-03

System Build 2008-03 will be the third and final build for the calendar year, and will focus mainly on updating the Grants.gov LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol) and making changes to the system to finish the transition to the Adobe system.

LDAP is an application protocol for querying and modifying directory services. The Grants.gov LDAP is similar to a large database and is used to query the system and validate permissions for grantors and applicants. For example, the LDAP is queried every time a grantor or applicant tries to access the system by logging into Grants.gov. Today, the Grants.gov system has a capacity of 360 concurrent users. Once Build 2008-03 is complete the system will have a capacity of 2,000 concurrent users.

LDAP functionality is directly related to system processing time since it is also queried each time an applicant tries to submit an application package. The LDAP must go through each of the listings to return a validation. Now that Grants.gov has over 150,000 registered users the LDAP configuration needs to be reassessed. The new LDAP configuration will

greatly reduce any redundancies in the system and reduce the query result time, which will ultimately equate to a faster system processing time.

### WORKING PAST THE ISSUE – “BROKEN PIPE”

Each Grants.gov error message indicates the cause of the error and provides the opportunity to correct the issue so that the application package can successfully pass Grants.gov’s screening. When submitting an application with Adobe Reader some users are receiving an error message titled; “Intake Servlet Is Unable to Save the Data. Broken Pipe.” If you receive the “Broken Pipe” message, this means there were intermittent interruptions during submission. As a result, the submission confirmation page did not display properly after you submitted your application package. Although you may receive this error message (“Broken Pipe”), your submission may have been properly received by the Grants.gov system. If the “Broken Pipe” error message displays, you will not automatically receive a Grants.gov tracking number for your application package. To ensure that your application package was received properly by Grants.gov you have three options:

**OPTION 1.** Visit the [“Track Your Application”](#) section and login to the Grants.gov system to view your submitted applications. If you do not see your submitted application listed, follow the instructions in Option 2 below.

**OPTION 2.** Open an Internet browser window (ex: Internet Explorer) and resubmit your application package as normal (detailed instructions below). If you still do not receive the confirmation page after you resubmit your application package, contact the Grants.gov Contact Center (see Option 3 below).

Instructions to resubmit by opening a new Internet browser window (Internet Explorer)

1. Open the Internet Explorer browser on your computer
2. Go to the File menu and choose “Open”  
\*The “Open” dialog box will appear

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Receive updated information about critical issues, new tips for users and other time sensitive updates as information becomes available. [Click here to sign-up!](#)

3. In the “Open” dialog box click on the browse button  
\*Another dialog box will appear with access to your files
4. In the dialog box go to the drop down menu for “File Types” and select “All Files”
5. Through the dialog box, find the location of your saved application package on your computer
6. Once you have located your application package, select it with your mouse and click the “Open” button  
\*The dialog box will disappear and the “Open” dialog box will still be present
7. In the “Open” dialog box, click on the “Ok” button  
\*Your application package will now appear
8. Within your application package, to resubmit, click on the “Submit & Save” button

**OPTION 3.** Call or email the Grants.gov Contact Center at 1-800-518-4726 or [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) to verify that your submission was received by the Grants.gov system and to receive a tracking number for your application package.

For more information and help troubleshooting errors, see [Adobe Reader Error Messages](#) or view the FAQ: [How will I know if my application is rejected by the Grants.gov system?](#)

### FROM BULK EMAIL TO RSS

Grants.gov recently introduced an RSS feed for new and modified grant opportunities. RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication. It's an easy way to keep up with news and information that's important to you, and helps you avoid browsing or searching for information on grant opportunities. Now the content you want can be delivered directly to you without filling your inbox with email messages. Visit the RSS feed page <http://grants.gov/help/rss.jsp> to subscribe and learn more about using RSS feeds on new grant opportunity listings and modifications.

Now is the best time to subscribe to the RSS feed as the “Notices Based on Advanced Criteria”, and “Notices Based on Funding Opportunity Number” email services are set to terminate on January 31, 2009. At the moment, the Grants.gov email service sends nearly 700,000 emails daily. The processing load on Grants.gov is tremendous and this resource could be better used to process applications. The bulk email service is also time consuming, it normally takes twelve hours to complete, and takes away from the transmission of other emails sent out

by the Grants.gov system. Moving to the RSS feed will allow you to get grant opportunity notices faster and receive them the way you prefer.

Use the following link:

<http://www07.grants.gov/search/unsubscribe.do> to unsubscribe from Grant Notices email notifications today. If you receive an error message when you attempt to unsubscribe please send an email to [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov). To remove one or more subscriptions please include the email(s) in the message. In the subject line please include “Unsubscribe.”

### THE NEW GRANTS.GOV BLOG

<http://grants-gov.blogspot.com/>

In August, Grants.gov introduced the Grants.gov blog to keep you posted with updates on everything grants; from system functionality, meeting announcements, new grant opportunities and media responses, to new forms, the blog covers it all.

The blog offers first hand information from the dedicated staff of Grants.gov, so you can be sure the information is completely reliable and straight from the source. The blog is updated regularly and includes information for every member of the grant community, Applicants and Grantors alike. Visit: <http://grants-gov.blogspot.com/> to read what is on the Grants.gov blog.

### WEBSITE UPDATE ON ELIGIBILITY

<http://grants.gov/aboutgrants/eligibility.jsp>

The number one reason people visit Grants.gov or call the Contact Center is to find funding. Unfortunately many of the website visitors and callers have been misled by phony ads claiming that Grants.gov offers free money to start a business or go back to school. Don't be duped by imposters selling free information about government funding, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. In an effort to combat the spread of the “free money rumor”, the homepage and other pages of the website have been updated with copy to reflect the type of funding available on Grants.gov and dispel the myths.

To ensure that the message is clear to all visitors, the website “Eligibility” page was updated with the following text: “We have all seen them; late night infomercials, websites, and reference guides, advertising “millions in free money” Don't believe the hype! Although there are many grants on Grants.gov, few of them are available to individuals and none

### GET CONNECTED

**Sign up to receive the Succeed e-Newsletter.** If you are receiving the Grants.gov Succeed e-Newsletter from a colleague or at a meeting, sign up to receive it by email – directly to your inbox. **Subscribe Today!**

<http://www.grants.gov/help/subscribe.jsp>

of them are available for personal financial assistance. To find an alphabetical listing of federal personal assistance visit USA.gov website's [Government Benefits, Grants, and Financial Aid page.](#)”

Grants.gov wants to make certain that people understand the purpose of federal grants and that money awarded through Grants.gov is generally to serve the greater good and not meant as personal financial help. To find out if you are eligible for federal grants – just visit the “Eligibility” page at: <http://grants.gov/aboutgrants/eligibility.jsp>.

### APPLICANT TROUBLESHOOTING PAGE

If you run into technical difficulties, help is now available 24 hours a day with the new applicant “Troubleshooting” page: [http://grants.gov/help/trouble\\_tips.jsp](http://grants.gov/help/trouble_tips.jsp). On this page you will find information on common troubleshooting issues, such as verifying your Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) status, login for E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC) and accessing search results. These troubleshooting tips can help you quickly resolve your technical issues.

As with any of the Grants.gov web pages, your comments and feedback on the content are encouraged.

If you are experiencing a technical issue that continues to occur please contact the Grants.gov [Contact Center](#) at 1-800-518-4726.

### GRANTS.GOV AND CLOUD COMPUTING

Grants.gov is planning for future flexibility and capability through a cloud computing environment. An official Request for Information (RFI) was made available on September 2, 2008 to vendors interested and capable of accomplishing such a large undertaking. Moving to a cloud environment would allow Grants.gov to focus on its core goal, to help applicants find and apply for grants. The goal of the cloud computing environment is to provide a more reliable, scalable, and secure system that will deliver a compelling user experience.

## SHARE YOUR SUCCESS STORY WITH GRANTS.GOV

If you have received a grant award by applying through Grants.gov, we want to hear from you! A story about you, your program or event will be featured on our new "All About Grants" page as well as in this newsletter. We hope that your story will motivate and inspire others and show the importance of continued federal support for similar programming. We are requesting that you send information about your programs and events, past or present, along with photographs, testimonials and a narrative about the event or program. [Submit your Success Story idea today!](#)

## GPC STAKEHOLDER WEBCAST & MEETING

Tuesday, October 28, 2008

2:00 – 3:30 p.m.

### Agenda:

- Welcome
- GPC Update
- Draft Implementation Plan Presentation
- Transparency Act Sub award Pilot Update
- Participants' Discussion, Questions, and Comments
- Close

*The Grants Policy Committee (GPC) continues to lead federal grant management and administration streamlining activities. The GPC encourages non-federal organizations' staff and members to attend the meeting in person or via Webcast. Presenters will be available for a question and answer period after the presentations. For more information about the GPC or the Webcast, please visit the [Webcasts and Outreach](#) page of [www.GPC.gov](http://www.GPC.gov) or email questions to [gpcwebcast@nsf.gov](mailto:gpcwebcast@nsf.gov).*

## STAKEHOLDER WEBCAST

The next Grants.gov Stakeholder Webcast will be held October 15, 2008 from 1 – 2 p.m. ET, to discuss the transition to the Adobe Reader System and other issues affecting the grant community. Details for logging on to the Webcast are available on the [Stakeholder Webcast](#) page.

## UPCOMING EVENT SCHEDULE

Here is a listing of Grants.gov, Grantor and other related events:

### [Grants.gov Stakeholder Webcast](#)

October 15, 2008

### AAGP is "Celebrating 10 Years of Advancing the Grant Profession"

American Association of Grant Professionals

10th Annual National Conference

October 22-25, 2008

Long Beach, CA

### "Funding Resources Face to Face"

A Grant Workshop for Nonprofit Organizations

October 22-23, 2008

Detroit, MI

### Funding Resources Face to Face Grant Workshop

October 24, 2008

8:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.

Grants.gov webinar begins at 12:45 - 1:45 P.M. ET

Visit the [Events](#) page for more information and listings.