Office of Federal Financial Management Office of Management and Budget

Attachment to Circular A-136: A User Guide for Financial Management Reporting via MAX Federal Community

Starting in the 3rd Quarter, Fiscal Year 2008, financial management reporting will no longer be submitted to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) through the Statements Inbox (via <u>statements@omb.eop.gov</u>). The agency submission process will be enhanced by using the MAX Federal Community's *Financial Management Community* page. The MAX Federal Community is a "Wiki" tool created and maintained by OMB. Like Wikipedia, this tool is an interactive, real-time website dedicated to sharing information and ideas across various audiences. The financial reporting submissions will be between the agencies and OMB; however, interaction can occur between agencies or within a specific agency using the MAX Federal Community.

The MAX Federal Community was originally created with "Wiki" software as a collaborative environment for the Budget community. It soon became apparent that other communities, such as the Financial Management Community, could benefit from the same information sharing tools.

This User Guide will help agency financial managers understand the new financial reporting submission process and the benefits of the MAX Federal Community website.

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I. How to Get Started in the MAX Federal Community

The MAX Federal Community is a government-only "Wiki" tool used to share information in a real-time, web-based environment. "MAX" refers to OMB-wide databases and the "Wiki" concept allows any user of the community to edit or share information (the website Wikipedia is a popular example of this). The MAX Federal Community website itself is a series of "spaces," or pages through which various communities can collaborate. These communities can be agency only, government-wide (e.g. financial management) or cross-cutting (e.g. guidance documents). Any single user can be involved in more than one community. Please note that while most pages are open to the entire community, some pages may have restricted access if they carry sensitive information. The following steps explain how to get started.

a. Getting a user ID

User IDs are open to any Federal government employee (or contractor supporting a government organization) wishing to use the MAX Federal Community. Please note that access is currently only granted to Executive branch agencies.

To acquire an ID follow these steps:

- 1. Go to the MAX Registration Form.
- 2. Fill out all required information. Access to the MAX Federal Community is granted automatically.
- 3. Submit the form. If your email is from a recognized domain, you will automatically be granted access.
- 4. When access is granted, you will receive an email to set your password. NOTE: The password must be 8 characters and contain at least one <u>upper-case</u> character, one <u>lower-case</u> character, one <u>numeric</u> character and one <u>special</u> character.

b. Basics of navigating the Community

Bread Crumbs

At the top of every page is a sequence of words that starts with the word "Dashboard", followed by the name of the *Space* you are in, followed by the hierarchy of pages that lead to the page you are currently on. (These are called *bread crumbs* because they enable you to trace back to the starting point).

How to upload a document

- 1. Go to the page you wish to add an attachment.
- 2. Click on the "Add" drop-down menu located on the top right of the screen.
- 3. Browse to find the file to be attached and add a comment.
- 4. Hit the Attach File(s) button when you are ready.

How to watch a page

- 1. To watch a page, click the icon in the upper-right corner of the page.
- 2. To stop watching a page, click the icon in the upper-right corner of the page.
- 3. When a page is being watched, you will be notified via E-Mail of changes made to that page.

How to comment on a page

- 1. Go to the page you wish to comment about.
- 2. Click on the Add Comment link located at the bottom of the page.
- 3. Select the Rich Text tab (which is the default).
- 4. Hit the Post button when you are done typing.

 If you are responding to a previous comment, then use the "Reply To This" button on that comment. This will create what is known as a "Comment Thread"

Email Links

- 1. When sending a link to a Community page, it is recommended that you use the email link that is displayed at the upper right of every page like so: **EMAIL LINK**: https://max.omb.gov/community/x/NwBnAQ. Do not use the "address URL" that shows at the top of the browser window as this address will change whenever the page name is changed or the page is moved thus breaking the link. Using the "Email Link" provides a stable link to the page.
- 2. Go to the page where you want to copy the link.
- 3. Highlight the "Email Link" at the upper right of the page.
- 4. Copy the "Email Link" link from this section into your e-mail.

Setting Preferences

- 1. At the top right of the screen, under the search box, put your mouse over your name.
- 2. Choose preferences from the drop-down menu to edit profile information such as a preferred community and time zone, email preferences for updates and actions, and see unsaved drafts of previously edited documents.

c. How to get more help

Help is available to the top right of the screen labeled <u>OHELPFUL TIPS</u>. The pages within this link provide additional help from how to use the Community to editing to signing up for OMB offered training sessions.

Help is also available from OMB Systems staff at (202) 395-6860 or MAXgeneral@omb.eop.gov between 8:30 AM – 6:00 PM EST.

II. MAX Financial Management Community for Financial Reporting

The spring 2008 update to OMB Circular A-136 requires the agencies to use the MAX Federal Community for all financial reporting submissions to OMB. This includes:

- Year-end financial reporting (i.e. Performance and Accountability Reports (PARs) or Agency Financial Reports (AFRs)
- Citizens' reports
- Management Representation Letters
- Interim statements and fluctuation analyses
- Statement of Budgetary Resources (SBR) analyses

While navigating the Financial Management Community it is useful to note that other program areas of the Office of Federal Financial Management (OFFM) use the site for collaborations. Some areas include grants management, charge cards and improper payments.

a. Benefits of using the Community for collaboration

The Federal Financial Management Community page streamlines the current financial reporting process. While there are several benefits to using the Community, time savings is key. The previous process required the agencies to email OMB their reporting packages, and then once OMB received the packages (whether it was year-end reporting, quarterly reporting or management representation letters) the agency waited for a confirmation of receipt.

The New Feature	Thus Eliminates
 Submit financial reports and receiving visual confirmation in real-time. 	 Time spent waiting for OMB confirmation of receipt.
• Uses Direct Editing, the function which allows multiple reviewers to either simultaneously edit or "check out" a document (which locks the file and prevents only one user's edits at a time).	Work flow confusion
Allows financial managers at each level to directly access information.	Time spent waiting for guidance or other information to circulate from the Department-level CFO office.
 Acts as a forum for interagency working groups to share best practices, a public calendar, media, performance measures, etc. 	Difficulties in reaching counterparts at the various agencies.

b. Advantages of changing the current reporting process

In addition to the benefits of using the Federal Financial Management Community for collaborative purposes, there are technical reasons to changing the reporting process from email to a "Wiki" tool. There have been reported issues with file size limitations; as well, there is the need to make these records permanent. The new process addresses these issues, and as financial reporting improves and changes, the Community can also grow and evolve.

Prior to using the Federal Community	With using the Federal Community
The Statements Inbox (statements@omb.eop.gov) has a limited attachment size which makes it difficult to send large files.	 The Community page has a maximum file size limit of 100 MB. For reference, the largest FY 2007 PAR was 30.2MB.
• Unable to use Direct Editing, the function which allows multiple reviewers to either simultaneously edit or "check out" a document (which locks the file and prevents only one user's edits at a time).	There will be better version control management.

c. File Naming Convention

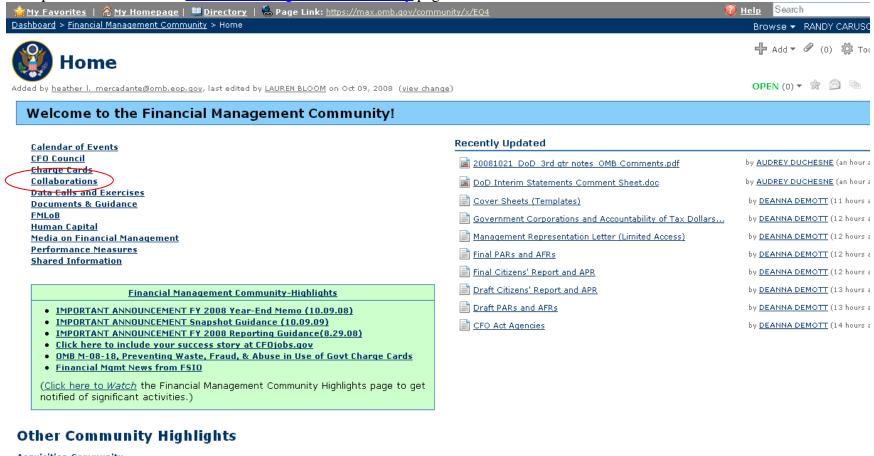
In the Community there are two types of pages, limited access and public access. On a limited access page, only specific users can see these pages. In the A-136 Collaboration page, this is done by limiting agency users to its individual pages for draft documents. On these pages the file naming convention is not imperative, as only the agency users and OMB users will see these documents.

Final Document pages are more sensitive. To serve as a quick reference tool, all MAX Community users will be able to view to these "unrestricted access" pages. In order to view the documents alphabetically, the following naming convention is suggested: Agency Name_Report Name_Fiscal Year (e.g. NASA_AFR_FY08). Attachments not labeled with the full agency name will not show in alphabetical order.

III. Instructions for submitting financial reports

a. CFO Act Agencies (Those 24 agencies on the CFO Council as listed in the CFO Act of 1990)

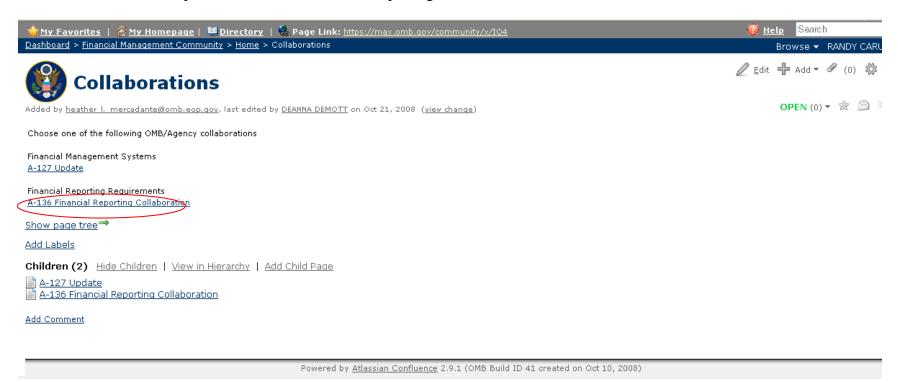
1. Open the MAX Federal Financial Management Community page. Click "Collaborations."



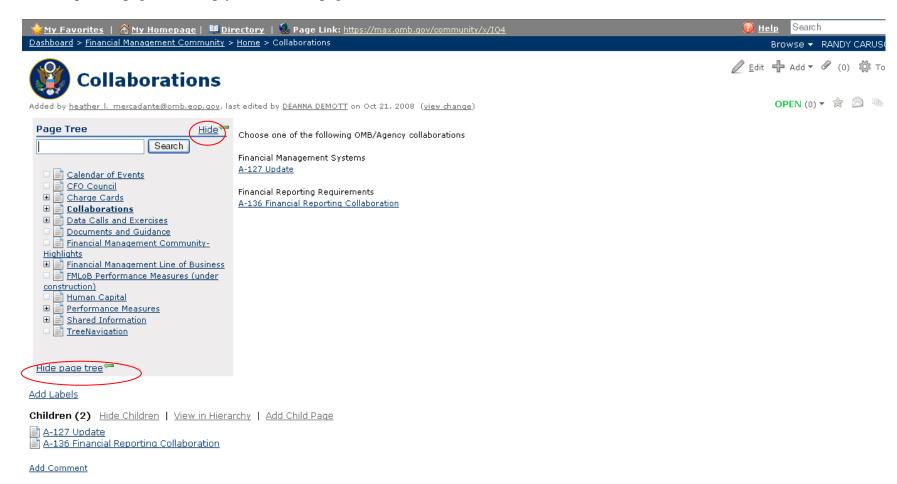
Acquisition Community

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2. To submit financial reports click "A-136 Financial Reporting Collaboration."



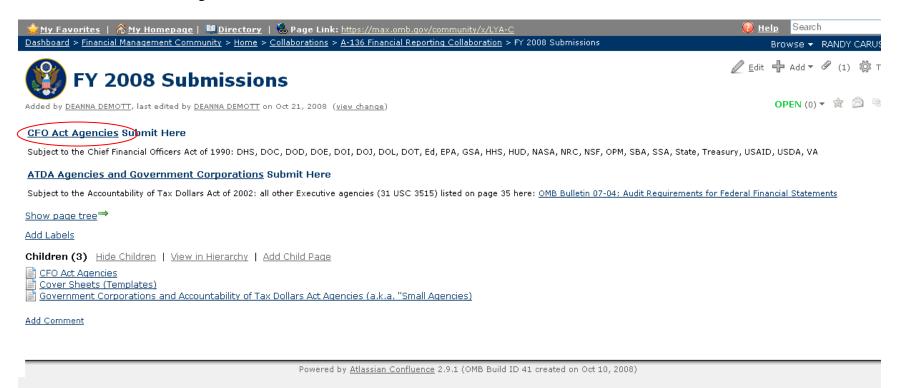
Note: Depending on your settings, your page may by default show the "Page Tree" as a sidebar on the left, as in the image below. To collapse the page tree, simply select "Hide page tree."



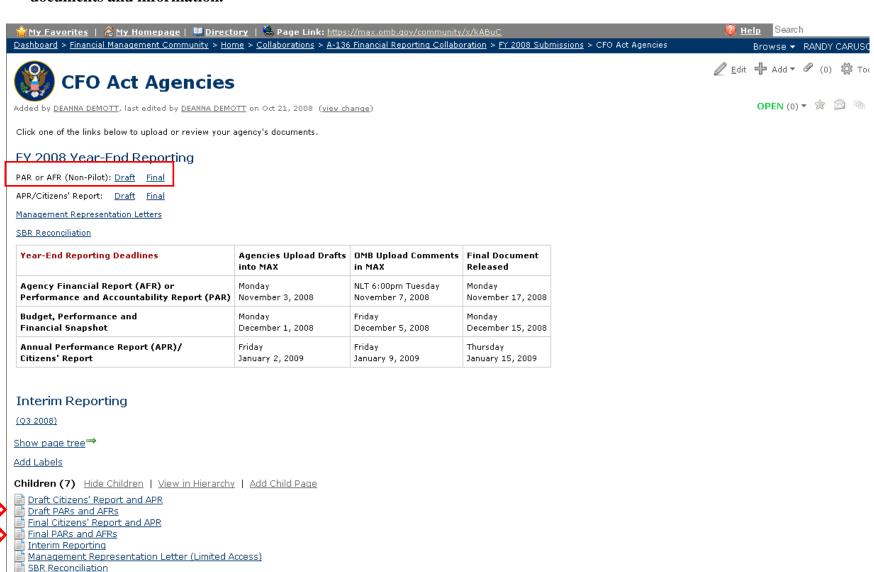
3. Click the current fiscal year for which the agency is reporting.



4. Choose the "CFO Act Agencies" link.

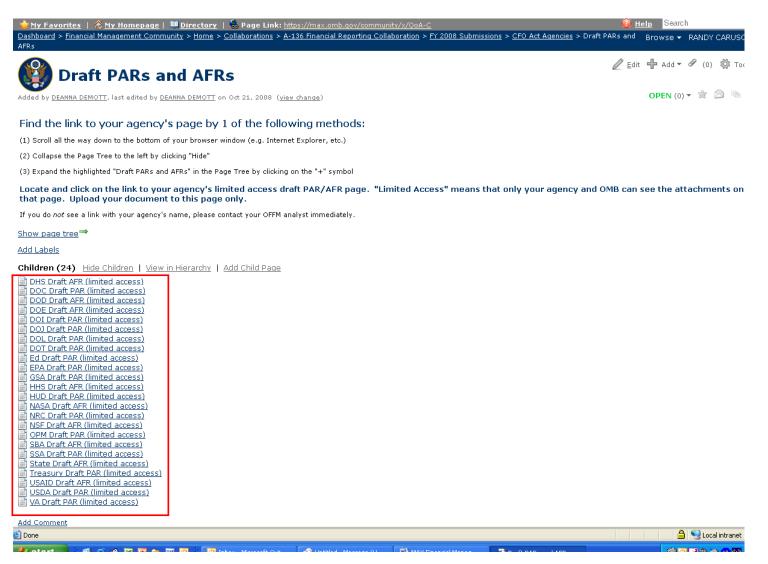


5. Click the type of report to submit, for example Draft PARs/AFRs. Note: There are "limited access" pages that generally include either sensitive information or agency draft versions of documents. Only the agency will have access to its own documents and information.



Add Comment

6. Select your agency from the list, and proceed to the next step...
[Note: Because the following example was done on an account with OMB-Access, it will display all agencies' pages.]



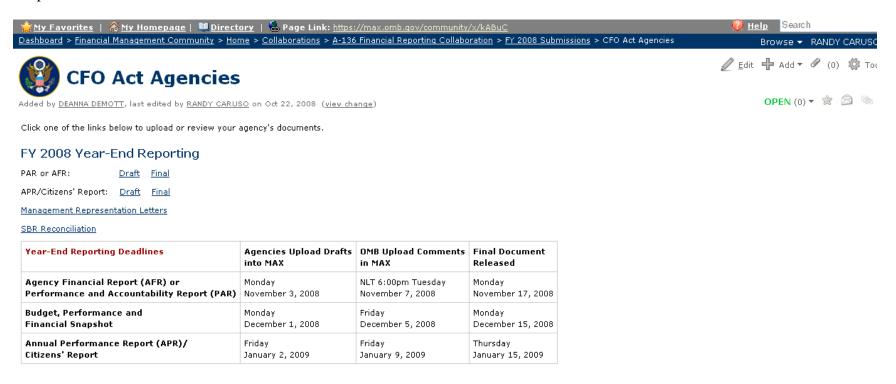
7. Once this link is clicked, notice the restrictions set on this page by hovering the mouse over the orange "restrictions" link.



8. Place your mouse over the Add button and select Attachment from the drop down menu. Follow the on screen dialog to "Browse..." for and "Attach..." your document.



9. Revisit the CFO Act Agencies page to submit any other reports. For example, **Interim Reporting** generally follows the same path.



Interim Reporting

(Q3 2008)

Show page tree →

Add Labels

Children (7) Hide Children | View in Hierarchy | Add Child Page

📄 Draft Citizens' Report and APR

Draft PARs and AFRs

Final Citizens' Report and APR

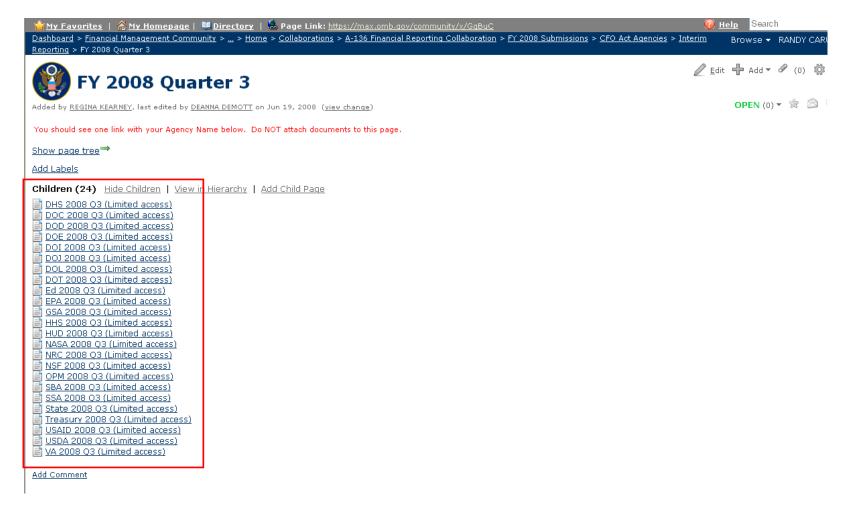
Final PARS and AFRS

Interim Reporting

9. Click on the appropriate fiscal year and quarter.



10. Again, because this is a "limited access" area, an agency can only see its own link. Please select your agency and continue... [Note: Because the following example was done on an account with OMB-Access, it will display all agencies' pages.]



11. Place your mouse over the Add button and select Attachment from the drop down menu. Follow the on screen dialog to "Browse..." for and "Attach..." your document.



12. To submit Statement of Budgetary Resources data click the **SBR Reconciliation** link. The agency link should appear.



Interim Reporting

(Q3 2008)

Show page tree →

Add Labels

Children (7) Hide Children | View in Hierarchy | Add Child Page

Draft Citizens' Report and APR

Draft PARs and AFRs

Final Citizens' Report and APR

Final PARs and AFRs

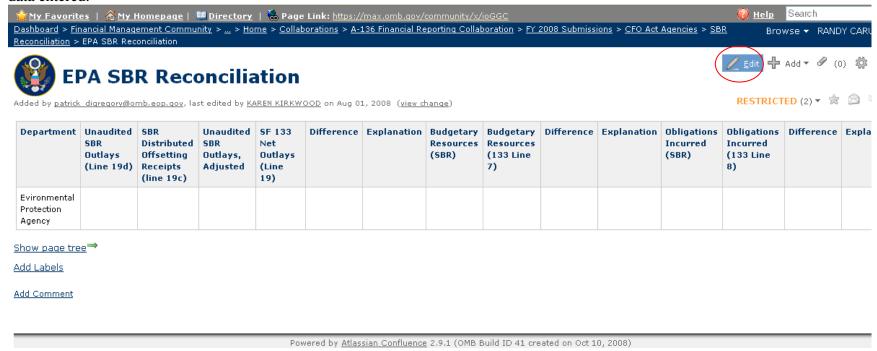
Interim Reporting

Management Representation Letter (Limited Access)

SBR Reconciliation

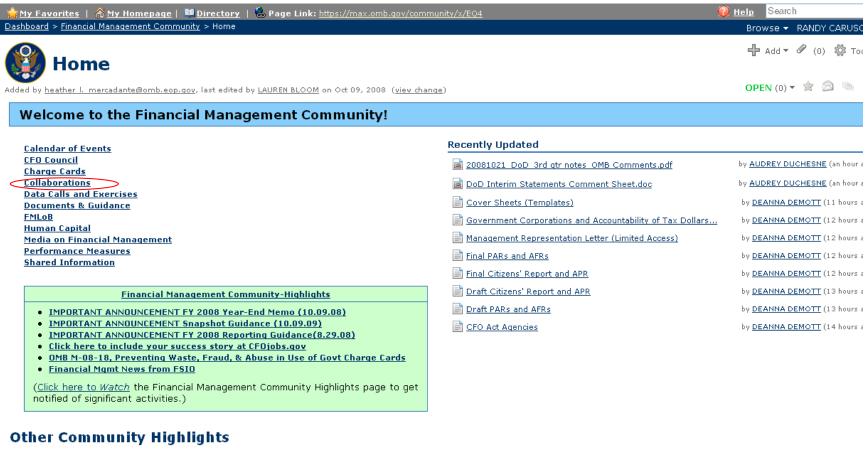
Add Comment

14. After the agency link is clicked, a blank table should appear. Select the "Edit" tab and input your data. Remember to save any data entered.



b. Government Corporations and ATDA Agencies (The Accountability for Tax Dollars Act of 2002 stated other agencies not listed in the CFO Act of 1990 or Government Corporations Control Act will comply with the same requirements for financial reporting.)

1. Open the MAX Federal Financial Management Community page. Click "Collaborations."



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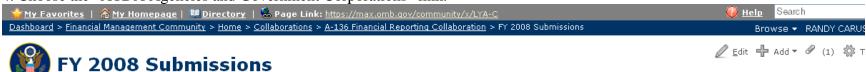
2. To submit financial reports click "A-136 Financial Reporting Collaboration."



3. Click the current fiscal year for which the agency is reporting.



4. Choose the "ATDA Agencies and Government Corporations" link.



Added by DEANNA DEMOTT, last edited by DEANNA DEMOTT on Oct 21, 2008 (view change)



CFO Act Agencies Submit Here

Subject to the Chief Financial Officers Act of 1990: DHS, DOC, DOD, DOE, DOI, DOJ, DOL, DOT, Ed, EPA, GSA, HHS, HUD, NASA, NRC, NSF, OPM, SBA, SSA, State, Treasury, USAID, USDA, VA

ATDA Agencies and Government Corporations Submit Here

Subject to the Accountability of Tax Dollars Act of 2002: all other Executive agencies (31 USC 3515) listed on page 35 here: OMB Bulletin 07-04: Audit Requirements for Federal Financial Statements

Show page tree→

Add Labels

Children (3) Hide Children | View in Hierarchy | Add Child Page

CFO Act Agencies

Cover Sheets (Templates)

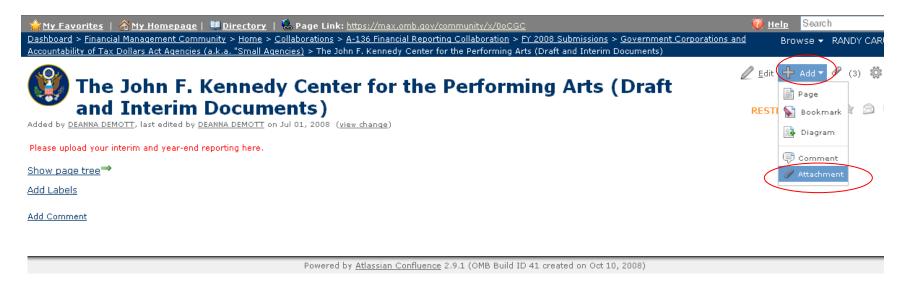
Government Corporations and Accountability of Tax Dollars Act Agencies (a.k.a. "Small Agencies)

Add Comment

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- 5. Once the page loads, read the on screen instructions and select your agency to proceed....

 [Note: The agency pages are restricted. Each agency should only see its own page AND a public PAR/AFR page.]
- 6. ATDA Agencies will upload all **draft financial reporting** documents on the "Attachments" tab of the **page with your agency's name**. This includes the interim and year-end reporting.



6. Once the "Attachment" page loads, Click the "Browse" button to search for the appropriate file, then hit the "Attach File" button to upload.

8. Note: All **Final PARs/AFRs** will be uploaded to the "*Final Year-end Documents for All ATDA Agencies and Gov't Corps" page because they are publicly available.



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