NIH eRA eXchange Partnership Program
Service Provider Questionnaire

Solution Name: **Grants.gov**

Company Name: **Federal Government (one of the President's Management Agenda (PMA) E-Gov initiatives)**

1. What is the name of the solution you developed to help grantees submit electronic applications to the NIH?

Grants.gov serves as the Federal government's single interface for potential applicants/ grantees to search and apply electronically for all Federal funding opportunities, including all NIH funding opportunities. Grants.gov was created in response to the President's Management Agenda, which called for a government-wide electronic grants solution.

All Federal agencies are required, by OMB policy (http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/14mar20010800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2003/pdf/03-25488.pdf) to post their discretionary funding opportunities on Grants.gov. Also, all agencies are directed to use Grants.gov's Apply mechanism (OMB memo M-04-05, Clarification of Passback Language to Grant-Making Agencies, http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/fy04/m04-05.html, which allows agencies to post their application packages on Grants.gov, and allows applicants to download the application package, complete it offline, and then submit the package electronically to the grant-making agency through the Grants.gov site.

2a. Is your solution a product or is it a service that can be purchased by an institution?

Grants.gov is a website where all Federal grant-making agencies post funding opportunities, and post grant application packages, which can be downloaded, filled out, and submitted electronically back to the agencies through the Grants.gov site.

Grants.gov is funded by the Federal grant-making agencies on a fee-for-service, usage-based model (OMB memo M-04-14, FY 2004 Grants.gov Funding and Advance Planning Guidance for FY 2005 – FY 2006, http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/memoranda/fy04/m04-14.pdf). All grant-making agencies contribute funding towards the maintenance, operation, and enhancement of the Grants.gov system. There is no cost to potential applicants/grantee organizations that want to apply for a grant opportunity posted on Grants.gov; however, an organization must be registered (at no charge) with Grants.gov to download and submit grant application packages.

2b. If a product, do you offer site licenses, concurrent user licenses, desktop licenses or other pricing mechanisms?

This question is not applicable. Any grantee organizations or potential applicant can use Grants.gov, free of charge, to search and apply for funding opportunities. They can download PureEdge viewer (at no cost) to complete electronic application forms.

2c. If a service, describe your service contracts?

No service contracts are required between Grants.gov and potential applicants/grantee organizations.

The Federal grant-making agencies have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). The MOUs signify an agency's commitment to post funding opportunities and grant application packages on Grants.gov, as well as to contribute funding for continued Grants.gov operation, maintenance, and enhancements.

3a. If your solution is a product, is it an enhancement to an existing product?

This question is not applicable to Grants.gov. Grants.gov acts as the government's single interface for customer interactions throughout the grants lifecycle. The website serves as a single place for all Federal grant-making agencies to post all funding opportunities, as well as a single place for those agencies to post grant application packages. Potential applicants/grantee organizations need only reference the Grants.gov site to find all discretionary funding opportunities available throughout the entire Federal government.

3b. If yes, is it necessary to purchase the entire package?

This question is not applicable to Grants.gov.

4. If your e-application solution is a service, do you offer other related services? If so, describe the services and their associated costs.

All of the Grants.gov services are free of charge to the grantee community; funding for Grants.gov is provided by the Federal grant-making agencies.

Grants.gov allows potential applicants/grantee organizations to search all Federal discretionary funding opportunities. Federal grant-making agencies also post grant application packages on the Grants.gov site, where potential applicants/grantee organizations can download the packages, complete the forms (off-line), and then electronically submit the packages on the Grants.gov site. Grants.gov then forwards the packages on to the appropriate agency.

Potential applicants/grantee organizations can refine their searches of funding opportunities through several search/query options available on the site. Also, they can sign up to receive weekly email notifications of newly posted funding opportunities based on their preferences.

Additionally, Grants.gov operates a Contact Center that potential applicants/grantee organizations can call/email if they have questions about, or require assistance regarding Grants.gov features and functionality.

5. Is your solution appropriate for small, medium, and/or large institutions? (Small=<50 applications submitted per year; medium=50–200 applications submitted per year; large=>200 applications submitted each year.)

The Grants.gov solution is appropriate for all institutions, whether they are classified as small, medium, or large.

Grant-making agencies, as a whole, receive hundreds of thousands of grant

applications per year from a variety of applicants/grantee organizations, from those individuals who may only submit one or two applications a year, to grantee organizations (State/Local governments, Educational institutions, etc.) that are in the practice of submitting several hundred applications per year. Any institution that is interested in responding to a Federal grant opportunity should use Grants.gov.

6. Does your solution require the purchase of hardware?

No purchase of hardware is required to use Grants.gov. Grants.gov can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection. The grant application packages on the site are developed using PureEdge forms, and applicants can download free of charge all necessary software to view and fill out the PureEdge forms.

7a. Do you provide customer support?

Yes. As part of its ongoing operations, Grants.gov operates a multi-channel Contact Center (1-800-518-4726) to support agencies (grantors) and the Federal applicant community (grantees). The Contact Center was designed and developed for the electronic Application launch in October 2003, and currently provides personalized support via phone and email for Tiers 1, 2, and 3 user support. The Contact Center's supporting systems are hosted at a state-of-the-art secure hosting facility.

7b. If so, when is this service available?

Grants.gov operates the Contact Center Monday through Friday 7 a.m.–9 p.m. ET with several exceptions as follows: closed on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, and Christmas. It also closes at 5 p.m. ET on the days before Thanksgiving and Christmas. To remain responsive to customer needs, however, flexibility to extend the identified hours as needed is built into the Grants.gov customer service approach.

7c. How many concurrent calls can you handle?

The technical setup for the Grants.gov Contact Center, complemented with the staffing model described in 7d below, allows for approximately 350 concurrent calls to be handled by the Contact Center.

7d. Describe the skills of your customer support team.

The Contact Center is currently staffed with eight Tier 1 client service representatives, two who are bilingual (Spanish/English-speaking); two Tier 2/Supervisors, and one Tier 3/Contact Center Manager during hours of operation. Knowledge is managed very closely so that as many contacts are handled at the Tier 1 level as possible. If greater assistance is required, the issue is escalated to the Tier 2/Supervisors. For issues that require assistance beyond the Tier 2/Supervisor (e.g., going outside of the Contact Center to the Grants.gov PMO, a sponsoring agency, or a Grants.gov team member), the Tier 3/Contact Center Manager will handle the matter.

The staff is trained on Grants.gov helpdesk process and procedures as well as Grants.gov functionality. They provide technical support for users of Grants.gov that covers navigational issues; using online help and user support tools; using PureEdge, downloading application packages and submitting applications; as well as creating and publishing application packages and retrieving submitted applications. Ongoing

training and refreshers of site functionality occur on a regular basis. Additionally, there exists an internal quality-assurance process, which regularly monitors and measures quality of the service.

7e. How do you charge for customer support?

Customer support, like all Grants.gov services, is free to the applicant community. Services and operations related to Grants.gov are funded by the Federal grant-making agencies.

8. What operating systems/platforms are compatible with your solution? Is there a requirement for a specific database system?

There is no database requirement associated with the applicant use of Grants.gov.

Applicants can search and download applications on Grants.gov's website using any modern Web browser such as Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape, or Mozilla running on Windows or Macintosh. To complete a grant application package, applicants must download and install (free of charge) PureEdge, which requires a Windows-based computer. However, Macintosh users can also use PureEdge software to complete grant packages by running a Windows-simulation software such as Microsoft Virtual PC.

Grantor Agencies can retrieve applications from the Grants.gov website using either a browser or a system-to-system interface. Since the system-to-system interface is based on exchange of XML data using HTTP/SOAP protocols, it does not place any restriction on the operating system or database tools used by the agency.

9a. Explain how the institution supplies you with grant application data and attachments. (Through downloadable forms? Through a Web interface? Through PDF files? Through system-to-system data streams?)

Federal grant-making agencies post grant application packages, using PureEdge forms (downloadable, fillable forms), on Grants.gov. Potential applicants/grantee organizations can then download the application packages from the Grants.gov site. The forms can then be completed off-line. Once all forms are completed, the applicant can submit them electronically on Grants.gov. The forms are then sent to the appropriate agency through a backend system-to-system interface.

9b. How many users can submit proposals concurrently?

Grants.gov has a fully redundant and high-availability production configuration designed to support concurrent submissions and processing of grant applications. Grants.gov operations staff continuously monitor system load, and have built in processes that add additional capacity to meet growth.

9c. Will the institution be able to capture the data transmitted to the NIH? If so, how?

Institutions can keep a copy of the application package forms (in PureEdge) for their records and files once the forms are complete.

Additionally, once an applicant submits an application package, an email notification is sent to the applicant stating that the application has been submitted. If there are problems with the application (e.g., required fields are not filled out), another email

notification is sent to the applicant alerting them to the problem, which must be corrected before the application can be sent to the appropriate agency.

Once the application is successfully submitted, the applicant is sent a "tracking" number, which allows them to view the status of their application at the agency, as well as review the application materials that were delivered to the agency.

10a. Did you take part in any of the NIH eRA CGAP pilots?

No.

10b. If so, provide contact information for at least one participating client.

Not applicable.

11. Do you offer free trials?

This question is not applicable as Grants.gov services are free to the applicant/grantee community.

12. Provide contact information for a specific company representative who can respond to institution inquiries.

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13. Do you have plans for enhancing and/or expanding your product or service? What are they?

Grants.gov currently allows Federal grant-making agencies to post grant packages for discretionary grant opportunities. This functionality is being expanded to allow for the posting of mandatory grant application packages.

Grants.gov is also expanding to allow individuals (not associated with an organization/ institution) to apply for appropriate grant opportunities.

Ongoing enhancements are done based on input and feedback from the grants community to ensure Grants.gov is fulfilling the needs and requirements of all agencies and applicants/grantee organizations.

14. Briefly describe the background of your organization.

Grants.gov is the mechanism by which the vision of the President's E-Grants initiative is being realized. The release of the President's Management Agenda (http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2002/mgmt.pdf) in 2002 provided the mission for Grants.gov. The President's Management Agenda (PMA) called for agencies to "allow applicants for Federal grants to apply for, and ultimately manage, grant funds online through a common web site, simplifying grants management and eliminating redundancies." The release of the PMA built upon Public Law 106-107,

Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999, which calls for the establishment of "a common system, including electronic processes, wherein a non-Federal entity can apply for, manage, and report on the use of funding from multiple financial assistance programs..."

Grants.gov is deploying two Government-wide grants mechanisms: FIND and APPLY.

1. Grants.gov's Find mechanism allows Federal agencies to post discretionary grant opportunities on Grants.gov and allows potential applicants to conduct a search of these opportunities. All grant-making agencies have been publishing synopses of grant opportunities on Grants.gov since October 2003.

2. Grants.gov's Apply mechanism allows agencies to post their application packages on Grants.gov and allows applicants to download the application package and complete it offline based on agency instructions. The Grants.gov Apply mechanism was launched on October 31, 2003.

As an E-Gov initiative, Grants.gov is funded through contributions by the Federal grant-making agencies. Given the government-wide nature of Grants.gov and the vast impact that its purpose has, a funding strategy was developed to disperse costs among the Federal grant-making agencies.

HHS is the managing partner for the Grants.gov initiative. The Grants.gov Program Management Office (PMO) is staffed with Federal grant-making agency representatives (detailees) and contractors, and is responsible for the development, deployment, and ongoing operations of the Grants.gov system. The Grants.gov PMO also conducts extensive outreach and training efforts to assist agencies and applicants, as well as to solicit feedback on the Grants.gov system.

The Grants Executive Board, comprising Federal grant-making agency representatives, provides strategic guidance and oversight for the initiative. The Grants.gov Program Manager is the Executive Board's chair. The Board exercises oversight of the Grants.gov initiative's strategy and timetables, ensures consensus among the Federal grant-making agencies, provides executive sponsorship for Grants.gov outcomes in the agencies, and resolves interagency issues.