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ADOBE TRANSITION

The Grants.gov transition to Adobe is just about complete. Twenty-three of the 26 federal agencies have transitioned to Adobe, including National Institutes of Health (NIH). The 23 agencies are now solely using the new Adobe Reader based forms. The remaining agencies (National Science Foundation (NSF), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Department of Energy (DoE)) are awaiting the approval and release of certain new and modified forms to be deployed in Adobe to complete their transition.

SPEED AND RELIABILITY UPGRADE

The Grants.gov Speed and Reliability upgrade is currently underway although delayed as we continue to resolve certain technical issues associated with the configuration of certain hardware and software elements. The "Speed and Reliability" upgrade will greatly improve system capacity for application submissions, taking the daily submission limit from 2,000 to 10,000 per day. Currently the system can process up to 2,000 application submissions without producing strain on the system.

To date Grants.gov has successfully updated software and added additional hardware, including three brand new T-1000 servers. Once the upgrade is complete, system speed and reliability will be greatly enhanced. Although the upgrade will greatly boost system performance, Grants.gov still urges applicants to register and submit application packages as early as possible, to prevent any and all possible delays.

SYSTEM BUILD 2008-03 UPDATE

Grants.gov is busy putting the final touches on the current system build (Build 2008-03). System Build 2008-03 will be the third build since Grants.gov began the Adobe based forms system. This build was originally scheduled for January 10, 2009 but has been delayed due to the technical issues discovered during testing of the build.

The Speed and Reliability build deals with the amount of submissions that can be processed, while Build 2008-03 focuses on the LDAP (Lightweight Directory Access Protocol), which controls the speed at which concurrent users are able to login to the system and thus submit their packages at the same time.

Build 2008-03 will include updates that will transform your experience with the website; from enhancements to speed up the system to make application processing faster and more reliable (LDAP) to features that give you more control over the way you receive and manage information (RSS feed, email notifications), the build will greatly improve existing features and give you added benefits. Detailed information about specific build enhancements will be placed on the Site Features and Enhancements page: <http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/buildreleases.jsp> for you to view.

MANAGING PARTNER



*Fulfilling the President's
Management Agenda*

UNDERSTANDING ADOBE READER VERSIONS AND “BROKEN PIPE”

Adobe Reader is the required software for use while completing and submitting a grant application with Grants.gov for those agencies who have transitioned; however Grants.gov also accepts applications completed using Adobe Acrobat Professional software (as long as the Adobe Reader version used within Acrobat is a compatible version with Grants.gov). Information about all Grants.gov compatible software can be found on the Download Software page of the website: http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp.

Recently Adobe has released two new versions of the Adobe Reader: versions 9.0 and 8.1.3. “Broken Pipe” is due to an issue in the Adobe Reader script which causes intermittent interruptions during submission of a grant application package. The intermittent interruptions confuse the application processing and applicants see an error message: "Intake Servlet Is Unable to Save the Data. Broken Pipe."

In most cases of the “Broken Pipe” issue the submission is successful; however, the applicant does not receive confirmation of their submission. The confirmation information ensures that there was in fact a package submitted and provides proof of the timeliness of the submission. Adobe Reader 8.1.3 was released and then validated by Grants.gov on November 6, 2008, confirming that it resolves the “Broken Pipe” issue. Please note that Adobe Reader version 8.1.3 (not 9.0) is the only version that resolves the “Broken Pipe” issue.

Adobe Reader Software Versioning Information

Adobe Professional Versions	Adobe Reader Version	Compatible	Broken Pipe Resolved	Vista Compatible	Mac Compatible
8.0*	8.1.1	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	8.1.2	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
	8.1.3	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9.0	9.0	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

*Adobe Acrobat Professional versions comparable to the Grants.gov compatible Adobe Reader versions are compatible for use with Grants.gov. [System Requirements information](#)

GRANTS.GOV CONTACT CENTER

Contact Center Re-Compete

Much of the Grants.gov success is due to its ability to communicate with the public. The Contact Center plays a major role in helping the grant community when they need it most. Currently the Contact Center is a Health and Human Services (HHS) contracted service that has been provided for the last five years by the same company (Computer Science Corporation), including many of the same experienced Customer Support Representatives. The existing contract has reached the contractual limit and HHS has gone out with a Request for Proposal for Contact Center Service. The existing contractor can bid on the re-compete.

The Contact Center has provided exceptional service throughout the duration of the contract. They maintain an enormous database of information concerning every aspect of Grants.gov, which they have used to consistently offer immediate one-on-one help to individuals in need of assistance. The Contact Center’s customer satisfaction ranking has remained high each year.

VISIT THE GRANTS.GOV BLOG

In addition to the website, the Grants.gov Blog is a great way to stay informed. The blog keeps 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 many members of the grant community, applicants and grantors alike. Visit: <http://grants-gov.blogspot.com/> to read the latest on the Grants.gov blog. Remember, you can always request Grants.gov to participate in one of your events or have us walk you through the Find and Apply process by filling out an [outreach request](#) form.

LOOKING TOWARDS CLOUD COMPUTING

Future system expansion and continued program growth is an important objective for Grants.gov. For this reason Grants.gov is considering Cloud Computing. Over the past several months, Grants.gov has performed analysis of current system limitations and is currently looking at options for a system renovation such as moving to a Cloud Computing Environment.

An official Request for Information (RFI) was made available September 2, 2008 to vendors interested and capable of accomplishing such a significant mission. The goal of a cloud computing environment is to provide a more reliable, scalable, and secure system that will deliver a compelling user experience.

An official Request for Proposal (RFP) is currently in development to explore the various options that vendors may offer to provide the best quality service and help realize the Grants.gov mission. There are various aspects and services offered within cloud computing environments and Grants.gov is exploring the different options. The principal option being explored for a new system is using a Platform as a Service (PaaS) architecture. Platform as a Service (PaaS) makes it possible to build and deliver web applications and services entirely from the Internet. PaaS also reduces issues related to concurrent users and includes automatic concurrency management, scalability, failover and security, as well as workflow facilities for application design, development, testing, deployment and hosting without the need for downloads or client installations.

The new system would offer services such as team collaboration, web service integration and orchestration, increased security, storage, persistence, application versioning, and more. The greatest advantage to using a PaaS system architecture is the ability to be more flexible. PaaS architecture will allow for continued growth and advancement of the system and will help Grants.gov to offer the latest and best possible technology at the best value to the government.

TECHNICAL ISSUES? NO PROBLEM, FIND HELP 24 HOURS A DAY

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. On this page you will

find information on common troubleshooting issues, such as verifying your Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) status and login for E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC). 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: <http://www.grants.gov/contactus/contactus.jsp> or call 1-800-518-4726.

SUBMISSION HICCUPS

Potential Erroneous Email Notifications

Grants.gov has received notice that some applicants have received conflicting email notifications after a submission. The following scenario has manifested itself more than once: an applicant receives the Grants.gov submission receipt email, the applicant then receives a rejection notice for the application with a list of errors, followed by a submission validation receipt email. Applicants are receiving the third (validation) email without correcting any errors listed in the second (rejection) notice email. This chain of emails is created because the Grants.gov system is automatically reprocessing the applications — those without errors are being successfully validated, hence the applicant receiving the third validation receipt email. The applications that are re-processed and successfully received into the Grants.gov system are being forwarded to the agencies for retrieval.

If this scenario occurs after you have submitted an application, please contact the Grants.gov Contact Center: <http://www.grants.gov/contactus/contactus.jsp>, to ensure your application has been received and to also receive a case number which can be used as proof of your issue during the submission process. We are currently researching this issue as the cause is still to be determined.

HAVE GRANTS.GOV UPDATES SENT RIGHT TO YOUR INBOX

Receive updated information about critical issues, new tips for users and other time sensitive updates as information becomes available. To sign-up visit:

http://www.grants.gov/applicants/email_subscription_signup.jsp

GMLOB UPDATE

Grants.gov is participating in the Grants Management Line of Business (GMLOB) Communications Committee. The GMLOB Communications Committee was formed to give agencies within the grants community an opportunity to lend their expertise in working with their specific agency and the communities they serve. The committee provides input into various areas of GMLOB communications, as needed and requested by the GMLOB Program Management Office. The committee consists of representatives from the National Science Foundation, National Archives and Records Administration, the United States Department of Agriculture, and Grants.gov.

The goal of GMLOB is to develop a government-wide solution that supports end-to-end grants management activities promoting citizen access, customer service, and agency financial and technical stewardship. GMLOB's primary objectives include improving service to internal and external customers; increasing standardization and streamlining; increasing value delivered through information technology to agencies, grantees, and the public; and reducing the number of grants systems government-wide.

To achieve its goals and objectives, GMLOB developed a "Consortia-based" operating model. The Consortia approach to implementation aligns agency work teams (Consortia) around shared business interests. Each Consortium is comprised of one lead agency and one or more member agencies. Lead agencies work with member agencies to define business and technical requirements, evaluate and select alternative solutions, develop a funding strategy, and lead planning and implementation of a common solution. Under this model, each agency remains responsible for managing its own grant programs.

Through GMLOB's Consortia approach, grant applicants will experience improved service and reduced administrative burden due to the standardization and streamlining of government-wide grants business processes. Fewer and more consistent grant system interfaces, as well as the availability of online forms and filing will lead to time, cost, and resource savings for the grantee community.

STAKEHOLDER WEBCAST

The next Grants.gov Stakeholder Webcast will be held January 21, 2009 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:

http://www.grants.gov/help/stakeholder_communications.jsp.

UPCOMING EVENT SCHEDULE

NJ Chapter of the American Association
of Grants Professionals
January 22, 2009
Online Interactive Session

Dept. of Education: Graduate Assistance in
Areas of Need Program
January 30, 2009
Washington, D.C.

Pikes Peak Library District
March 18, 2009
Online Interactive Session

National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal
and Skin Diseases (NIH)
April 6, 2009
Online Interactive Session

[Grants.gov Presentation Request Form](#) – Fill out this form if you have an upcoming event you would like Grants.gov to attend or if you would like to request a complimentary Grants.gov presentation on the Find and Apply process. Email the completed form to support@grants.gov and a representative will contact you.

[Read about past events attended by Grants.gov](#)

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!**

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