

# Introduction

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## Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance

The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance is a government-wide compendium of Federal programs, projects, services, and activities that provide assistance or benefits to the American public. It contains financial and nonfinancial assistance programs administered by departments and establishments of the Federal government.

In 1984, Public Law 98-169 authorized the transfer of responsibilities of the Federal Program Information Act from the Office of Management and Budget to the General Services Administration (GSA). The transfer took place in July 1984. These responsibilities include the dissemination of Federal domestic assistance program information through the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act, Public Law 95-220, as amended by Public Law 98-169. GSA now maintains the Federal assistance information database from which program information is obtained. The Office of Management and Budget serves as an intermediary agent between the Federal agencies and GSA, thus providing oversight to the necessary collection of Federal domestic assistance program data.

As the basic reference source of Federal programs, the primary purpose of the Catalog is to assist users in identifying programs that meet specific objectives of the potential applicant, and to obtain general information on Federal assistance programs. In addition, the intent of the Catalog is to improve coordination and communication between the Federal government and State and local governments.

The Catalog provides the user with access to programs administered by Federal departments and agencies in a single publication. Program information is cross referenced by functional classification (Functional Index), subject (Subject Index), applicant (Applicant Index), deadline(s) for program application submission (Deadlines Index), and authorizing legislation (Authorization Index). These are valuable resource tools that, if used carefully, can make it easier to identify specific areas of program interest more efficiently.

Other sections of the Catalog provide users with information on programs added and deleted since the last edition of the Catalog, a crosswalk of program numbers and title changes, regional and local offices, intergovernmental review requirements, definitions of the types of assistance under which programs are administered, proposal writing, grant application procedures, and additional sources of information on Federal programs and services.

Programs selected for inclusion in the Federal assistance data base are defined as any function of a Federal agency that provides assistance or benefits for a State or States, territorial possession, county, city, other political subdivision, grouping, or instrumentality thereof; any domestic profit or nonprofit corporation, institution, or individual, other than an agency of the Federal government.

A "Federal domestic assistance program" may in practice be called a program, an activity, a service, a project, a process, or some other name, regardless of whether it is identified as a separate program by statute or regulation. It will be identified in terms of its legal authority, administering office, funding, purpose, benefits, and beneficiaries.

"Assistance" or "benefits" refers to the transfer of money, property, services, or anything of value, the principal purpose of which is to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation authorized by Federal statute. Assistance includes, but is not limited to grants, loans, loan guarantees, scholarships, mortgage loans, insurance, and other types of financial assistance, including cooperative agreements; property, technical assistance, counseling, statistical, and other expert information; and service activities of regulatory agencies. It does not include the provision of conventional public information services.

For years, GSA has published a printed version of the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA or Catalog), as required by legislation dating to 1977 and 1983. That same legislation allowed GSA to distribute free copies of the printed Catalog to designated recipients. In fiscal year 2003, nearly 10,000 paper copies of the Catalog were distributed at no cost to the recipients.

Current legislation, however, authorizes GSA to determine in what form to prepare and publish the Catalog. Consistent with the Administration's Electronic-Government initiatives, the Government Paperwork Elimination Act, and a move to a paper free environment, GSA will now disseminate the Catalog electronically through the CFDA website on the Internet. As a result, effective immediately, GSA will no longer print and distribute free copies of the Catalog.

The Internet and GSA's free CFDA website at <http://www.cfda.gov> will be the primary means of disseminating the Catalog. The CFDA website will also contain a PDF file version of the Catalog that, when printed by any user, will have the same layout as the printed document that the Government Printing Office (GPO) has provided.

GPO will continue printing and selling the CFDA to interested buyers. For information about purchasing the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance from GPO, call the Superintendent of Documents at 202-512-1800 or toll free at 866-512-1800, or you may reach GPO's on-line bookstore at <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>.