Department of Energy	**No.** 2003-03R
Financial Assistance Regulation	**Date** 10/28/03

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE LETTER

Financial Assistance Letter is issued under the authority of the Procurement Executives of DOE and NNSA

Subject: **Implementation of OMB Grant Management Policies**

What is the Purpose of this Financial Assistance Letter (FAL)?

This FAL provides Contracting Officers and grants personnel guidance on the following new Office of Management and Budget (OMB) policy requirements:

- Applications for new or renewal grants or cooperative agreements received on or after October 1, 2003, including applications or plans submitted under mandatory grant programs, must include the applicant's Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number.

- Program announcements of funding opportunities (e.g., solicitations) issued on or after November 23, 2003 must be in the standard government-wide announcement format.

- On or after October 1, 2003, synopses of discretionary grant and cooperative agreement funding opportunity announcements and modifications of these announcements must be posted on the Grants.gov FIND Internet site at www.FedGrants.gov, using the standard data elements/format.

How will this Change My Work Processes?

DUNS Number. The requirement to use the DUNS number will not affect your work processes. The revised SF 424 and the revised DOE F 4650.2 application forms include a DUNS number as a required element. Use the revised forms.

Announcement Format. You must use the Word version of the DOE-wide announcement template at http://e-center.doe.gov/IIPS/busopor.nsf/ViewMenu?ReadForm to prepare an announcement of funding opportunities that would result in the award of discretionary grants or cooperative agreements (See attached copy of the announcement template).

Grants.gov FIND. The Department has been posting synopses of financial assistance funding opportunities on the Grants.gov Find Internet site at www.FedGrants.gov since March 2003.

You will continue to use the Industry Interactive Procurement System (IIPS) to post synopses of funding opportunities on this Internet site. Any new information requirements mandated by Grants.gov will be incorporated into IIPS.

When is this FAL Effective?

This FAL is effective 10 days after the date of issuance. This FAL supersedes and cancels FAL 2003-02 "Implementation of DOE's Industry Interactive Procurement System (IIPS)."

When does this FAL Expire?

This FAL remains in effect until superseded or canceled.

Who is the Point of Contact?

Contact Trudy Wood of the Office of Procurement and Assistance Policy by telephone at (202) 586-5625 or by email at trudy.wood@hq.doe.gov.

What is the Background?

The Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-107) directed agencies to work together to simplify and streamline Federal grant-making processes. As a result of the government-wide streamlining initiative, OMB recently published several notices and policy directives. The first notice [68 FR 38402] establishes a requirement that applications for Federal grants or cooperative agreements include the applicant's DUNS number. The second notice [68 FR 37370] establishes a government-wide standard format for publishing announcements of funding opportunities under programs that make discretionary awards of grants or cooperative agreements. The policy letter included in the *Federal Register* notice requires Federal agencies to organize announcement information in this standard format to make it easier for potential applicants to quickly find the information they need. A third notice [68 FR 37379] establishes standard data elements for electronically posting synopses of Federal agencies' financial assistance program announcements at Grants.gov FIND. The last notice [68 FR 37385] proposes a government-wide policy that would require Federal agencies to post synopses of financial assistance funding opportunities on the Grants.gov FIND Internet site at www.FedGrants.gov beginning October 1, 2003. The Grants.gov FIND Internet site at FedGrants is modeled after FedBizOpps, an Internet site established by the General Services Administration as the government-wide point of entry for access to Federal procurement opportunities. These two sites - FedBizOpps and FedGrants - will provide one stop access to Federal procurement and financial assistance opportunities. These policy notices are available on OMB's website at http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/grants_docs.html.

Guidance Included in this Financial Assistance Letter

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I. What is the new OMB policy regarding DUNS numbers?

A. What is the requirement?

After September 30, 2003, applications for new or renewal grants or cooperative agreements, including applications or plans submitted under mandatory grant programs, must include the applicant's DUNS number. The applicant is not required to submit DUNS numbers for entities with which it may enter into subawards; only the primary applicant needs to provide a DUNS number. The DUNS number will supplement, not replace, other identifiers required by statues or regulations, such as tax identification numbers.

B. Are there any exceptions?

Yes. This requirement does not apply to: 1) an individual who would personally receive a grant or cooperative agreement award apart from any business or non-profit organization they may operate; or 2) any applicant that receives an exemption from OMB or an applicant under a program that receives an exemption from OMB.

C. What are the contracting officer's responsibilities?

The contracting officer must:

- Include the paragraph entitled "DUNS Number" (See Section IV.2.A) in the attached template in every announcement that closes on or after October 1, 2003. If you have an open announcement that has a closing/due date on or after October 1, 2003, you must amend the announcement or take other appropriate measures to inform potential applicants of this requirement. For the purposes of this requirement, announcements include any type of notification of funding opportunities, including requests for formula grant applications or plans.

- Ensure that each announcement requires that the applicant submit either a SF 424 (Rev. 9-03) or a DOE F 4650.2 (Rev. 10-03) application form. These forms include a blank for the applicant's DUNS number. These forms will be available at http://e-center.doe.gov/IIPS/busopor.nsf/Forms?ReadForm.

- Ensure that every entity applying for a new or a renewal grant or cooperative agreement, including a mandatory grant, provides its DUNS number in the application.

The contracting officer should work with the program offices to educate the applicant community regarding the new requirement for a DUNS number.

II. **What is the new OMB policy regarding a standard format for program announcements of funding opportunities?**

   A. **What is the requirement?**

   Federal agencies must use the government-wide standard format for program announcements of funding opportunities.

   B. **What is a program announcement?**

   Program announcements include any issuance used to announce funding opportunities that would result in the award of a discretionary grant or cooperative agreement, whether it is called a solicitation, program announcement, program notice, broad agency announcement, research announcement, notice of program interest, or something else.

   C. **How will DOE implement the standard format?**

   In accordance with the new OMB policy guidance, we have developed a DOE-wide announcement template that conforms with the government-wide announcement format (See attachment to this FAL). While the template includes standard language to promote more uniformity and to facilitate development, in virtually every section, the contracting officer/program official is given the flexibility to craft language that more completely and accurately defines the terms of the competition. On and after November 23, 2003, contracting officers/program officials must use the DOE-wide template to issue program announcements of funding opportunities.

   D. **How does the contracting officer complete the announcement template and post it on IIPS**?

   The contracting officer accesses the Word® announcement template by logging into IIPS and proceeding to the Main View. Follow the link to the template; save the template to your computer; open the template and complete it; save the completed announcement using the "save as" feature of Word ® to save the file with a unique name; then, after obtaining appropriate approvals, return to IIPS "Create FA Opportunity." Complete the "Financial Assistance Form" information (i.e., synopsis information) and attach approved announcement file to the "File Upload" section. See the IIPS user guide for more detailed instructions. The announcement file must be posted to IIPS at the same time the synopsis is sent to the Grants.gov FIND Internet site via IIPS (See Section III, C).

   E. **How does the contracting officer modify an announcement that has been posted on IIPS**.

   The contracting officer must:

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- Incorporate change(s) to the announcement file by creating a conformed file that includes a line in the margin to annotate the change(s). Be sure to select "Modification" under "Announcement Type" on the funding opportunity announcement cover page and, if appropriate, change the "Due Dates."

- Post the announcement modification on IIPS as an "Accompanying Document" (See IIPS User Guide), attaching the announcement file on the "Accompanying Document" page.

- Delete the prior version of announcement file (the Word® document) from IIPS.

F. Will the announcement template be revised in the near future?

Yes. This is the first iteration of the DOE-wide announcement template. It is intended to be used for applications submitted through IIPS. During FY 2004, DOE will transition to the Grants.gov APPLY application, also called the Grants.gov "storefront". This transition will not affect your business processes since IIPS, or the successor system, will continue to provide the "backend" processes. However, it will require changes in the template.

DOE plans to revise the template to require applicants to submit their applications through the Grants.gov "storefront" as soon as the government-wide "research and research related application package" is completed so that we can incorporate all new requirements in a single revision. We expect this to happen in the second half of FY 2004. We anticipate that all applications (i.e., competitive and noncompetitive) will be submitted through the "storefront" by October 2004. Please provide any suggestions or comments for improvements in the announcement template so that we can incorporate them in the next version. We are particularly interested in additions or deletions to the pick lists.

III. What is the OMB policy regarding Grants.gov FIND?

A. What is the requirement?

Federal agencies must post synopses of discretionary grant and cooperative agreement funding opportunity announcements and modifications to the announcements at www.FedGrants.gov (the Grants.gov FIND Internet site), using a standard set of data elements, except for:

- Announcements of funding opportunities for awards less than $25,000 for which 100 percent of eligible applicants live outside of the United States.

- Sole source announcements of funding opportunities issued by an agency which are specifically directed to a known recipient.

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B. How does this requirement affect DOE/NNSA?

DOE has been posting notices on the Grants.gov FIND Internet site at
www.FedGrants.gov since March 2003 via IIPS. The new policy will result in no change
to the current IIPS process. However, new government-wide data elements will be
incorporated into the IIPS financial assistance funding opportunity synopsis form (web
page) by October 2003. You must complete all the required information on the revised
form.

C. What are the contracting officer's responsibilities?

The contracting officer is responsible for ensuring that all discretionary grant
and cooperative agreement funding opportunity program announcements and
modifications to the announcements are posted to the Grants.gov Find Internet
site via IIPS at the same time that the announcement is posted on IIPS. The
contracting officer must:

- Develop the program announcement file in accordance with Section II
  of this FAL.

- Ensure that the program office has a valid Catalog of Domestic
  Assistance (CFDA) number for the announcement.

- Go to "Create FA Opportunity" and complete the "Financial
  Assistance Form (i.e., synopsis information). This form includes all
  the required data elements for posting a synopsis on the Grants.gov
  Find Internet site;

- Ensure that "Yes" is checked for the field "Post to FedGrants?"; and

- Upload the announcement file to the "File Upload" section and click
  on "Submit Form."

D. Do you still have to publish a notice in the *Federal Register* per 10 CFR 600.8?

Yes. We are in the process of amending 10 CFR 600.8, but we can not
publish the rule until OMB has issued its final policy on Grants.gov FIND.
We plan to require program offices to continue publishing solicitation notices
in the *Federal Register* through December 31, 2003. This will give potential
applicants time to get use to the new Grants.gov FIND internet site. We will
advise you of any changes in the publication requirements as soon as they are
final.

IV. **What are the requirements for announcements issued under a Program Rule?**

Program Officials, who issue announcements of funding opportunities under a program rule, must comply with the new OMB grants management policies set forth in this FAL.

Attachment: Announcement Template (Rev. 10/28/03)