JANUARY 2005 STAKEHOLDER MEETING MINUTES
January 26, 2005

Next Meeting
Date: Wednesday, February 23, 2005
Time: 2:00 pm- 3:30 pm
Place: HHS Building

All meeting materials and presentations are available at Grants.gov by visiting
http://www.grants.gov/meetingmaterials012605.

Opening Remarks and Presentation:

Ms. Becky Spitzgo, Grants.gov Program Manager, began the meeting at 2:00pm with the
following agenda:

- Grants.gov Update
- The Forms Development Process
- Ramp-up Schedule: Next Steps
- Stakeholder Questions & Answers

After welcoming the audience, Ms. Spitzgo introduced the Office of Management and
Budget's (OMB) new e-government portfolio manager, Stacie Higgins. Ms. Higgins is
assuming the role for Kamela White. Her job role is to oversee all e-government
initiatives and collaborate across all levels, including State & Local government. More
importantly, she will ensure that Grants.gov continues to make progress and stays on
track.

Grants.gov Update

Ms. Spitzgo then provided the Grants.gov Update. Currently, 2,100 active funding
opportunities are available on Grants.gov "Find". Find activity has reached its peak since
inception. On average, 1,500-1,600 active funding opportunities are available. Site
usage continues to grow with a steady 1.6 million hits per week and 700,000 applicant
notification emails distributed weekly. The FedGrants.gov contract transfer was
successful and a new vendor is in place. Grants.gov is working to merge systems and
reduce costs but with no changes in functionality. All customer support for
FedGrants.gov has been transferred to the Grants.gov Contact Center. Over time, the
FedGrants URL will dissipate and users will be required to have only one login to post
opportunities and application packages to Find and Apply.

The U.S. Department of State posted their first grant application package bringing total
agency participation on Apply to 19 of the 26 grant-making agencies. Starting this
month, Grants.gov has been actively reaching out to smaller agencies and commissions to
bring them onboard with the Program. Grants.gov is able to reach this extended market
through the enlisted help of new staff members.

To-date, 262 grant application packages have been posted on Grants.gov, approximately 30 new application packages posted just this month. This is the first time since February 2004 Grants.gov has seen such a dramatic increase in the number of posted application packages. Over the next month, Grants.gov expects another dramatic increase once the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) goes live with their SuperNOFA system. Thus far, 1,500 electronic grant applications have been received from grantees. Since receiving our 1000th electronic grant application submission, it has taken four months to reach our current standings. We expect this number to increase over the next few weeks as a tremendous number of programs close around the February/March timeframe and as HUD mandates electronic grant application submission.

1885 users have registered on Grants.gov. (This number represents registered users who have gone through the entire registration process.) This number continues to grow. We experienced a significant increase in October 2004, which can be attributed to HUD's electronic application brochure, as well as the U.S. Department of Energy notifying all states about electronic submission.

Q. Is it possible to pull a report on users that are partially through the registration process in order to reach out and follow up?
A. Yes. The best method of communication would be via email. We will investigate this further.

In other update news, Carol Huber, who was on detail with Grants.gov since April 2004, has returned to her home agency with the U.S. Department of Transportation. While on detail, Carol worked on the forms development process. The agencies that Carol managed while on detail have been reassigned and current contact information will be provided later on in the presentation. HUD's forms (11) have been developed and deployed and SuperNOFA is at OMB for clearance. The mandatory forms have been approved by OMB and deployment is scheduled for February 28, 2005. They are now in development with the Forms Factory. The focus will now shift on how to pull mandatory programs into Grants.gov for the future. Grants.gov's fee-for-service funding model has been completed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). All 26 grant-making agencies are expected to contribute in order to complete the fee-for-service obligations to Grants.gov. A Grants.gov weekly status report is being provided to OMB to report on the agencies that have completed funding for Grants.gov.

The Forms Development Process

After the Grants.gov Update, Ms. Spitzgo then introduced Mike Atassi, Project Manager for the Systems Integration Team at Northrop Grumman to discuss the forms development process. Mr. Atassi began by stating that the current forms queue remains full as they continue to look for ways to make the queue more of a factory. He also noted that it is important to realize that the application downloaded from Grants.gov remains as a live entity until the grantee submits the application to Grants.gov.

The Forms Factory team is made up of data analysts who analyze a submission and map it back to the global schema to ensure validity in three stages:

- PureEdge developers (XFD) who review the original application requirements to ensure that they are downloadable;
- XML schema (XSD) and XML formatting objects (XSL-FO) developers who create the XML and formatting objects to render forms into readable PDF documents
- XML style sheet developers who map the inputted data from an application into the global schema for the backend process at the agency level

All members of the Forms Factory team work in parallel or sequentially. The basis that the team works from is the Data Analysis Template (DAT), which describes all of the data elements and the relationships amongst them in a form provided in a spreadsheet from the agency. A DAT is initiated by the requesting agency and is received by the Grants.gov Program Management Office (PMO). The DAT is then validated and verified by the PMO and IV&V (Information Verification and Validation) team, as well as tested by an impartial party. The Forms Factory Data Analyst then analyzes and updates the DAT to ensure that it's readable for the developers. The final DAT is then baselined to the definitive Requirements Document.

The Forms development lifecycle is a predictable and repeatable process and is composed of 5 phases: streamlining, requirements, prototype/design, development, and testing. (Please see the meeting material for a visual representation of the Forms development lifecycle process.) In the requirements phase, a complete and thorough analysis of the Agency DAT is conducted. The DAT is then updated with additional information and a project schedule is developed. DAT comments and recommendations are documented. The final step within the phase is when the DAT is baselined, i.e. becomes a requirement and the documentation is provided to the Agency. On average, the forms development schedule has a 48.75-day turnaround. During the Prototype/Design Phase, the agency is provided with a working model to make validation easier. This entails developing a working PureEdge prototype which functions as the starting point so that the Agency can see a model of the final product. Data modeling is also developed and completed. Critical Design Review (CDR) materials are developed, which includes welcome instructions, the DAT, the PureEdge prototype form, the CDR feedback form, a PDF rendition of the original form, and the DAT notes. All analysis and comments are documented with the DAT and can be reviewed by the Agency.

Q. How many forms exist?
A. Currently, 62 are in production, but Grants.gov still has 400 licenses for additional forms development.

Q. Is there a basic narrative form?
A. Yes.

Ramp-up Schedule: Next Steps

Ms. Spitzgo introduced the next speaker, Peter Brunner, Grants.gov Program Advisor, to provide an update on the ramp-up schedule and next steps. Currently, 22 Agencies have submitted their Fiscal Year (FY) 2005 ramp-up schedules. Four Agencies have committed to submitting their schedules in the near future. Grants.gov is currently working with these Agencies. Of the submitted schedules, 764 programs, with a base of 161,000 potential applicants, have been identified.

OMB's passback goals have been communicated. These passback goals are as follows:
- Agencies should continue posting 100% of grant opportunities on Find
- Agencies should post 100% of all grant opportunities using only the SF 424 on Apply
- Agencies should post a minimum of 25% of all grant opportunities on Apply

These goals are in place to help institutionalize Grants.gov and reach the goal of 15,000 electronic applications by June 30, 2005. Agency ramp-up schedules will help to establish baselines to measure performance against OMB's passback goals. In turn, Grants.gov agency representatives will continue working with their assigned agencies to ensure that the schedules reflect a mutually agreed upon count and goal and to successfully meet OMB's compliance goals. To ensure success, it is important to identify new forms requirements early to better coordinate forms development lead times with production schedules, determine any potential barriers to success, and identify Outreach resources or best practices to promote applicant usage.

Updated Grants.gov agency contacts were then provided:
- Ebony Brice (202) 205-1270 – CNCS, Ed, DHS, NASA
- Peter Brunner (202) 205-6303 – DOC, DOE, DOL, DOS, VA, EPA, IMLS, NEA, NEH, SBA, SSA
- Mary Gonzales (202) 205-1152 – DOI, DOT, Treasury, NARA, NSF, USAID
- Keenon James (202) 205-1168 – DOD, DOJ, HHS, USDA
- Terry Nicolosi (202) 205-5890 - HUD

Q. Are there any dramatically new resources available?
A. No.

Q. What is the timeframe for the ramp-up schedules?
A. Grants.gov will be contacting agencies within the next two weeks. The timeframe should be quick and the best way is through the agency point-of-contact.

Ms. Spitzgo reminded the stakeholders that the PMO was working collaboratively with the agencies on the goals. The PMO is increasing their outreach to each agency to help identify their target goals and how to meet those goals. Additionally, Grants.gov will begin tracking and reporting to OBM the progress of agency partners on the Agency Participation on Apply tracking report, provided at each Stakeholder meeting.

Stakeholder Questions & Answers

Q. Do you have to have a Find notice in order to post an application package on Apply?
A. No. For example earmark grants.

Q. How many applications have been received from States' offices?
A. This information would come directly from the Agency.

Q. Of the Applications received, has there been feedback from the agencies to see how many of the applications are acceptable?
A. There has been no direct feedback. However, Social Security Administration (SSA) fully utilizes Grants.gov's services, requiring electronic submission. Thus far, the process has worked successfully for SSA.

Q. Should we move to bimonthly, instead of monthly, stakeholder meetings?
A. This is up to the Stakeholders. Please provide your feedback on this suggestion.