



THE DIRECTOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

September 11, 2009

M-09-30

MEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: Peter R. Orszag
Director

SUBJECT: Improving Recovery Act Recipient Reporting

On February 17, 2009, President Obama signed into law the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, P.L. 111-5 (“Recovery Act”). In the first six months since enactment, the Recovery Act – along with the Administration’s other economic initiatives – has worked to stabilize economic conditions and help those most harmed by the economic crisis.

Section 1512 of the Recovery Act requires recipients to report on the use of Recovery Act funding. The first of these reports is due October 10. The Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board (“Recovery Board”) has identified and deployed a nationwide data collection system at the website FederalReporting.gov that serves to collect data required by Section 1512. Assisting recipients with effective Section 1512 reporting in FederalReporting.gov will serve not only to reflect the President’s commitment to an unprecedented level of transparency and accountability but will also improve the quality and timeliness of reporting required by the Recovery Act. Federal departments and agencies are well-positioned to partner with recipients in a collaborative effort that will increase the timeliness and accuracy of recipient reporting.

This memorandum identifies essential actions that Federal agencies must take immediately to effectively assist recipients in meeting reporting requirements associated with Section 1512 of the Recovery Act and to register and upload required information to FederalReporting.gov before the October 10, 2009, deadline. Specifically, departments and agencies are to conduct additional measures to prepare for the upcoming reporting deadline, including:

- (1) *Targeting program-focused outreach and assistance.* FederalReporting.gov requires recipients to register before they can provide required information. Registration procedures are outlined on the Recovery.gov website, and all recipients have been informed of their responsibility to register. Current recipient registration is below expected levels, which may lead to underreporting as the October 10 deadline approaches. To encourage more timely and extensive registration, Federal departments and agencies are to immediately identify Recovery Act award recipients for each Recovery Act program they administer and conduct outreach and assistance actions. These efforts should raise the awareness of program award recipients of Section 1512 registration requirements, identify actual and potential barriers to timely registration and reporting, and provide programmatic knowledge and expertise that recipients may need to register and subsequently enter data into FederalReporting.gov

before October 10, 2009. Examples of these efforts include telephone contacts, webinars, listserves, email alerts, or other actions that are most effective at reaching and involving recipients.

For efficient risk mitigation, departments and agencies are urged to conduct these activities in priority of award amounts, and to focus on larger awards first. To guide this effort, departments and agencies are encouraged to develop and execute communication strategies that appropriately use all relevant and effective communications channels.

Further, the Recovery Implementation Office and OMB staff will prepare regular updates of messages that we would like agency assistance in disseminating. Please provide the name and information of an agency staff contact who will be responsible for department or agency communications efforts by September 14, 2009.

(2) *Providing resources for government-to-government outreach.* Because of their extensive work in implementing the Recovery Act, recipient State and local governments face special challenges regarding registration and reporting. OMB and the Recovery Board have initiated government-to-government effort to assist states and select local governments meet reporting required by Section 1512 of the Act. This effort will augment—but not replace or duplicate— existing assistance provided through the FederalReporting.gov call centers or by agency programmatic personnel for each state and select local government Recovery Act Coordinators (RACs). Effectively immediately, agencies are to provide in-kind resources for this effort. Specifically, in addition to specific information that will be forthcoming from OMB staff, departments and agencies are to:

- Identify and assign one primary and one back-up Washington D.C.-based High Volume Coordinator (HVC) to serve until October 20, 2009.
- Require appointed HVCs participate in conference calls and/or attend meetings in the Washington, D.C., area through October 20, 2009.
- Provide a minimum of eight field-based liaisons identified by their Agency's HVC before September 14, 2009.
- Support assignment of agency field-based liaisons selected by OMB and the Recovery Board to make contact with their assigned RACs and potentially meet and coordinate with them in person between September 28, 2009 - October 10, 2009.
- Identify an individual to serve as the Recovery Board's Point of Contact (POC) for service desk questions. This POC is to be available to address recipient reporting questions provided to the service desk and provide answers within 24 hours of referral.

(3) *Address outreach and assistance elements within risk mitigation framework.* Delays in recipient registration and reporting on the FederalReporting.gov website significantly increases the risk of incomplete or inaccurate submission of information required by Section 1512. Agencies are to identify this is an emerging risk and identifying key mitigation steps to be taken and establish any contingency actions as the October 10, 2009, deadline approaches.

A more detailed set of activities for Federal departments and agencies that will help encourage recipients with registration and reporting will be forthcoming.

This effort cannot work without the collaboration of every Federal department and agency involved with the Recovery Act. Due to the critical importance of these efforts and activities, Senior Accountable Officials and OMB will assess progress on a weekly basis. Please direct questions and responses to the above items on or before the requested dates to John_Pasquantino@omb.eop.gov.

Thank you for your cooperation.