

# Tips for Successful Recovery Act Reporting

## Reference Guide

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# Steps for Successful Reporting

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## Your Recovery Act Section 1512(c) report is public information.

The Section 1512(c) report was established to facilitate transparency and accountability on the part of the recipients receiving American Recovery & Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act or ARRA) funds. Information from your quarterly Section 1512(c) report is posted on Recovery.gov ([www.recovery.gov](http://www.recovery.gov)) for the general public to view and evaluate. Inaccurate, inadequate, or vague information reflects poorly on your organization and its acceptable use of taxpayer dollars.

The Office of Justice Programs (OJP) has created this reference guide to assist you in creating and submitting an error-free, quality report. It is based on several recurring issues that have been identified as interfering with timely and accurate report submission. Most of these errors can be prevented through careful data entry on the part of the recipient. This quick tips guide outlines these common problem areas and gives guidance for preventing their occurrence.

In this guide, you will find assistance in—

- Ensuring OJP receives your report
- Avoiding common significant errors found in reports
- Creating an accurate and transparent report for the public
- Submitting your final Section 1512(c) report in FederalReporting.gov

## I. Ensure OJP Receives Your Report

Avoid the mistakes in the areas outlined below to make sure your report is submitted to OJP. If OJP does not receive your report, you will be reported as noncompliant.

**Please note:** Not submitting the Section 1512(c) report prior to the Initial Submission period deadline will result in your organization being reported to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) as noncompliant, and you will face possible sanctions, such as OJP prohibiting drawdowns of funds for all your awards, requiring the return of any unexpended award funds, restricting your eligibility for future awards, and/or suspending or terminating your Recovery Act award.

### Central Contractor Registration

The connection between CCR and FederalReporting.gov.

**Requirement:** The Central Contractor Registration (CCR) is a database utilized by the Federal government to validate applicant information. FederalReporting.gov utilizes CCR to validate your organization's information. Therefore, in order to submit your Section 1512(c) report, (1) your registration in CCR must be active and (2) your DUNS number must be current and accurate. For questions regarding your registration in CCR, visit the CCR website ([www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov)).



*Allow a sufficient amount of time before the beginning of a FederalReporting.gov reporting period to make changes in CCR.gov as actions may take up to several weeks to complete.*



### Verify your registration in CCR has not expired.

**Requirement:** All prime recipients and subrecipients of Federal funds must register and maintain an active registration in CCR. Your registration in CCR must be renewed every 12 months. If your registration expires, you will not be able to submit your report in FederalReporting.gov. It may take up to several weeks for the registration to be reactivated and for the information to be updated in FederalReporting.gov. To verify and/or renew your registration in CCR, visit the CCR website ([www.ccr.gov](http://www.ccr.gov)).



*Check your registration status in CCR.gov on a quarterly basis and renew expired registrations prior to FederalReporting.gov reporting periods.*

### Confirm your new DUNS number is accurate in CCR.

**Requirement:** Your Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number must be accurate in CCR. If you have acquired a new DUNS number since the last reporting period, the new number must be updated in CCR at least 2 to 3 weeks prior to the beginning of the FederalReporting.gov reporting period.



*When verifying your registration status in CCR, check that your DUNS number is current and accurate.*

## Report Data

### Make sure the awarding and funding agency codes are “1500.”

**Requirement:** In order for your report to be routed to the Department of Justice (DOJ), the funding agency code and awarding agency code must both be “1500” in FederalReporting.gov.



*Verify your report has “1500” in the Awarding Agency Code and Funding Agency Code fields on your report.*

### Address any FederalReporting.gov error messages.

**Keep in mind:** If your report contains detectable errors, FederalReporting.gov will not accept it and will give you one or more error messages specifying what is incorrect or missing. You will not be able to submit the report until all the errors have been corrected. If you continue to receive errors, contact the OJP Recovery Support team at [gmstier2support@usdoj.gov](mailto:gmstier2support@usdoj.gov) or contact your Federal grant manager.



*A list of FederalReporting.gov system errors and their potential causes can be found in appendix B, “Error Messaging,” in the FederalReporting.gov User Guide (<https://www.federalreporting.gov/federalreporting/downloads.do>).*

## We are experiencing issues with our Section 1512(c) reporting. Who do we contact?

- For technical issues with accessing or navigating the FederalReporting.gov website, contact the FederalReporting.gov Service Desk at 877-508-7386 or [Support@FederalReporting.gov](mailto:Support@FederalReporting.gov).
- For report submission issues or requirements, contact the OJP Recovery Support team\* ([gmstier2support@usdoj.gov](mailto:gmstier2support@usdoj.gov)), or contact your Federal grant manager.

\*The OJP Recovery Support team cannot assist with technical issues regarding FederalReporting.gov.



Be sure to choose the correct recipient type.

**Requirement:** Prime recipients are non-Federal entities that receive funding directly from the Federal government. Subrecipients are non-Federal entities that receive funding from a prime recipient.

If you are a prime recipient, you must select one of these two Recipient Type options (*if you are a subrecipient, choose the Subrecipient type*):

- *Prime Recipient (Prime Only)* – for reports containing only activities performed by you (the prime recipient).
- *Prime Recipient (Prime Reporting for Self and Sub(s))* – for reports containing activities performed by you (the prime) and entities (subrecipients) that received a portion of the Recovery Act funds from your organization.

## Who's responsible for submitting your report?

Unexpected staff changes and absences occur. To ensure you can complete your reporting requirements each quarter, make sure your organization is prepared to accommodate any staffing issues.

Arrange for more than one person within your organization to know the FederalReporting.gov account information and to be capable of submitting the report.



*Be careful to report as the correct recipient type. If you unintentionally report as a subrecipient when you are a prime, your report will not be accepted, or you will have to submit a new report.*

## Technical Issues

Verify the submission status of your report is not “D” (draft).

**Keep in mind:** Your report is considered submitted only when you click the Submit button in FederalReporting.gov before the Initial Submission period deadline ends. If your submission is successful, you will receive a confirmation message and a follow-up [confirmation email](#). Additionally, the Status column on the FederalReporting.gov search page will display an “S.” If you do not receive these confirmations, your report was not submitted.

Saving, validating, and uploading a report does not qualify as report submission. For example:

- If you submit your report online using the FederalReporting.gov interface, you will be able to save a report as a draft; however, saving a report as a draft does not constitute a report submission.
- If you submit your report using the Excel template, you will be able to validate and upload the report in FederalReporting.gov; however, this option also does not constitute a report submission.



*Ensure that you receive a [confirmation email](#) from FederalReporting.gov that states your report has been successfully submitted to prevent being reported as noncompliant.*

Double check your report has been submitted; it may have been unintentionally deactivated.

**Keep in mind:** If you do not find your submitted report in your reports list in FederalReporting.gov, your report may have been unintentionally deactivated. Contact the FederalReporting.gov Service Desk (877-508-7386 or [Support@FederalReporting.gov](mailto:Support@FederalReporting.gov)) to have the report reactivated. Be prepared to provide the award and DUNS numbers that were submitted in the report as well as your Federal Reporting PIN number (FRPIN).



*Avoid using the deactivation function in FederalReporting.gov unless instructed by OJP or the FederalReporting.gov Service Desk.*



## II. Avoid Common Significant Errors Found in Reports

The following errors will not prevent the successful submission of your report; however, OJP may not be able to accurately identify your report and post the information to Recovery.gov if they occur, causing you to be reported as noncompliant.

### Key award data is entered incorrectly.

**Requirement:** Key award data must be entered in your report exactly as it appears on your award document, including the format. OJP has found recipients often incorrectly submit the following items, which are available in your award document.

- **Award Number** – Your award number must be in the following format: 20XX-XX-XX-XXXX (including hyphens, no spaces).
- **Award Date** – Your award date must be the same as the award date that appears on your award document in block #6. Enter it in the following format: 00/00/0000 (month/day/year).
- **Award Amount** - This amount must be the same as the amount listed on your award document in block #11, unless you also have received a supplemental award. If so, add the initial award amount (block #11) and the supplemental award amount together to determine the total amount that should be entered in the report.

If OJP notifies you about errors found in your report, you may correct the errors by opening your report in FederalReporting.gov, updating the referenced field(s), and saving the report. Errors not corrected by the end of the Continuous Quality Assurance period will be reported to OMB as a significant error.

### Key Award Data in Your Grant Award Document

Your award document is a valuable resource to have on hand while completing your Section 1512(c) report. Copy your key award information directly from the award document to avoid any submission errors.

Preview an example award document ([www.ojp.usdoj.gov/recovery/pdfs/EgAwardDocument.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/recovery/pdfs/EgAwardDocument.pdf)).



*Reduce your chance for errors by using the Copy Forward function in FederalReporting.gov instead of manually entering information each quarter; however, check that the information you copy forward is correct.*

### DUNS number in your Section 1512(c) report does not match GMS.

**Keep in mind:** OJP validates the DUNS number in your Section 1512(c) report with the DUNS number recorded in the OJP Grants Management System (GMS) to confirm the numbers are the same. If the numbers are different in the two systems, the system with the incorrect number must be updated before the end of the Continuous Quality Assurance period.

- If the DUNS number in GMS is incorrect, submit a Grant Adjustment Notice (GAN) in GMS to update the GMS profile. For more information on submitting a GAN, visit the GMS Online Training Tool ([www.ojp.gov/gmscbt](http://www.ojp.gov/gmscbt)).
- If the DUNS number in the Section 1512(c) report is incorrect, use the Change Business Key Information function in FederalReporting.gov to correct it. For more information on the Change Business Key Information function, refer to chapter 13, “How to Update Reports,” in the *FederalReporting.gov User Guide* (<https://www.federalreporting.gov/federalreporting/downloads.do>).



*When you verify your DUNS number is accurate in CCR, also check that the DUNS number is accurate in GMS (<https://grants.ojp.usdoj.gov/gmsexternal>).*



**Jobs estimate does not correlate to the narrative information in the report.**

**Requirement:** Section 1512(c) of the Recovery Act requires recipients to report the total number of jobs funded or partially funded by Recovery Act funds (whether created, retained, or existing). Your report must include the total number of jobs in terms of Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) and provide a narrative description of the employment impact the jobs had on your organization.



Using OJP's Jobs Guidance and the OJP Jobs Calculator\*, verify the Jobs Number and Jobs Description fields accurately reflect the jobs created and/or retained. (\*The link to the OJP Jobs Calculator tool is located in the Calculating Jobs Data section (<http://www.ojp.gov/recovery/recipientreporting.htm>)).

### III. Create an Accurate and Transparent Report for the Public

The accuracy and completeness of the narrative data included in your report is just as important as the key award data. Like the significant errors, incorrect information in the following fields will not prevent the actual submission of your report; however, it may prevent others from understanding how your Recovery Act funds were utilized when they review your report on Recovery.gov. In accordance with OMB guidance, report narratives must be “sufficiently clear to facilitate understanding by the general public.”

**Select the most appropriate activity code(s).**

**Keep in mind:** Activity codes are codes that describe projects or activities for an award. You must provide at least one activity code in each quarterly report. Select the activity code that most closely categorizes your program's purpose.

The *Activity Code Recommendations and CFDA Numbers* reference guide ([www.ojp.gov/recovery/pdfs/actcodecfdanumbers.pdf](http://www.ojp.gov/recovery/pdfs/actcodecfdanumbers.pdf)) provides a list of recommended activity codes by program.



If you cannot find a code that accurately describes your program, additional codes can be found at the following websites:

- *National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities – Nonprofit Program Classification (NPC)*  
([www.nccsdataweb.urban.org/PubApps/nteeSearch.php?codeType=NPC](http://www.nccsdataweb.urban.org/PubApps/nteeSearch.php?codeType=NPC))
- *North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes (for infrastructure projects only)*  
([www.census.gov/eos/www/naics](http://www.census.gov/eos/www/naics))

**Provide an award description that accurately reflects the purpose of your award.**

**Requirement:** The award description is a written narrative that conveys the overall purpose of the grant funded by the Recovery Act.



Utilize the project description content provided in block #15 of your “*DOJ Grant Manager's Memorandum: Project Summary*” as well as any additional changes to the scope of the grant in order to complete the Award Description field in your Section 1512(c) report.



**Provide a project description that clearly explains the activities accomplished each quarter.**

**Requirement:** The quarterly activities/project description is a narrative of the overall purpose and expected outputs and outcomes of the award and first-tier subaward(s), including significant deliverables. Be sure that the information entered in the Quarterly Project Description field clearly explains the activities that you have performed within the respective quarter.



*The project description for your Section 1512(c) report should restate the activities you would include in your OJP progress report.*

For the award and project descriptions to be considered complete and adequate, they must include, but are not limited to, the following attributes:

- Adherence to instructions and examples for narrative fields in OMB and agency-specific guidance
- Clear and complete information on the award’s purpose, scope, nature of activities, outcomes, and status of activities (at a minimum)
- An explanation of all abbreviations or acronyms that may be unfamiliar to the general public
- The use of complete sentences

**Enter the project name or project/program title found in your award document.**

**Requirement:** The project name or project/program title needs to be entered in your report exactly as it appears on the DOJ award document in block #3.



*Avoid entering the project name or project/program title in your report manually each quarter by using the Copy Forward function within FederalReporting.gov.*

**Enter the total amount of funds expended on your project.**

**Requirement:** The Total Federal Amount of ARRA Expenditure is the amount of Recovery Act funds that has been expended to projects or activities. Prime and subrecipients must report the **cumulative** amount of Federal Recovery Act funds expended from the beginning of the award. Expenditures should be calculated according to the type of accounting basis—Cash or Accrual.



*If your accounting records are not closed prior to the end of the Initial Submission period deadline, you may provide an estimate of the total expenditures incurred for the award. When calculating this estimate, include all known actual expenditures for periods already closed and the projected amounts for periods that have not yet been closed.*

### Copy Forward Function

Begin the reporting process each quarter by using the Copy Forward function. This will link your previous report with your current report and will automatically enter key award information, reducing the risk of data entry errors.

For more information, refer to chapter 10, “Copy Forward and Copy Functions,” in the *FederalReporting.gov User Guide* (<https://www.federalreporting.gov/federalreporting/downloads.do>).





Enter the total amount of funds received for your project.

**Requirement:** The Total Federal Amount ARRA Funds Received/Invoiced is the amount of Recovery Act funds that has been received directly from OJP through draw downs from the payment request system. Prime and subrecipients must report the **cumulative** amount of Federal Recovery Act funds received from the beginning of the award.



Prime recipients should copy this amount directly from OJP's Grants Payment Request System (GPRS). The amount will be listed in the Total Amount Requested field located in the At a Glance section. For more about GPRS, visit the Office of the Chief Financial Officer's GPRS page ([www.ojp.gov/about/offices/ocfoqprs.htm](http://www.ojp.gov/about/offices/ocfoqprs.htm)).

## IV. Submit Your Final Section 1512(c) Report for Grant Awards

In order for your final Section 1512(c) report for a grant award to be accepted by OJP in FederalReporting.gov, all of the following criteria must be met (*please note, the following does not apply to contracts*):

- At least 75% of the total award amount must be drawn down from OJP.
- All funds must be expended at the prime recipient level.
- The project's activities must be completed per OJP requirements.
- The Project Status field must be marked as "Fully Complete" (marked as "4").
- No additional jobs will be funded.
- The Final Report field must be marked as "Yes."

If your report **does not** meet the final report criteria, OJP will require you to change the Final Report field in your Section 1512(c) report to "No," and you will need to submit another Section 1512(c) report during the next reporting period.

If your report **does** meet the final report criteria and the report is accepted by OJP, you will not be required to submit any additional Section 1512(c) reports in FederalReporting.gov; however, you will need to initiate the grant closeout process in GMS. In order to close out the award, you must complete and submit a closeout package in GMS, which includes the following:

- Final progress report
- Final SF-425 report
- Special condition compliance
- Financial reconciliation completion
- Programmatic requirements certification

For detailed instructions on how to submit a closeout package, please visit the GMS Online Training Tool ([www.ojp.gov/gmscbt](http://www.ojp.gov/gmscbt)).

### Keep contact information current in GMS.

It is important that your organization's contacts are up to date in GMS to ensure all communication from OJP is received. DOJ regularly sends Recovery Act reporting correspondence to the Authorized Representative and the Point of Contact on file in GMS. Recipients with outdated contact information may not receive important Recovery Act information, such as submission deadlines or policy changes. If a contact changes, submit a Grant Adjustment Notice (GAN)\* in GMS to update the new contact information.

We recommend that your organization create an email account for award related correspondence that more than one person in your organization can access. This way, if your official contact is unavailable, communications from OJP can still be accessed.

\*For more information about submitting a GAN, visit the GMS Online Training Tool ([www.ojp.gov/gmscbt](http://www.ojp.gov/gmscbt)).

