



FEBRUARY 2006 STAKEHOLDER MEETING MINUTES
February 22, 2006

Next Meeting

Date: Wednesday, April 23, 2006

Time: 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Place: HHS – Hubert H. Humphrey Building

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

Opening Remarks and Presentation:

Mr. John Etcheverry, Grants.gov Deputy Program Manager, began the meeting at 1:30 pm with the following agenda:

- Grants.gov Monthly Update
- E-Authentication
- Introduction to Outreach & Liaison Contractor
- DOJ/OJP Grants.gov Services to DHS
- Wrap Up/Questions and Answers

Grants.gov Monthly Status/Update

Mr. Etcheverry provided the Grants.gov Update. With over 20,000 submissions since October 1, 2005, Grants.gov usage shows to be steadily increasing. The number of registered users exceeds 35,000, and there are still 1 million email notifications each week. These emails have been a source of useful feedback that Grants.gov values as a means to improvement.

Mr. Etcheverry then went through the Status of Agency Participation on Find and Apply, showing that there is a lot more activity on postings. Grants.gov has been working with TMP in order to create a more usable and more valuable site. The focus is to make it very user-friendly. Major changes will be implemented in late April and all involved are excited to see how the changes will help streamline the grant process. Mr. Etcheverry discussed PureEdge, now known as IBM Workplace Forms, stating that Grants.gov is working diligently with IBM to develop a Non-Windows compatible viewer. IBM has committed to providing a platform independent viewer by November 2006. In the meantime, Grants.gov has partnered with NIH (National Institutes of Health) and launched Citrix server availability for all users as an interim solution. Mr. Etcheverry also discussed the RFI/RFP for SI coming up and recent cuts to the budget. Department of Defense (DOD) will no longer be able to commit its 450k to the Grants.gov due to its own internal budget cuts. Therefore, at the next executive board meeting, Grants.gov will discuss with the board where cuts can be made to the budget. Grants.gov aims to

minimize the affect on the applicants and will be in touch with what is decided. For the ramp up and outreach plans, Mr. Etcheverry asked that everyone work on making sure everything is updated. These plans have become very important documentation since it was determined that they may be the most comprehensive planning documents the federal government has on grants.

Mr. Etcheverry then introduced Ms. Jeanette Thornton, Office of Management and Budget.

What is E-Authentication?

Ms. Thornton began her explanation of the E-Authentication process by explaining that E-Authentication is a gateway which provides access to numerous Credential Providers. The idea of E-Authentication is to allow your agency to use existing pins and passwords for many different government services. It will impact grantees by changing the enrollment/registration process and it will also provide more choices to the grantee. E-Authentication also reduces the online identity management and credentialing burden for government agency application owners and system administrators. Ms. Thornton reviewed the welcome page of the e-authentication portal, explaining the look of the site as well as letting the audience know that the portal is up and running. In August of 2006, the implementation on the application posting service on grant application services went live; in April 2007 the pilot for the grantee community on using Grants.gov will go live, and then in August of 2007 the full implementation on Grants.gov will be active.

Mr. Etcheverry then introduced Ms. Sarah Daniels, Account Director for TMP Worldwide in order to introduce the Outreach team.

Introduction to Outreach & Liaison Contractor

Ms. Daniels started off the presentation by introducing the TMP Worldwide Outreach team consisting of Sarah; Lindsay Wozniak, who started TMP's interactive department; Ellis Pines, who has 35 years experience, creative and account service, strategy for government clients, GSA for online tools, DOL, e-Authentication; Nicol Pomeroy, who has an interactive background with emphasis on content management tools, website design and architecture; Annie Whitehead, project management, who has been instrumental in transition from previous contract as well as supporting MGS; and Megan Conroy, project management, who has previous experience in events from Marriott and will be supporting outreach groups, speaking engagements and recommending new platforms for Grants.gov. Ms. Daniels then focused on the success of Grants.gov in the past. As an interagency e-government initiative, Grants.gov has been amazingly successful as being the one website that can service the entire grant community. With access to 1,000 programs and \$400 billion worth of agency grants, Grants.gov is one stop shopping for your grant needs.

In the future, Grants.gov will increase the reach to both grantor and grantee communities;

- Economizing on resources;
- Spending wisely by looking for cost effective ways to reach the most targeted audience

- Anchor website

The website IS the experience of Grants.gov. The initial visit to the website is often the first and only impression. Trying to communicate the vision of the initiative while bringing the government closer to the people, we are working so that grantors and grantees can spend less time on process and administration and more time on the work at hand. We are taking advantage of captivated audiences to send a message, and making full use of existing channels or hubs. The tagline “Find. Apply. Succeed.” has equity. We’ve got the words out there, now we need to give them more meaning. The Outreach team is going to take it a step further by defining these words through success stories and strategic targeting.

- Objective #1
 - Show the system in action, proved every day from both a grantor and grantee point of view. The real benefit from using success stories are to show how grantees solved problems by using Grants.gov.
- Objective #2
 - Excellent PR inside the beltway. Using the many articles in Grants.gov’s launch year as a new e-Gov initiative. Earned rather than paid media, which would cost millions of dollars. PR would bring interest back to the initiative.
- Objective #3
 - Maintain relationships with people who have been supporters of the initiative all along. Also remind them of how the program is doing as well as continually reminding them of current issues, like the sun setting of PL 106-107.
- Objective #4
 - Build relationships and engage the community. There are 17,000 school districts, 3,000 colleges and universities, 50 states, 3,000 countries and 33,000 cities. We can do this by direct contact and meetings, direct response marketing, focus groups and user groups.
- Objective #5
 - We understand that agencies are in a different place with Grants.gov and we want to reach out accordingly. Align communication with needs. Emphasize communications and provide cost benefit analysis.
- Objective #6
 - Focus on the fact that Grants.gov IS the website. Move the needle on FORESEE scores by redesigning the site, streamlining the content, revising the site architecture and always bringing further enhancements to improve usability.

Mr. Etcheverry commented after Ms. Daniel’s conclusion, stating that Grants.gov is targeting the 70s for their future FORESEE score and that he feels like TMP has a good vision of how to get them there. Mr. Etcheverry then introduced Bruce Whitlock from the Department of Justice to discuss DOJ/OJP Grants.gov Services to DHS.

DOJ/OJP Grants.gov Services to DHS

Mr. Whitlock started by explaining who DOJ/OJP's grant management system serves.

- OJP hosts the majority of Justice Grants making services using our GMS system that predates Grants.Gov. The other DOJ grant-making component that participates in Grants.Gov is the Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) and they do not currently use OJP's GMS. Please note that the Certificate is at the DOJ level and we have the ability to also download COPS grant applications from Grants.gov.
- We serve 6 bureaus and offices within OJP. We also serve another component within DOJ, OVW.
- Prior to 2003, OJP hosted the Office of Domestic Preparedness (ODP). ODP was separated from Justice in 2003 and became part of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as the Office Of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP). In 2005 SLGCP was reorganized as the Preparedness Directorate/Grants & Training Office (OG&T). In all of this time they have been users of OJP's GMS and Financial Management system (IFMIS).
- In FY05 BJA piloted OJP's use of Grants.gov for both Find and Apply while the remaining offices participated in Find only. In FY06 all OJP offices are participating on Grants.Gov Find and Apply for Competitive/Discretionary Grant programs.
- In November of FY05 DHS OG&T entered in discussions with OJP to enable their competitive/discretionary grants programs serviced by OJP to utilize the Grants.gov Find and Apply. Implementation discussions continued into December and we started the setup in January.

Mr. Whitlock then went into describing how the architecture is set up:

- OJP's GMS is a full service Grants Management utility that is WEB enabled for applications acceptance and processing, award making and ongoing progress reporting/management. It is also mail enabled and it is possible to maintain an interactive communications cycle between the grant making office and the applicant community.
- OJP has implemented an XML based API interface with the Grants.gov systems that enables us to transfer submitted applications via a SOAP service where the data stream is parsed and pushed into GMS. When an application is successfully pulled from Grants.gov and pushed to GMS, we send a Tracking Number back to Grants.gov which is used by the applicant for further interaction with GMS as the application is evaluated by the grant making office.
- To facilitate service to DHS and to maintain segregation of the application data we set up distinct agency certificates with Grants.gov for Justice and DHS. For the DHS certificate, we set up a separate OC4J container to accept the XML stream and take it from there.
- In this drawing we depict the interface through Grants.gov connector as one way simply because the only information we send back to Grants.gov is the Agency Received acknowledgement and the Tracking Number when we successfully push it to GMS. In contrast, we conduct a significant amount of continued communications between the applicant/grantee and OJP via GMS' direct WEB

- interface. We also support non-competitive opportunities on GMS without using Grants.gov at this time.
- For all post-award activities (ANA, Progress Reporting, Sub-grant reporting), the grantee is supposed to log into GMS. At this time our system creates a new account in GMS for every approved award for applications received from Grants.gov. In the future, we plan to have one account per grantee rather the current one account per application.

We reviewed the basic requirements:

- Security is always a significant concern. In our case we have a system, a facility and staff that are all cleared and approved for information that is SBU. Our system is role based and compartmentalized to the degree that we can segregate DHS applications from Justice applications and can ensure that folks can only see the data they are approved to see.
- Justice requires all staff (government and contractor) to be U.S. citizens before they can be cleared to operate or maintain DOJ IT systems. This satisfies DHS concerns.

An attendee asked Mr. Whitlock if there was another component of Homeland Security, would you need to modify it again? Mr. Whitlock said that yes, they would need to modify it again. Mr. Whitlock concluded the session by discussing the lessons learned.

Closing Remarks

Mr. Etcheverry asked if any of the attendees had any questions. With no further questions from the audience, Mr. Etcheverry thanked everyone for joining Grants.gov for the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 2:35 p.m.