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SYSTEM STABILITY & THE RECOVERY ACT

During the peak of system activity caused by Recovery Act traffic to the Web site, Grants.gov experienced an unprecedented rate of growth. Traffic to the Web site and subsequent application submissions were at an all time high. This unparalleled activity placed a measurable strain on the system and its overall capacity to perform.

System enhancements have been made on a monthly basis to improve performance as a result of the increased activity. The Recovery Act impact on the site appears to have reached the pinnacle. The number of Web site hits has declined since March. Grants.gov continues their efforts to improve overall system functionality.

The largest number of applications processed occurred around several large closings on April 27, 2009. During the eight days leading to April 27, Grants.gov processed over 30K applications. This large volume caused a backup in the validation process, which caused the 48 hour validation service level to be surpassed. On May 2, 2009, after making system changes, Grants.gov was able to clear all submissions in queue to be validated. In April, the system processed 56,781 applications which was by far the largest number of applications processed in a given month. On May 12, 2009, Grants.gov surpassed the 202,133 submissions processed for the entire fiscal year 2008.

System Build 2009-01 (April), introduced the "Track My Application" feature, which reduced system strain from multiple login attempts by applicants checking the status of a submitted grant. This feature allows applicants to track the status of up to five Grants.gov Tracking Numbers (submissions) without logging in, which led to a reduction in the number of users logged into the system and further improved the processing of grant submissions.

System Build 2009-02 (May), involved upgrading virus scanning, making error messages more clear and concise, upgrading the Iplanet LDAP server software, optimizing submission and audit reports, and updating the confirmation screen. Infrastructures for applicant login, password retrieval, applicant registration and the applicant center were also improved.

System Build 2009-03 (June), is the latest system build which streamlined Step 3 of the registration process for obtaining the Grants.gov username and password, provided direct access to the applicant login, improved E-Business Point of Contact email notifications, added immediate Authorized Organization Registration (AOR) status updates, and presented clearer messaging on application tracking statuses.

Moving forward, Grants.gov will continue to implement enhancements to improve overall system capacity, speed and user satisfaction. To view detailed information on past system builds, check out the Site Features and Enhancements page:

<http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/buildreleases.jsp>.

MANAGING PARTNER



*Fulfilling the President's
Management Agenda*

LOOKING FORWARD, THE “BOOST” AND BEYOND

In addition to the monthly system builds executed by Grants.gov, the next phase of system improvements is known as the “Boost” initiative. The Boost is an investment in additional hardware and related software enhancements to further stabilize and increase reliability of the system at higher volume levels.

The Boost Encompasses:

- Increased network performance
- Increased system capacity to handle a larger number of applications
- Additional and upgraded hardware
- Increased system monitoring

The goal of the Boost is to increase processing capacity by 125% over FY08 levels within 60 days of full funding and award of contract modifications. The Boost will augment the existing system architecture, which was implemented in FY05, to provide the fastest processing and most secure transfer of your grant application.

APPLICANT VS. GRANTOR REGISTRATION

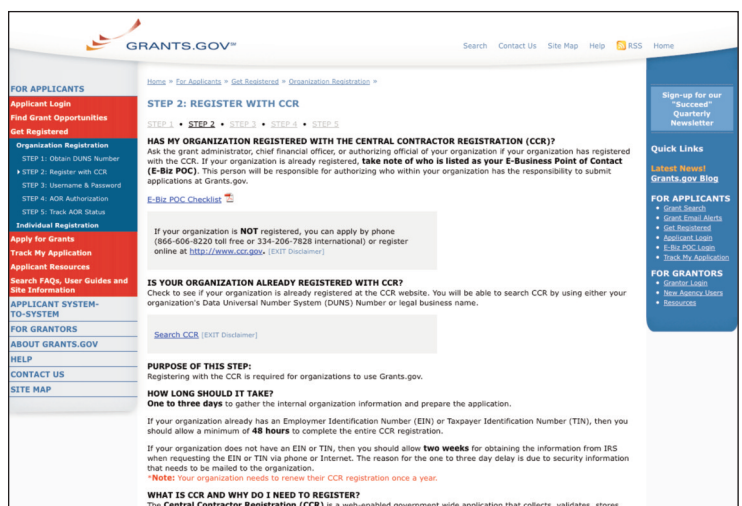
Registration is imperative to the federal grant process. Applicant and grantor registration are different processes and have been separated based on the registrant’s role and planned activities at Grants.gov.

Applicant registration is intended for those wishing to submit an application to apply for a federal grant. Grantor registration is only meant for federal agency representatives who have been assigned to create and post a funding opportunity. Applicants attempting to register as a grantor will not be able to submit an application. In order to be eligible to submit an application, grant applicants must follow the appropriate registration process. There are two types of applicant registrations, Organization and Individual. To determine which registration best fits you, visit the “Get Registered” page: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp.

CCR RENEWAL – CHECK YOUR REGISTRATION STATUS

Grants.gov registration is an integral part of the federal grant application process and is required for any organization or individual wishing to apply for a grant. This one-time process has been set up to verify and protect the applicant’s identity and allow for proper allocation of federal funds. The registration process is composed of five steps and multiple verifications.

Although registration is a one-time process involving five steps, only the second step, Register With CCR, must be renewed yearly for Organization Registration.



The screenshot shows the Grants.gov website interface. The main heading is "STEP 2: REGISTER WITH CCR". Below this, there are instructions for organizations already registered with CCR and those that are not. A "PURPOSE OF THIS STEP" section explains that CCR registration is required for organizations to use Grants.gov. The page also includes a "HOW LONG SHOULD IT TAKE?" section stating that it takes one to three days to gather internal information and prepare the application. A "WHAT IS CCR AND WHY DO I NEED TO REGISTER?" section defines CCR as a web-enabled government wide application that collects, validates, stores, and disseminates business information.

The Central Contractor Registration (CCR) is a Web-enabled government wide application managed by GSA that collects, validates, stores and disseminates business information about the federal government's trading partners in support of the contract award, grants and the electronic payment processes. Your organization’s CCR Registration designates an E-Business Point of Contact (E-Biz POC), the person who will be responsible for managing your Grants.gov activities within your organization. The CCR assigns the E-Biz POC an MPIN (Marketing Personal Identification Number) to login to Grants.gov and assign members of your organization Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) status. Being an AOR provides you the ability to submit applications electronically through Grants.gov. An E-Biz POC must also register as an AOR, using a separate email address, and approve themselves in order to submit applications.

Renewing and maintaining a valid CCR Registration status is extremely important because without this information your organization will be unable to apply for award funding. Checking your CCR status is simple. To start visit the “Search” page on CCR’s Web site:

<https://www.bpn.gov/CCRSearch/Search.aspx> and either perform a “Simple Search” or do an “Advanced Search” to narrow your search results and return more precise results. You will need your DUNS Number + Plus 4 and your CAGE code to do a “Simple Search.” To do an “Advanced Search” you will need to enter your company name, address and NAICS Code.

For additional help, contact GSA’s CCR Customer Service by filling out the form located at:

<http://www.ccr.gov/ContactCCR.aspx>.

You may also call, CCR Customer Service: 1-866-606-8220 (U.S.) or 334-206-7828 (Outside U.S.).

NEW ON GRANTS.GOV – ANIMATED TUTORIALS

Grants.gov is focused on improving the interactivity of the Web site and its features. Information is presented in many ways to provide the clearest guidance to users as they navigate Grants.gov to find and apply for federal grants.

One of our newest interactive tools is the animated tutorials available on the “Applicant Resource” page of the Web site under “Animated Tutorials”:

<http://www.grants.gov/applicants/resources.jsp#animated>.

Here you will find a listing of free tutorials on every aspect of the program, including an overview of Grants.gov, to determine your eligibility to apply for grants, getting registered as an Individual or on behalf of an Organization, and completing an application for submission to Grants.gov.

NEW ADOBE READER VERSIONS RELEASED

Adobe Reader versions 8.1.6 and 9.1.2 are available to complete your Grants.gov application. To download either version, visit the Download Software page of Grants.gov: http://www.grants.gov/help/download_software.jsp#adobe811

Software updates are made on a regular basis providing new features and addressing any new security issues.

View a complete listing of Adobe Reader software compatibility in the “Operating System Platform Compatibility Table” below.

Operating System Platform Compatibility Table

Computer	Operating System	Forms Program	Compatible
Mac	Tiger	Adobe Reader (8.1.1,8.1.2,8.1.3,8.1.4,8.1.5,8.1.6,9.0,9.1, 9.1.1,9.1.2)	Yes
Mac	Leopard	Adobe Reader (8.1.1,8.1.2,8.1.3,8.1.4,8.1.5,8.1.6,9.0,9.1, 9.1.1,9.1.2)	Yes
PC	WINXP	Adobe Reader (8.1.1,8.1.2,8.1.3,8.1.4,8.1.5,8.1.6,9.0,9.1, 9.1.1,9.1.2)	Yes
PC	Vista	Adobe Reader (8.1.1,8.1.2,8.1.3,8.1.4,8.1.5,8.1.6,9.0,9.1, 9.1.1,9.1.2)	Yes

HAVE GRANTS.GOV UPDATES SENT RIGHT TO YOUR INBOX

Receive updated information about critical issues, new tips for users and other time sensitive updates as information becomes available. To sign-up visit:

http://www.grants.gov/applicants/email_subscription_signup.jsp

WRITING A GRANT PROPOSAL & APPLYING FOR A FEDERAL GRANT

Applying for a grant is hard work and it’s never guaranteed you will be awarded a grant. There are generally strict guidelines that must be followed to apply for discretionary federal grants. These application guidelines vary among federal agencies and opportunities.

Discretionary grants posted on Grants.gov are highly competitive. A sure disqualifier for your application is to not include all that is asked for by the grantor agency. There may be many applications submitted to a single opportunity and those with the best chance of funding will include exactly what is requested by the grantor agency presented in clear, simple language.

Research, sufficient planning and preparation is key to ensure you are able to provide all that is required to apply for a particular funding opportunity. Research is critical to every proposal and determines its overall quality.

Need/Significance of Project

Researching the relevance and need for your project and having supporting information to justify federal funding is the first step to writing a clear and simple proposal.

Quality of Project Design

The quality of your project design will rely heavily on the research you have done to create it. A good project design typically fulfills the requirements and presents a clear methodology of how the project will be executed in a justifiable way. This is a major portion of the proposal and should be well thought out.

Adequacy of Resources

The budget should be adequate to fulfill the requirements of the proposed project. During your research you will need to determine the overall cost to achieve your project. Budgets that seem insufficient to achieve the project may be rejected, just as budgets that seem superfluous may not be funded.

Quality of Project Personnel

Subject knowledge and expertise is extremely important and should be demonstrated by the quality of the project personnel listed. Presenting high quality personnel helps to establish your credibility and ability to complete the project.

Quality of Project Evaluation

You should also describe in a clear way how you intend to evaluate the success of your project. Your project evaluation method is just as important as the project being proposed and is used to measure success of the project and achievement of objectives.

Quality of Proposed Services

The need for a project, quality of design, adequacy of resources, quality of personnel, and evaluation methods may all be impeccable; but the actual services and benefits delivered to the intended participants must also be presented in a meaningful way.

The lack of any of the mentioned proposal elements may lead to the rejection of your application and proposal.

REMEMBER TO: Research, plan and prepare a proposal that addresses the:

- Need for project
- Significance of project
- Quality of project design
- Adequacy of resources (budget)
- Quality of project personnel
- Quality of project evaluation
- Quality of project services

As always, if you have questions about applying for a particular funding opportunity, contact the Agency Point of Contact (POC) listed on the synopsis of the funding opportunity or on the application package cover page.

AVOID GRANT FRAUD – STAY INFORMED

Grant funding used for any purpose other than its intended purpose is considered fraud. Keep yourself informed to avoid grant fraud. There are many grant scams that have emerged and are gaining in popularity due to misinformation and lack of knowledge about federal funding and its purpose.

Although there are many grants on Grants.gov, few of them are available to individuals and none of them are available for personal financial assistance. To find an alphabetical listing of federal personal assistance visit USA.gov's Web site "Government Benefits, Grants, and Financial Aid" page: <http://www.usa.gov/Citizen/Topics/Benefits.shtml>.

There are many groups of organizations that are eligible to apply for government grants. Typically, most grantee organizations fall into the categories listed on the "Eligibility" page: <http://www.grants.gov/aboutgrants/eligibility.jsp>. To find out if you are eligible to apply for grants on Grants.gov, watch this helpful animated eligibility tutorial: <http://www.grants.gov/tutorials/gdgeligibility/Animated2009/index.htm>. If you are eligible and would like to apply for a federal grant, you must be registered with Grants.gov. Visit the "Get Registered" page: http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp to begin the registration process.

OUTREACH AND EVENTS

Grants.gov reaches out to the community in multiple ways increasing knowledge and accessibility to grant information. The “Find and Apply Presentation,” given in-person in the DC Metro area or via interactive Web-based sessions, is one of the main ways Grants.gov conveys information first-hand to the public about the program. The “Find and Apply Presentation” is a one hour complimentary session which walks participants through finding and applying for a federal grant, the registration process and current program initiatives. To date, Grants.gov has completed 61 of these presentations reaching out to over 4,800 people.

The live presentations offer invaluable direct contact with the grant community. During the presentation, questions are always welcome allowing the audience to interact in an informal way with a member of the Grants.gov Program Management Office (PMO). The presentations also help the PMO gain insight on ways to improve the program.

To request a complimentary Grants.gov presentation on the “Find and Apply” process, visit the “Applicant Resource” page to complete the form located here:

<http://www.grants.gov/applicants/resources.jsp>. View sample “Find and Apply Presentation” slides:
<http://www.grants.gov/assets/GrantsgovFindApply.pdf>.

STAKEHOLDER WEBCAST

The next Grants.gov Stakeholder Webcast will be held live **October 21, 2009 from 1-2 p.m. Eastern Time**, to discuss current program status, system enhancements, other activities and issues affecting the grant community. Details for viewing the archive Webcast are available on the Stakeholder Web site page:
http://www.grants.gov/help/stakeholder_communications.jsp.

Notice: July 15, 2009 Stakeholder Webcast

Due to a Distributed-Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attack on the listserv provider we were unable to distribute the invitation for the July 15 Grants.gov Stakeholder Webcast in a timely manner. This presentation has been archived on the Stakeholder

Webcast page of the web site and may be viewed by using the following link:

http://www.grants.gov/help/webcast_communications_july15_2009.jsp.

Thank you for your understanding and we apologize for any inconvenience.

UPCOMING EVENT SCHEDULE

Stakeholder Webcast

October 21, 2009

1-2 p.m. ET

http://www.grants.gov/help/stakeholder_communications.jsp.

The Library Corporation

September 29, 2009

Webex Session

American Association of Grant Professionals

Annual Conference

November 4-7, 2009

Austin, Texas

<http://grantprofessionals.org/annual-conference/about-the-2009-annual-conference.aspx>

GET CONNECTED

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