

COFAR Principals Meeting
August 27, 2012
White House Conference Center Lincoln Room

Key Points of Discussion

Grant Reform Policy

- OMB provided a summary of key policy decisions likely to be proposed in upcoming grant reform proposal which is still under review.
 - OMB will follow-up with HHS regarding approval level required for deviations from negotiated indirect cost rates.
 - OMB will confirm authority to make changes on disclosure statement requirements for institutions of higher educations within circular (not for procurement related disclosure statement).
 - OMB will follow-up with White House Council on Women and Girls, OSTP, and others regarding policy implications for allowability of family friendly costs.

Federal Spending Transparency – Government Accountability and Transparency Board (GATB) Update

- The COFAR considered ideas proposed in the forthcoming “Strategy to Improve Federal Spending Transparency” concept paper requested by GATB including universal award ID, improving reliability and reconciliation of Federal funds, and related ideas proposed in the DATA Act.
- One goal of any proposed policy will be to set spending and accountability standards with appropriate controls for transparency while allowing agencies maximum flexibility to meet those standards to the extent possible with existing systems and resources.
- OMB will circulate the draft paper to the COFAR following review by a cross-government, cross-council group.

COFAR Priorities for FY13 – FY15

- In an initial discussion of potential areas for COFAR work to focus for FY13-15, ideas discussed included:
 - Continuing work on Grant Reform
 - Implementation of GATB recommendations on spending transparency
 - Training & certification coupled with grants workforce development
 - Closeout of ARRA Awards
 - FAPIIS/Do Not Pay including implementation
 - Governance of SAM/IAE/Grants.gov
 - Communication with non-COFAR partners
 - Policy on programmatic evidence and outcomes – programmatic and financial management integration
 - Review possible overlap between Foreign Assistance.gov and USAspending.gov

COFAR Outreach and Governance

- Plans for outreach include establishing a COFAR website similar to CFOC and GATB which will include summaries of meetings, ongoing policy issues, and allow for receipt of public feedback –

likely integrated with the new forthcoming CFOC website. This will likely be combined with a FEDs-only MAX page.

- Plans for hosting public town hall meetings via webinars/live streaming video to allow broad access to Federal grants updates.
 - Will include representatives from key stakeholder groups in the grants community
 - Initial town hall webinar tentatively planned for late September 2012
- Plans for convening town hall meetings for the Federal grants community to allow for dialogue between OMB, COFAR, and non-COFAR agencies.
 - **Initial Federal agency town hall meeting was held Tuesday August 28, 2012**
 - At the meeting, COFAR senior staff co-chairs shared recent COFAR discussions and solicited input on upcoming areas of priority for the grants community.
 - Members of the community emphasized the need for robust communications with the COFAR and the broader group of agencies.
 - During the discussion of potential priorities, community members highlighted the need to build on previous GPC/GEB work on training and certification, and to also follow-up on any needed implementation work around FAPIIS/Do Not Pay.
- COFAR continues to be governed by its founding memorandum, M-12-01, "Creation of the Council on Financial Assistance Reform"