PRESS RELEASE

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BREAKING NEWS
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Saving Time and Money

WASHINGTON—The Recovery Board is launching a pilot project to determine if a centralized system of collecting financial reporting data would save recipients of federal funds and government agencies money and time.

In announcing the Grants Reporting Information Project, or GRIP, Michael Wood, the Board's Executive Director, said that many recipients of federal funds complain about submitting multiple financial reports on the same government award to different federal agencies. GRIP will collect data on grant awards made by several agencies to pilot participants, including seven universities and a community college.

"It would seem more sensible to consolidate government reporting requirements so that recipients could submit reports to a single collection system,'' Wood wrote in a blog posted today on Recovery.gov. "With that in mind, the Recovery Board will be testing whether a centralized system of data collection and warehousing would save recipients and government agencies money and time.''

The text of Wood's blog follows:

Filling out government paperwork can be repetitive, time-consuming, and costly to those who receive federal funds. An oft-heard query, and complaint, from recipients of government funds: How many times do I have to submit the same information to different government agencies?

That's a legitimate complaint. Indeed, it can be a pain to fill out even a single government report, as anyone who's prepared one knows. But when confronted with the prospect of submitting multiple reports on the same government award—sometimes using different paper and electronic formats—it can be downright maddening.

The Recovery Board has spent more than three years in the data trenches, collecting spending reports from recipients of Recovery Act funds. Some recipients also are required to file similar reports with other agencies—and they are really not all that happy with that bureaucratic requirement. And, frankly, we don't blame them. It would seem more sensible to consolidate government reporting requirements so that recipients could submit reports to a single collection system.

With that in mind, the Recovery Board will be testing whether a centralized system of data collection and warehousing would save recipients and government agencies money and time. We are calling this pilot project the Grants Reporting Information Project, or GRIP for short. GRIP will be modeled after the reporting system the Board created for the Recovery program.

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GRIP will collect financial data from recipients of non-Recovery grant awards made by several agencies. The recipients include seven universities, a community college, the State of Nebraska, and a local city in Maryland. The agencies include the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Education, Energy, Health and Human Services, Housing, Interior, and Justice; the Environmental Protection Agency; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; the National Science Foundation; the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and the Office of Naval Research.

Test recipients will submit their reports to Grants.FederalReporting.gov. The website is an offshoot of Federal-Reporting.gov, the password-protected site developed with Environmental Protection Agency technology to gather spending data from Recovery Act recipients for the past three years. EPA has worked closely with the Board in developing the GRIP project.

GRIP data will be collected through November 9. Once the reports are in, participating agencies will evaluate the data reports for accuracy, completeness, and compatibility with existing financial reporting systems. If this proof of concept model proves feasible, we would next sponsor a full pilot project in which agencies would use the centralized system over a more extended period.

This could end up being a big deal if this initial pilot project suggests significant efficiencies and savings. Once the results are in, I will report the findings in this blog.

--Michael Wood, Executive Director, Recovery Board

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