Pam 3.0 Release Modernizes Payment Processing & Reporting

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The Payment Application Modernization (PAM) project is important to the United States Government because the current payment process relies upon old technology including aging programming languages. The legacy applications currently support over 30 different file input formats and check faces due to the different needs of the more than 200 Federal Program Agencies (FPA's) serviced by the US Treasury Regional Financial Centers (RFCs). The PAM project is modernizing the technology by building a custom application that will standardize, automate, and streamline the payment process ensuring "on time, every time" payment delivery for the millions of recipients across the United States and beyond, on behalf of the FPA's.

With the original release of PAM, only Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments were processed through the PAM application. In February 2010, another piece of functionality was added to interface to the Secure Payment System (SPS). This interface permits the streaming of payment certifications to the PAM application. Linking PAM and SPS set the stage for the latest new software release, Pam 3.0, which includes such payment types as daily vendor, salary, travel, and miscellaneous payments. This major new release, which successfully occurred in November 2010, installed significant functionality to the PAM application. Included in the November 2010 release were functionality associated with payment offset processing, ability to accept a standardized agency input payment format, the use of a standardized print check face, and a standardized file receipt notification report that will be electronically delivered to agencies upon receipt of a payment file. Of particular note is the new standardized payment format, which will accommodate new Government-wide Accounting (GWA) accounting requirements that will require agencies to report Treasury Account Symbols (TAS) and Business Event Type Codes (BETC) for payments.

As there are significant changes occurring within Treasury's payment modernization and new accounting reporting requirements initiatives, there is a critical need to reach out to FPAs so they understand how these efforts will impact them. The key date to focus on is October 1, 2014—at which time, all FPAs will be required to use the new standardized payment format. The PAM application is now ready to accept the new standard payment format with the November 2010 software release. In May 2012, FPAs using the standard payment format would be eligible to be "GWA Ready" and be fully compliant with the TAS/BETC reporting requirements for their payments. FPAs not ready at that time would have until the October 1, 2014, timeline to become compliant. Providing FPAs with this advance lead time should provide ample time to plan and budget for these new changes.

The RFCs will play an integral role in working with customer agencies ensuring proper and timely awareness of the upcoming changes. This is envisioned to be conducted and communicated via conference calls, web conferencing, training and educational sessions, and face-to-face meetings. Additionally, the RFCs sponsor Customer Advisory Board (CAB) and specialized agency informational forums which will be used to convey and communicate these changes and impacts. The PAM Project management staff will support the RFCs in these various forums. Outreach efforts have already been underway with many agencies. In fact, some FPAs actively pursued the use of the PAM standard payment format with the intent of being in position to submit their payments in conjunction with the November 2010 PAM software release.

The RFCs and the PAM Project Management Office (PMO) staff will be very busy over the coming months working with customer agencies to get the word out about the changes and impacts to the payment processing and reporting requirements. On the heels of this communication, the RFCs and PMO staff will begin working with customer FPAs to conduct testing and to coordinate their transition to the new PAM software. For more information or to download the requirement specification documents of the PAM standard input file format and/or the standard agency notification report, please visit the PAM website at: www.fms.treas.gov/pam/index.html.