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OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
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MEMORANDUM FOR AGENCY BUDGET DIRECTORS, CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICERS,
AND PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT OFFICERS

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SUBJECT: Federal Program Inventory Exploratory Pilot

When the Federal government provides transparent information on its spending, it promotes efficient allocation of taxpayer dollars and accountability in how agencies spend these funds. While agencies have made considerable progress in improving the transparency of their spending data, additional work is needed to facilitate comparison of federal activities that have similar missions and purposes.

The Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) directs the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to develop a single website that provides a “coherent picture of all Federal programs, and the performance of the Federal Government as well as individual agencies.” This information will allow policymakers and the public to review and analyze Federal spending that shares a common purpose, both within and across Federal agencies.

To make progress towards providing this comparative review of federal spending, in the coming weeks OMB will work with agencies on an exploratory pilot that builds on efforts related to the Federal Program Inventory (FPI). This pilot will start with 12 program categories, where agencies are asked to work with OMB to identify associated programs and provide for each of them descriptive information and two years of historical spending data. OMB plans to publicly release the results of the FPI Exploratory Pilot.

As we implement the FPI Exploratory Pilot, we will learn how to expand it into a comprehensive inventory that includes robust connections across budget formulation, execution, and performance data. This pilot is designed to provide critical insight into the most efficient path to a more comprehensive inventory, while also limiting agency reporting burden to those areas most critical to achieving the inventory’s intent.

Additional detail on the FPI Exploratory Pilot, including the 12 program categories, are attached. In the coming days, OMB will issue a Budget Data Request (BDR) to agencies to collect information for this pilot.

Thank you for your help in achieving this goal.

Federal Program Inventory Exploratory Pilot

Background

The Government Performance and Results Modernization Act of 2010 (GPRAMA) directs OMB to ensure the effective operation of a single website that provides a coherent picture of programmatic information, as defined by agencies, across the Federal government. Under GPRAMA, this website should include information categorized by a common definition of program easily viewable and openly accessible to the public on a centralized website. The statute requires a description of the purpose of the program, the program's contribution to the mission and goals of the agency, and spending data for the current and two previous fiscal years.

GPRAMA does not define the term "program" for the purposes of creating the inventory. The Act instead defers that authority and responsibility to OMB. In consultation with agencies and stakeholders, OMB is responsible for providing the detailed implementing instructions for achieving GPRAMA's intent for the inventory, including a common terminology and methodology for conceptualizing program and reporting requirements for associated information elements.

In 2013, OMB developed and published an initial inventory pursuant to GPRAMA. In developing the 2013 list, OMB's guidance gave significant latitude and flexibility to agencies for identifying the term program through different programmatic approaches, relying on GAO's definition of program, recognizing that both agencies and their stakeholders use the term "program" in different ways across widely varying missions. While this effort provided agencies the flexibility to identify programs differently, it ultimately led to inconsistencies in the types of information reported for the inventory.

Since this effort, OMB has issued guidance in OMB Circular A-11 to leverage the DATA Act information architecture to help achieve the reporting purposes and intent of the GPRAMA inventory requirement. OMB has also taken steps to mature the DATA Act by improving the fidelity of the data and related linkages. Notwithstanding such improvements, the DATA Act implementation does not allow for adequate comparison of programs across government.

Federal Program Inventory Exploratory Pilot

In order to make sustainable progress on creating a Federal Program Inventory (FPI), OMB is launching an FPI Exploratory Pilot as an interim step to creating a comprehensive inventory. The pilot is intended to identify where there may be gaps in guidance and inconsistencies or conflicting definitions and is not intended to replace any existing Federal guidance. The pilot consists of the following phases:

- **Phase One:** Through this memorandum OMB introduces the FPI pilot and identifies programmatic categories.

- **Phase Two:** Agencies, working with OMB counterparts, identify associated programs and provide data about those programs. A Budget Data Request (BDR) will follow this memorandum with guidance for how to provide this information.
- **Phase Three:** OMB publishes data on a public website and engages stakeholders.
- **Phase Four:** OMB synthesizes the feedback and lessons learned. If required, OMB issues updated guidance in advance of the next data collection iteration.

Categories for the FPI Exploratory Pilot

OMB has identified the following categories for the FPI Exploratory Pilot. These categories encompass programs across the Federal government.

AI/QUANTUM INFORMATION SCIENCE R&D	BROADBAND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	FLOOD RISK
GLOBAL HEALTH	HIV/AIDS
HOMELESSNESS	NATIVE AMERICAN
OPIOID EPIDEMIC RESPONSE - HEALTH PROGRAMS	STEM EDUCATION
TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE	WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The availability of generally accepted definitions for these activities and regular OMB-led data calls collecting this information were primary drivers for selecting many of the categories. Moreover, focusing this initial effort on program identification within a category will allow for immediate cross-cutting analysis of the pilot data and further illustrate the potential benefits of constructing a more comprehensive inventory.

OMB will issue a BDR to agencies to collect the following information about these program categories:

- Agencies will identify programs associated with each category. For this pilot, program will be defined as a unique combination of an expenditure method and clearly delineated mission or purpose that has one or more recipients and beneficiaries.
- For each program agencies will provide descriptive information including name, description, and relevant websites.
- For each program agencies will also provide 2019 and 2020 spending data including the associated budget account(s), unobligated balances, new budget authority, and obligations.

On completion of the data collection, OMB will publish the results of this pilot on a public website and work with agencies and other stakeholders to solicit feedback. This feedback and other lessons learned will be used to iterate on the data-collection process as a government-wide implementation plan providing for a comprehensive inventory is finalized.

Long Term Vision

The long-term goal of this effort is to make readily available a comprehensive inventory that includes robust connections across budget formulation, execution, and performance data. Over time, a mature inventory will allow Federal policymakers and the public alike to view individual spending and performance information within the larger context of all Federal programmatic spending. Upon successful implementation of this multi-year effort, Federal decision-makers and the public will have access to an integrated data repository that facilitates centralized program reporting and decision-making. As part of this long-term effort, OMB will also explore how best to leverage the DATA Act process and associated displays for greater integration to achieve our goal of realizing a more data-centric environment.