

Grants Management Questions

February 2008

1. List of agencies (or parts thereof) you are currently servicing.

The COE currently provides grants management services to:

- Denali Commission
- HHS Administration for Children and Families (ACF)
- HHS Administration on Aging (AoA)
- HHS Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR)
- HHS Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS)
- HHS Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
- HHS Indian Health Service (IHS)
- HHS Office of Public Health and Science (OPHS)
- USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)

2. List of agencies (or parts thereof) you have scheduled to bring on – and when.

The following agencies have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under the GMLOB initiative and are new partners of the COE. We are currently in the process of assisting each new member in the development of their GMLOB Implementation Plans, due to OMB by March 31, 2008. While we have some limited information about implementation schedules, in general this information is not complete at this time.

- Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)
- Department of State [likely to be limited to domestic grant-making]
- Department of Transportation [possibly all components, but initially the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA)]
- Department of Treasury [all components]
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) [possibly to be the first new partner to implement COE]

3. List of agencies that COE believes are candidates for its services.

The Veterans' Administration (VA) has drafted an MOU with the COE, but it is not fully approved within the VA. The Small Business Administration (SBA) has expressed some interest in using the COE. The COE believes its services would be appropriate for other agencies, such as the Departments of Labor and Justice (and others). However, an important aspect for achieving any successful implementation is the agency's degree of cooperation and desire to use the COE.

4. Which agencies are members of the CEB board?

Currently the COE Executive Board (CEB) includes membership from those agencies that are “Managing Partners,” having provided one FTE to the COE project team. These are: HHS Administration for Children and Families (ACF), HHS Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), and HHS Office of Public Health and Science (OPHS).

5. What types of grants does COE support? (i.e., State block grants, competitive discretionary, etc.)

The COE has the capability to support multiple types of grants, including discretionary awards, cooperative agreements, block grants, mandatory formula awards, and open entitlements. The COE offers support for the entire grants business life cycle.

6. In terms of numbers, what percentage of the work load is competitive discretionary, block grants, etc.

X

OPDIV	Count Discretionary Awards	Count Discretionary Actions	Sum Discretionary Funds Awarded	Count Mandatory Awards	Count Mandatory Actions	Sum Mandatory Funds Awarded
ACF	6,515	12,868	\$7,607,874,868	3,007	8,555	\$37,594,442,099
AOA	375	495	\$47,423,678	922	1,520	\$1,307,696,737
CMS	344	457	\$626,267,535			
HRSA	9,058	18,641	\$5,299,691,090			
IHS	761	1,224	\$171,319,030			
OPHS	812	1,409	\$857,921,782			
Total:	17,865	35,094	\$14,610,497,983	3,929	10,075	\$38,902,138,836

7. Grant applications: what percentage of grant applicants regularly re-apply?

Of the 16,000 competitive applications received per fiscal year, the COE estimates 5-10% (or, 1,000 – 2,000) are from new applicants. Furthermore, of those new applications, the COE estimates 25% will receive funding. Please also note that the COE has about 8,000 – 9,000 non-competitive continuations each fiscal year, plus about 10,000 mandatory grant awards.

8. COE Operations & Maintenance costs are based on the number of award actions for a year. What is an award action?

Generally an award action is counted when a notice of award is produced during a particular fiscal year. This includes all new award notices; continuations (both competing and non-competing); and all amendments/revisions whether they are monetary or non-monetary. Amendments/revisions can include extensions, changes of project director, change of vendor/grantee (successor in interest or replacement grantee), supplements, carry over of unobligated funds, budgetary adjustments, changes to terms and conditions--anything that results in a notice of award or revised notice of award that is produced through the system and that would be sent to a grantee.

The charges are based upon the counts of the previous fiscal year award actions. The initial estimate is based on the counts of award actions for the programs with active grants that had award notices during the previous fiscal year for those programs that are migrated to GrantSolutions.gov for any portion of the life-cycle processing.

Although the system can produce award actions for purposes of "closeout" of a grant project in a financial or payment system. The "closeout" award actions are not included in the award action count. Generally once an award is closed then no new award actions will be produced for that grant or project.

This is a general yardstick to compare one agency's usage of the full life-cycle system with another agency's usage of the system. There are no separate charges for numbers of funding opportunities, numbers of applications submitted, numbers of post-award reports submitted by grantees.

9. Will my Operations & Maintenance costs go up? Is there a maximum or a minimum charge?

The overall systems costs are shared by the COE partners. Costs cannot increase without approval of the COE Executive Board and the affected member. The current costs are \$200 per award action. Minimum agency costs are \$0.3M annually and maximum costs are \$3M for using the standard system.

10. When will Operations & Maintenance costs apply?

O&M costs do not apply until an agency is scheduled to use the system. There are separate negotiated costs related to assistance with Fit-Gap analysis, Set up and Migration costs, and special services not part the current or projected grant system.

11. What office or person at OMB developed the 14 stages chart?

OMB did not develop the 14 stages for the GMLOB grants life cycle. It was developed collaboratively by all grant-making agencies that participated in the GMLOB Task Force during the Spring and Summer of 2004. The GMLOB Task Force, initially co-chaired by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and the Department of Education (and more recently co-chaired by NSF and HHS), was established by OMB in mid-March 2004 when the E-Gov Administrator kicked off the Grants Management Line of Business initiative in partnership with GSA. The GMLOB Task Force worked to reach agreement, across all grant-making agencies, on the business stages of the grants management life cycle. The GMLOB 14 stages were presented to OMB in early Fall 2004 and OMB concurred with the GMLOB Task Force.

12. How do grant applicants get a DUNS number? Do you have any insight into why GSA's IAE program requires \$6M in FY08 and 09 for DUNS numbers?

Grant applicants may receive a DUNS number for free (if they do not already have one) by calling Dun & Bradstreet's toll-free number established specifically for grantees. The requirement for each grant application to carry a DUNS number was put into OMB's policy on "Use of a Universal Identifier by Grant Applicants" issued as final policy on June 27, 2003 [68 FR 38402]. When the Grants.gov initiative implemented its APPLY option in October 2003, as a single portal for grant applicants to send applications to any grant-making agency, part of the process includes grantees registering in the CCR (Central Contractor Registry) operated under GSA's IAE program. This was done as a practical approach for registering and validating grant applicants under an existing on-line registration and validation process rather than building a new process. Furthermore, research done by a small work team revealed the fact that many grantees (colleges and universities, State and local governments, some non-profit organizations) already had a DUNS number.

13. Please explain what the GrantSolutions Fitgap is?

During the planning phase of an agency's migration to GrantSolutions, the business processes and system capabilities that support the grants management process of a potential partner organization are compared to those of ACF's GrantSolutions system. This comparison activity builds a common grants management understanding between partners, identifies divergences among business processes, and identifies gaps among system capabilities. Sharing of business process documentation, business rules, policies, data, and system generated output are all part of this activity. The results are documented and evaluated by both organizations to ensure each agency's business needs are met and issues are identified to support a smooth transition/migration.

The Grants Management Line of Business (GMLOB) processes and subprocesses have been mapped to the GrantSolutions processes and system capabilities. This provides the basis for mapping grants management processes and system capabilities for a partner organization.

Working closely with subject matter experts for the partner organization and ACF, each process and capability is reviewed and evaluated. This analysis will result in processes that will be deemed critical and non-critical. A critical process may be in a 'required' status with little or no modification to GrantSolutions or a 'not map at all' status in which case a decision will need to be made to either modify GrantSolutions to accommodate, or make a change in the process at the partner level. All non-critical processes will be similarly scrutinized.

Once the partners are in agreement regarding the fits and gaps and this analysis is completed, business decisions regarding the implementation can be made and carried out.

Staffing for the fit/gap comparison requires personnel from the partner organizations with expertise in the business processes and policy (subject matter experts, both in the program area and grants management), as well as program or grants management staff with supporting system functional expertise.

Our contractor charges about \$115 an hour per person for the high level of expertise required above. The number of people needed and the amount of time required will be estimated in conjunction with each partner agency requesting help with the fitgap analysis. Sample formats of previous fitgaps can be made available for review as needed.