AUGUST 2005 STAKEHOLDER MEETING MINUTES
August 31, 2005

<u>Next Meeting</u>
Date: Tuesday, October 25, 2005
Time: 1:30 pm- 3:30 pm
Place: HHS – Hubert H. Humphrey Building

All meeting materials and presentations are available at Grants.gov by visiting
http://www.grants.gov/meetingmaterials083105.

<u>Opening Remarks and Presentation</u>**:**
Ms. Rebecca Spitzgo, Grants.gov Program Manager, began the meeting at 1:30 pm with
the following agenda:

- Grants.gov Update & "Goal Star" Achievers
- Agency Ramp-up Schedules
- Grants Management Line of Business Overview
- Applicant System-to-System Update
- Find & Apply Merger
- Questions & Answers

<u>Grants.gov Update & "Goal Star" Achievers</u>
Ms. Spitzgo provided the Grants.gov Update. Last week, Grants.gov achieved a target
performance milestone – over 15,000 electronic applications submissions were received.
These submissions were received across 22 of the 26 Federal grant-making agencies.
Since April 2005, 13,000 electronic applications were received. Next week, a press
release will be issued, marking the milestone occasion. The number of Registered Users
has now exceeded 16,500 – this number represents the total number of Authorized
Organization Representatives (AORs).

Thus far, over 1,400 application packages have been posted by the agencies with the
National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), National Aeronautics and Space
Administration (NASA) and the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS)
posting their first application packages since the June Stakeholder Meeting. This brings
the total number of agencies on board with Grants.gov to 24 of 26. Grants.gov aims to
have all agencies on board by the end of September 2005.

Grants.gov Find site usage continues to consistently average 1.5M hits per week and
1.1M applicant notification emails distributed weekly. Please note that issues with
indexing within Grants.gov Find were resolved.

New agencies have joined the ranks as "Goal Star" achievers by meeting the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) mandate to post 25% of application packages posted on Grants.gov Find to Apply. These agencies include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and the Department of Labor (DOL). 19 of 26 agencies achieved the 25% posting goal; 10 of 26 agencies met both the posting and electronic application submission goal. Please refer to the Status of Agency Participation on Apply handout for a list of these agencies. Also, one agency, the Small Business Administration (SBA), reached the "100% Club" for posting all application packages and completely migrating all submissions to Grants.gov Apply. Awards were accepted by Dennis Finney from the EPA, Brett Bobley from NEH, Esther Johnson from DOL, and Arvette Leake-Davis from the SBA.

The Grants.gov Executive Board has now expanded to include all 26 Federal grant-making agencies. The 2007 Grants.gov budget and funding algorithms were finalized with a 15% increase to fund additional Help Desk support and to support Grants.gov's long-term architecture. The budget will be shared at next week's Executive Board meeting.

Grants.gov has developed a Fellow Program to help recruit detailees to the Program. Currently, there are three Grants.gov detailees, two of which will be retiring at the end of this year. Therefore, Grants.gov hopes to recruit detailees and have a total of four detailees who can offer insight from their home agencies. The Grants.gov Fellow Program closes October 14, 2005. For more information, please visit http://www.grants.gov/fellow.

The Grants.gov user group will host its kick-off meeting on September 6th from 1:30-3:00pm at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Representatives from each agency will be in attendance at this meeting. For more information about the user group, please contact Vincent Sprouls, Grants.gov Program Advisor, at Vincent.sprouls@hhs.gov.

Grants.gov hosted a long-term architecture meeting earlier this month. Highlights from the meeting will be provided at the October Stakeholder meeting.

FY 2006 Grants.gov agency goals mandated by OMB have been released and include:
- Posting 100% of funding opportunities on Find
- Posting 75% of Find opportunities on Apply – approximately 2,500 application packages
- 45,000 electronic application submissions – agency specific submission goals will soon follow

The total number of electronic applications received for FY 2006 will be calculated beginning with zero starting October 1, 2005 to meet the 45,000 goal. Grants.gov will use the agencies' FY 2006 ramp-up schedules and Outreach plans to plan accordingly.

Q: Will Grants.gov communicate any changes with the registration process during the Find/Apply merger?
A: There will be no changes on the applicant side with the Find/Apply merger. The only changes will occur on the agency side and will be communicated to the agencies soon.

Agency Ramp-Up Schedules
Mr. Peter Brunner, Grants.gov Program Advisor, provided an update on the FY 2006 agency ramp-up schedules. The agency ramp-up schedules are used to plan and measure progress towards FY 2006 Grants.gov participation targets. The ramp-up information provided will be used to establish numeric Apply posting goals for each agency and to report agency progress towards meeting the OMB goals. Grants.gov is also able to use this information to alert the Help Desk during spikes in Program closing activity. Agency Grants.gov milestones per OMB are to have completed ramp-up schedules due 1st quarter, FY 2006 or by November 1st. A completed ramp-up schedule means the designated Grants.gov Program Advisor has reviewed it before the final product is submitted.

Ramp-up schedules are due November 1st to provide sufficient time for review and discussion with the agencies. Program Advisors will work with the agencies to finalize schedules. They should include all discretionary opportunities, whether or not they will be published on Grants.gov Apply and separately identify all other opportunities to be posted. Agencies should also report the estimated number of electronic application submissions anticipated.

Agency Outreach plans to the grant community and agency staff must also be submitted. These are also due November 1st. The outreach plan helps to identify areas where Grants.gov Program Management Office (PMO) support is needed. Outreach plans can be submitted as an open format.

Grants Management Line of Business Overview
Mr. Charles Havekost, CIO for the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), provided an update on the Grants Management Line of Business (GMLOB). HHS and the National Science Foundation (NSF) are co-managing partners of the GMLOB with Charles Havekost and Mary Santonastasso serving as co-chairs. The goal of the GMLOB is to identify and establish common solution and target architecture approaches that identify systems, best practices, migration strategies and key interfaces to develop common business process and system solutions in grants management.

The stove-piping in Federal grants management has been particularly pronounced due to the limited COTS (Commercial off the Shelf) software offerings. Many agencies were compelled to develop custom one-off grants systems, posing a challenge for cross-agency efforts. The GMLOB recognizes that several agencies have developed successful grants management systems which can be leveraged across the government. The GMLOB is focusing on a consortium approach, where successful agencies will act as lead solution providers with other agencies connecting to their hardware and software as customers.

To start the process the GMLOB recently began data collection efforts with agencies to determine whether agencies have:

- Worked with other agencies
- An agency service provision model
- An agency partnership model
- Agency expertise in serving internal agency customers

This data will help the GMLOB garner intent and source potential agencies providers and customers.

The goal is to identify three agencies with the capability and technology platform for cross-agency service provision, thereby providing a choice of several agencies with successful track records.

Q: Can an agency elect to be a cross-agency service provider?
A: Yes

Q: Are cooperative agreements included as grant opportunities on Grants.gov?
A: Yes

Applicant System-to-System
A. MIT Coeus S2S Implementation

Mr. Stephen Dowdy from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) provided an overview of MIT's Coeus Applicant System-to-System (S2S) implementation. MIT was the pilot organization for the Applicant S2S.

There were several challenges with the S2S. Initial challenges included;

- Understanding the technology
- Understanding the grants application meta schema because each time a new form is added or if any form changes are made, the meta schema must be recompiled
- Ability to generate XML representations of grant applications because each data item to be included in the new form must be programmed

MIT's implementation incorporated core components of the S2S client in Coeus. S2S web services (GetOpportunityList, SubmitApplication, GetApplicationList, and GetApplicationStatusDetail) were also implemented in the Coeus S2S package. An XML driver verifier, used to validate proposal data, was implemented within Coeus to check if all streams are implemented for an application schema.

However, there are several concerns.

- Version management – The lead time before a new version goes to production needs better coordination because reaction times differ across the board as well as the co-existence of multiple schema versions.

- Schema design – There is an arbitrary maximum number of occurrences of repeating elements and the schemas seem to be defined for PureEdge simplification.
- Agency branding of forms instead of creating forms that can be used across multiple agencies.
- Using consistent terminology within the forms
- Consistent use of look-up tables
- Creating forms to collect data not stored and/or used by the agency adds to training costs
- Retiring old forms and getting the word out to the program officers
- Training due to various implementations
- Trying to use a generic attachment form when possible instead of requesting specific file names

Costs due to changes to data can be significant. For example, changes to existing data costs roughly $10,000. This estimate includes three weeks of programming, rebuilding and redeploying the application, creating a deployment package for other schools or some form of distribution, testing with Grants.gov and the agency and training users to use the new form. Changes to non-existing data can cost upwards of $20,000. It is important for agencies to take into consideration the burden on the applicants in order to make the S2S implementation successful.

B. InfoEd System's Approach to Applicant S2S

Mr. Scott Horgen of InfoEd Systems International provided an update on their approach to the Applicant S2S with the following agenda:

- InfoEd Corporate Overview
- InfoEd and eGov
- Working with Grants.gov
- NSF via Grants.gov – Step by Step
- InfoEd's experience
- Items for discussion
- Moving ahead with Grants.gov

InfoEd is the leading provider of software solutions for electronic Research Administrations including over 500 medical centers, universities, institutions and corporations worldwide. They provide a comprehensive suite of integrated software solutions that streamline administration of each discrete area and enables coordination across research offices. InfoEd is grantee-centric with grant application submissions being one component of complex interwoven processes from a compliance standpoint.

National Science Foundation via Grants.gov began with extensive Grants.gov documentation. Once the system was setup, the reference implementation (RI) was tested and the S2S RI was deployed along with the S2S Client Server. Then Grants.gov's web services were imbedded into InfoEd's Proposal Development module. Specific

supporting functionality was added into the module to allow the ability to publish Grants.gov XML with attachments direct from the InfoEd data model. Grants.gov's S2S capability was also integrated into InfoEd's Proposal Development user interface. The Proposal Development's Grants.gov S2S capability was then tested within the AT test environment. A "live" opportunity was tested by requesting that Grants.gov make the specific application package available on the test environment. InfoEd then successfully posted a submission with email confirmation that the application had been submitted.

InfoEd's experience working with Grants.gov was positive. The documentation was excellent and the test environment and support resources were invaluable. However, there are several items for discussion according to InfoEd's perspective. To name a few;

- End to end agency testing
- Grants.gov universal registration for all agencies
- Vendor certification of applicant organization sites
- Intake processing – how will peak loads be managed on major deadlines
- Centralizing post-submission communications

Q: What is end to end agency testing?
A: Currently, testing can only be conducted from the organization to Grants.gov but not to the agency. It is important to know if the agency receives the application package. This functionality is currently being tested on Grants.gov.

Find & Apply Merger
Mr. Jim Cain, Grants.gov Program Advisor, provided an update on the Find & Apply merger with the following agenda:

- Project goals
- Combined functionality
- Integrated Security
- Integrated Data Structure
- Training
- Schedule
- Future functionality

Grants.gov plans to integrate all Find functionality into the Apply system with a single hosting facility and architecture in October 2005. There will be a single database and a reuse of functionality – no functionality will be lost. The merger will present a single look and feel for Find & Apply and will utilize existing terminology and interface elements where appropriate. An Oracle Text search engine will also be implemented to replace the current search engine. The combined functionality will define an opportunity and application package in a single flow with a single sign-on. Fedgrants.gov will be eliminated and users will be redirected o Grants.gov beginning October 31.

The merger will also integrate the Apply security to be used by Grantor logins for the Find functionality. The security roles defined in Apply will be extended to incorporate

Find's unique functions such as create synopsis, archive, attach, etc. The agency structure in the Apply subsystem will be used for the Find functions (search, notify, define, etc.) Migration of find agency values within the opportunities is required. Some Find users may need to re-register if they are only registered with Find. Re-registering can proceed immediately within Apply. Agency organization structures will also need consolidation, as they do not coincide between Find and Apply. Agency Advisors will conduct the initial review on consolidating the Find and Apply Agency Organization Structure. Then each agency will be asked to verify and complete the effort.

The Find data will be merged into the Apply database. The Apply opportunities structure, which currently stores the application package opportunity, will be expanded to include the fields used for the grant synopsis on the Find side. This approach minimizes redundant data between the Find opportunity and the application package opportunity.

Use of the merged system should be simpler than the current system and should not require training. Grants.gov Outreach will post updates, instructions, etc on the site beginning in September. A preview of the merged systems will be available for the agencies at the end of October.

Find/Apply Merger Schedule:
September 9 – Organization Structures to agencies from Program Advisors
September 23 – Return agency organization structure feedback
October 31 – Find/Apply merger live in production

In the beginning of 2006, web services will be expanded to include synopses and package submission. Email/XML submission of synopses will also be replaced with web services but will remain until the web services are expanded.

Mockups of the Find and Apply merger are available at
http://www.infozen.com/Grants/index.html.

Questions & Answers
There were no questions.

The meeting concluded at 3:30pm.