DECEMBER 2004 STAKEHOLDER MEETING MINUTES
December 15, 2004

<u>Next Meeting</u>
Date: Wednesday, January 26, 2004
Time: 2:00 pm- 3:30 pm
Place: HHS Building

All meeting materials and presentations are available at Grants.gov by visiting
http://www.grants.gov/meetingmaterials121504.

Opening Remarks and Presentation:

Ms. Becky Spitzgo, Grants.gov Program Manager, began the meeting at 2:00 pm with the
following agenda:

- Grants.gov Update
- 424 Short and Individual Face Sheets
- An Introduction to the National Grants Partnership
- Grants.gov – From Ramp-up to Apply
- Stakeholder Questions & Answers

Grants.gov Update

After welcoming the audience, Ms. Spitzgo provided Grants.gov's December update.
"Find" activity remains consistent with 1.4 millions hits and applicant email notifications
averaging 600,000 - 700,000 weekly. Eighteen agencies are currently on-board with
"Apply". No new agencies are posting applications as 2004 comes to a close. Two
hundred twenty application packages are available on "Apply" with the most recent
postings coming from the Department of Energy (DOE), Social Security Administration
(SSA), the Department of Interior (DOI) and the Department of Commerce (DOC) to
name a few. Version 1 of the Research & Related forms were deployed approximately 2
weeks ago and appropriations of budget funding will encourage agencies to post
application packages on "Apply". The SF 424 Version was completed and will be
submitted to the Grants Executive Board later this week for comments before sending it
off to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). There will be no emergency
clearance for this review cycle. Grants.gov is currently reviewing the Environmental and
Protection Agency's Key Point-of-Contact form for government-wide use as well as the
Department of Education's abstract. More information will be provided at the January
Stakeholder Meeting.

The Grants.gov Program Management Office (PMO) has expanded to include several
full-time employees and the PMO hope this will help to settle any agencies' concerns
about the stability of Grants.gov without permanent staff. Detailees will continue to be
an incremental part of the PMO. Mr. John Etcheverry joined the PMO in October as the
Deputy Program Manager. He brings experience from the grant community at the

academic level. Ms. Mary Gonzales joined on December 6th as a permanent addition to the team. Ms. Gonzales joins us from the non-profit field and will be another addition that brings the grant community voice to Grants.gov. Ms. Ebony Brice joined December 13th as a detailee from the budget office within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The final addition to the team, Keenon James, will join the PMO on December 27th with experience from the Department of Justice (DOJ) as a grant specialist in the Community Oriented Policing Services Office (COPS) program. Mr. James will also be a permanent hire to the PMO.

This year's passback language from OMB states that a minimum of 25% of an agency's FY 2005 competitive grant programs' application packages to Grants.gov. This language is similar to the Grants.gov goals for each agency in 2005. However, it is ideal to evenly distribute this minimum across multiple agencies. OMB will soon ask Grants.gov to provide an update about each agency's status. Grants.gov is reaching out to the agencies for opportunities to help post application packages to the site to help each agency reach this OMB goal.

424 Short and Individual Face Sheets

Brett Bobley, from the National Endowment for the Humanities, provided an update of the 424 Short and Individual Face Sheets. Copies of the forms can be accessed at http://atweb.grants.gov/meetingmaterials121504. The 424 Short, also known as the Arts & Humanities (A&H) Short was modified to make it more user friendly and to standardize data across agencies.   NEH and NEA came together to develop a form similar to the SF-424, but the form developed collected less information from the applicant. Once the form was developed, it was realized that this form could be used by all agencies, not just the agencies involved with Arts & Humanities. With that goal in mind, the form was renamed the 424 Short. An agency can use this amended form if they do not need all of the information that is gathered from the SF-424 and the agency can also supply an agency-specific form to cover the other elements it needs to collect. NEH and NEA went on to work on a coversheet that could also be used for individuals as well. Again, this form was developed so that it could be used across all federal agencies.
Q: Will the updated forms include A&H in the title?
A: No.

An Introduction to the National Grants Partnership

Sandy Swab, from the National Grants Partnership (NGP) began by providing the history and background on the NGP. The NGP first grew out of:
- Interagency Electronic Grants Committee and subcommittees,
- State/local subcommittees,
- Interstate and Non-profit Advisory Group (INAG),
- The Uniform Guidelines Project which involves the Urban Institute collaborative efforts with states and non-profits to establish uniform grants financial reporting through accounting guidelines, and

- Federal government activities of the Federal Commons and E-government/Grants.gov.

Bob McDonald, from the US Department of Agriculture, was on assignment seeking a method to gain additional support for state and local involvement as well as development a stronger working relationship between the state and local governments. His findings were that state/local governments did not have a solid voice because an organization that focused on grants management did not exist. The Uniform Guidelines Project and the Urban Institute, who already had working relationships with organizations representing states, came forward to form INAG and work with the states on grants financial reporting. They have also agreed to serve as Secretariat for NGP. Within the Uniform Guidelines Project, the Urban Institute has been working with other participating organizations, including the Association of Government Accountants (AGA), National Grants Management Association (NGMA) and OMB Watch.

The NGP faces many challenges, such as the need to maximize grant fund use, especially at the state/local government and the need for standard data and information at the state, local and not-for-profit level. Therefore, the NGP mission is to foster a partnership among state, local, and tribal governments and non-profit stakeholders and Federal grant-making agencies to improve effectiveness of use of grant funds and reduce burdens associated with grants administration.

Mr. Tony Cavataio, from the Department of Education and the NGP Co-Chair, continued the discussion by outlining the challenges of the NGP. The NGP is a partnership designed as an activity-based partnership to improve grants management and processes. Its organization model reflects that of the Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP). A number of projects and activities are in place to support the NGP mission and goals. These examples include:
- Continue to develop and define uniform financial data elements to be used throughout the grants management proves to produce reliable financial data
- Promote and assist states in posting state grant opportunities on Grants.gov "Find"
- Work with the state of Michigan to develop funding strategies for the state

Ms. Cornelia Chebinou, from NASACT and the NGP Co-Chair, detailed the NGP's priorities. The NGP is working actively to develop and advocate for Federal grant enhancements. Current state participation includes Maryland, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Washington DC and Texas. Current Federal participation includes HHS, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Department of Education. More information about the NGP can be accessed via www.theNGP.org.

Grants.gov – From Ramp-Up to Apply

John Etcheverry, Grants.gov Deputy Program Manager, then spoke about Grants.gov – From Ramp-Up to Apply. Ramp-up schedules have provided a global perspective about grantor programs and are facilitating Grants.gov planning. By taking the ramp-up schedules and additional agency input, Grants.gov has a better sense of what tools need to

be developed to continue helping agencies post application packages on "Apply". The forms factory development process varies depending on complexity and diligence. Grants.gov encourages using existing forms or consolidating and streamlining forms to save time. It also helps to have a clean Data Analysis Template (DAT) to expedite the process to the next level, Critical Design Review (CDR).

To assist agencies with posting applications to Grants.gov, the PMO has Agency Outreach contacts which include detailees and permanent staffers who can help target larger volume competitions, identify efficiencies in forms development and consolidation, inform and educate participants within the agencies, and "Get the word out" to potential applicants. Some other uses for Grants.gov's "Apply" functionality include pre-applications, letters of interest, earmarks, and unsolicited applications.

The purpose of forms deployment sign-off is to obtain agency agreement to deploy a form assuming the agency:
- Identified the agency POC who will sign off on the individual forms;
- Completed Grants.gov training; and
- Participated in the CDR to baseline the requirements.

There are tools available to assist in forms deployment sign-off and can be accessed on Grants.gov's test website http://atweb.grants.gov. Tools include:
- Report matrix – Used to record problems with forms
- Checklist – Used to cross-check all areas necessary for review required to accept the form for production use
- Grants.gov Help Aids – http://atweb.grants.gov/GrantorCustomerSupport
- IV&V testing

Grants.gov's immediate focus is to have all twenty-six agencies posting application packages on Grants.gov, have each agency post a minimum of 25% of programs on "Apply", and to receive 15,000 grant applications.

Stakeholder Questions & Answers

There were no Stakeholder questions.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30pm.