Succeed

GRANTS.GOV

A NEWSLETTER   *SUMMER 2003*

SUCCEED AT-A-GLANCE

Welcome to SUCCEED, the Grants.gov newsletter. A contents overview can always be found in this column…

New! "Find Grant Opportunities" is now available to the public at www.Grants.gov. Beginning October 1, 2003, it will host information on all competitive Federal grant opportunities.

The "Apply for Grants" pilot, to gather critical feedback and to guide final refinements, concluded in mid-August. "Apply for Grants" will be launched on October 31, 2003.

HELPING YOU SUCCEED Grants.gov will provide robust customer support to its users. See page 2 for details.

Grants.gov will offer users THE OFFLINE ADVANTAGE. (Page 2).

THE WORD ON THE STREET highlights what key stakeholders are saying about Grants.gov. (Page 2)

IN THE NEWS features recent Grants.gov media coverage. (Page 2)

See GET INVOLVED to learn how you can help shape the future of Grants.gov. (Page 2)

FINDING GRANT OPPORTUNITIES JUST GOT EASIER

Grants.gov's "Find Grant Opportunities" (Find) feature is now available. This newest addition to the Grants.gov site allows you to search for information on competitive grant opportunities from all 26 Federal grant-making agencies from one location. Find gives you access to hundreds of grant opportunities from across the federal government. You can also register to be notified automatically of future grant opportunities as they are added to the site. After October 1, 2003, all competitive grant announcements will be posted on Grants.gov.

The availability of Find was announced by Charles Havekost, Grants.gov Program Manager, during a July presentation at the annual National Association of Counties (NACo). "Going live with the Find feature moves us closer toward the ultimate Grants.gov goal of providing one site to find, apply, and manage grants," says Havekost. He also emphasizes the importance of collaborating with partners representing the grant community to make this cross-agency program a success.

TAKING "APPLY FOR GRANTS" FOR A TEST DRIVE

A key Grants.gov feature, "Apply for Grants" (Apply), will be added soon. This feature allows grantors to post grant application packages and the grant community to access and submit applications – all in a single, online location. To ensure the Apply feature meets user needs, the Grants.gov leadership team is requesting and using end user input through every step of the development process. Interviews, surveys, and focus groups had already been conducted. The most important step – the Apply Pilot – was concluded in mid-August.

More than 100 grantor and grant community members were recruited to participate in the pilot, which was a critical and final step in getting feedback on the Apply feature before it launches on October 31, 2003. The participants represent many different grant community segments, including state, local and tribal governments, educational institutions, not-for-profits, and public housing authorities.

As part of the pilot, the Grant community participants are able to retrieve posted application packages, complete them offline, and submit them through Grants.gov. Grantors are able to administer how their agency will interact with Grants.gov (e.g., by organizations structure or program), add and manage users and their roles relative to interacting with Grants.gov, post grant application packages, and retrieve submitted applications.

Each pilot participant was asked to complete a satisfaction survey at the pilot's conclusion. A representative sample of participants were also asked to join discussion groups to probe issues and concerns identified in survey responses.

The survey results and discussion groups will provide valuable input to the Grants.gov leadership team as they refine the Apply feature. The Grants.gov team recognizes that the program's success starts and ends with its users – so hats off to those of you who participated in the Apply pilot.

WWW.GRANTS.GOV   **FIND. APPLY. SUCCEED.**

HELPING YOU SUCCEED

The Grants.gov team has created a range of online customer support tools to help grantors and the grant community transition from current processes to using Grants.gov. Help is just a click away from every page of the future Grants.gov site. A question mark link at the top of each page connects you with context-sensitive help that knows where you are and where you have been, providing just the help you need at any time. Now available on the Grants.gov Apply pilot site, This feature will support the full suite of content and capabilities for all site users when the Apply feature is launched on on October 31, 2003. Additional on-site customer service tools include:

- Frequently Asked Questions: Answers to your commonly asked questions
- Tutorial: Computer-based training designed to teach you everything you need to know about using Grants.gov
- User Guide: A well-indexed, comprehensive guide to reference information about Grants.gov

You can also receive personalized assistance through the Grants.gov Contact Center. Simply call the toll-free phone number (1.800.518.GRANTS) or email (support@grants.gov).

THE OFFLINE ADVANTAGE

You asked – and we hear you loud and clear. Grants.gov will feature the ability to download a grant application package and then view and complete it offline. This feature provides the flexibility to complete grant applications when and where you want, and to easily route it through your organization for completion of various components or review, just like any other email attachment. When the application is complete and ready for submission, Connect to the internet and click the submit button. Grants.gov will take it from there and guide you through the submission process.

THE WORD ON THE STREET

"When applicants hear about Grants.gov they are very excited. I'm hearing many say, 'This is great. I can't believe the government finally did this.' As a grants manager administrator for the government, that makes me very happy. I didn't realize just how much of a need there was out there until I got on the road and started telling grant applicants about this product. They were just ecstatic."

-A grants administrator in a recent Grants.gov focus group

"Grants.gov will have access to better information on what grants are available more quickly and it will streamline the process of applying!"

-Grantee Quote from Focus Group Research

IN THE NEWS

Grants.gov has been featured recently in several online publications. Visit the websites below and search on Grants.gov for more information:

- WashingtonTechnology.com
- FederalComputerWeek.com
- GovernmentComputerNews.com

Grants.gov is also getting airtime. Charles Havekost, Grants.gov Program Manager, was interviewed for the "Business of Government Hour" on the Washington, DC-based WJFK FM 106.7 radio station. The interview aired Saturday, July 19, and featured Havekost's views on the Grants.gov program and the challenges and rewards of leading a cross-agency initiative. You can access the recorded interview with Mr. Havekost online at www.businessofgovernment.org.

GET INVOLVED

We want to hear from you!

- HELP US HELP YOU – Make your voice – or that of your membership/constituents – heard by supporting a range of market research activities, including focus groups, interviews and surveys.

- HELP PROMOTE GRANTS.GOV – Get the word out to those who would benefit from Grants.gov.

- SUGGEST OR SUBMIT AN ARTICLE – For future editions of Succeed.

- TELL US WHAT YOU THINK – Share your perspectives on Grants.gov. We need your input to shape the future of Grants.gov.

- BE A PART OF THE GRANTS.GOV TEAM – The Grants.gov Program Management Office is staffed with professionals on detail from a range of Federal agencies. If interested, contact a Grants.gov team member. Join the Team and make a difference.

Contact us at info@grants.gov. We value your opinion.