

**DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY SUPPLEMENT TO  
THE GOVERNMENT-WIDE REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF  
PUBLIC LAW 106-107**

**I. BACKGROUND**

This enclosure is the Department of Energy (DOE) supplement to the government-wide Annual Progress Report on Implementation of Public Law 106-107, the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999. This report summarizes DOE's government-wide and agency efforts to streamline and simplify its grants process and activities for the period May 2002 through May 2003.

**II. PARTICIPATION IN THE GOVERNMENT-WIDE STREAMLINING  
AND GRANTS.GOV EFFORTS**

DOE has continued its active participation on the interagency work groups, subgroups and teams that were established to implement the government-wide streamlining initiatives. Although DOE is not a Grants.gov partner, the DOE CIO voluntarily provided funding to this effort and DOE staff actively participates in Grants.gov activities. DOE staff has participated in the following initiatives and work groups:

Pre-Award Work Group.

- Discretionary Subgroup.
- Team of four that developed the announcement of funding opportunities template
- Team of four that developed the data elements for Grants.gov FIND application
- Team of five that developed the consolidated assurance for the SF 424
- Team of four that is developing the administrative requirements
- Team that developed the proposal to simplify the government-wide policy framework for grants and agreements

Post-Award Work Group.

- Reporting Subgroup
- Co-chair of the Invention Reporting Team

Audit-Oversight Work Group.

Grants.gov Initiative.

- Stakeholders meetings
- Pilot tests (i.e., E-Find and Test of the Edges)
- Evaluation teams for selection of contractors to support development and implementation of Grants.gov
- Grants.gov focus groups

- Co-chair of the IAEGC State and Local Electronic Grants Subcommittee (DOE often hosts meetings)
- IAEGC Research and Related Subcommittee
- Electronic Standards Work Group – DOE provides three members

### **III. INTERNAL DOE EFFORTS TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE TO GRANTS STREAMLINING AND SIMPLIFICATION**

#### **A. General Approach**

The DOE CIO identified grants processing as one of the Department's innovative E-government applications initiatives and established the Streamlining Departmental Grants Processing (SDGP) project to reengineer administration and management processes for DOE grants activities. The primary purpose of the SDGP is to simplify the Department's grants' processes, to make the processes more uniform across the DOE complex, and to define program management and administrative requirements for electronic solutions. The SDGP team includes representatives from the various DOE headquarters and field activities that will be affected by changes to grants processes, including senior managers, grants management staff, program management staff, grants officers/specialist, and information technology staff. This team also provides comments on the Government-wide grants streamlining proposals.

DOE's outreach activities to internal staff include making presentations at regional meetings of technical/program managers and at procurement directors' meetings; disseminating information via televideo conference calls with grants management staff; distributing videotapes and DVD's of outreach sessions to the various field offices within DOE; conducting one-on-one or small group briefings to senior management personnel; and a collaborative web site utilized by grants management staff.

DOE staff conducted seminars with its grants management staff to provide information on the President's Management Agenda, specifically addressing Expanding Electronic Government, and how these initiatives impact the grants management community. Prior to posting synopses on the Grants.gov FIND site, DOE conducted training for the staff that would be using this new application. The training explained the new requirement and system capability, why the capability was added to the DOE system, and how to use it. DOE also held a workshop for DOE program offices on the Grants.gov APPLY function. A Grants.gov staff person identified the core data elements for workshop participants. In addition, she explained that DOE needed to identify DOE specific or program specific non-core data elements and the steps required to get these elements in the Grants.gov APPLY application.

DOE representatives have provided briefings on DOE grant processes and Grants.gov at meetings of DOE constituency groups. The DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EE) began coordinating with the states in 2002. EE staff discussed the simplification efforts and Grants.gov initiative at routine meetings and conducted

conference calls and briefings with state energy program managers, the State Energy Advisory Board, and key stakeholders such as National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) on the status of the initiative, how it would affect them, and strategies for making an effective transition.

## **B. Electronic Synopsis**

DOE has been involved in the development and testing of the electronic synopsis – Grants.gov FIND- since its inception. We participated in the development of the data elements, the capabilities to be included in the pilot and the ongoing pilot. This early involvement allowed the Department to perform an extensive modification to the Department’s existing posting system and begin transmitting synopses to Grants.gov FIND in March 2003, three months before scheduled date. The modification also included other enhancements to make the system more “user friendly.” Even though full participation is not required until October 2003, DOE is currently posting 100 percent of its discretionary grants synopses on the Grants.gov FIND site.

## **C. Announcement Template**

DOE was involved in the development and implementation of the Government-wide Announcement format. In anticipation of the adoption of the government-wide format, we began developing a DOE announcement template for use on all discretionary awards. This template is fully consistent with the government-wide policy and format and includes DOE-wide language, where appropriate, to ensure more uniformity in DOE grants announcements. The template has been coordinated with the SDGP group, the DOE Financial Assistance Advisory Council, General Council, grants officers and program managers. We are in the process of resolving comments. We plan to begin using the DOE-wide template in FY 2004. We also plan to develop an electronic mechanism for preparing and posting such announcements. The proposed solution will allow the electronic flow of information to Grants.gov FIND and the DOE e-center site.

## **D. The Grants.gov Portal and Electronic Applications**

In order to participate in the Grants.gov APPLY portion of the storefront, DOE must have a system-to-system interface with Grants.gov. The DOE IT procurement staff has been working closely with the Grants.gov PMO to obtain XML schemas and other interface tools needed to establish the “back office” interface with the Grants.gov portal. Extensive discussions and analyses have been conducted to formulate a transition plan. The Department’s existing system can receive XML based data and store that information in the native database. The proposed schemas have been examined to develop a preliminary design document for the interface.

The DOE Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EE) participated in the Grants.gov APPLY proof-of-concept (“testing the edges”) pilot. EE, in conjunction with the State of Nebraska, the National Association of State Energy Officials, the DOE Office of Procurement, and the IAEGC conducted the pilot test using a DOE formula

grant. Between February and May 2003, subject matter experts from each organization worked to coordinate the application pilot. This included scheduling, training, conference calling, establishing security and access, conducting the test, and performing a test assessment on outputs and outcomes. The test is considered a major success. There were many lessons learned. The results have been coordinated and shared among the subject matter teams and across the organization.

To prepare for receipt of electronic application through the Grants.gov portal, agencies have been asked to determine their non-core data elements. EE performed a thorough analysis of the data elements needed for each of the Department's formula grants programs (i.e., Weatherization and State Energy Programs grants). As a result of these reviews, EE has reduced the amount of data required from the States and has provided more motivation for a State to include better performance measures, which will allow DOE to track the extent to which program participants experience the benefits or changes intended.

#### **IV. OTHER**

As part of its initiative to consult with non-Federal entities, the Department solicited comments and suggestions from the grant community. DOE received comments from for-profit organizations relating to issues that were unique to DOE and that were not being addressed in the Government-wide effort to implement Public Law 106-107. In response to these comments, DOE published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in the *Federal Register* on August 26, 2002. In this notice, DOE proposed new administrative requirements for awards to for-profit organizations. These administrative requirements are similar to the "Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, Other Nonprofit Organizations", but the provisions have been tailored specifically for awards to for-profit organizations. DOE has made changes in the proposed rule in response to public comments and plans to issue a final rule in the near future.

In addition to the Department's SDGP and e-procurement/grants initiatives, DOE has another innovative E-government initiatives, called Portfolio Management Environment for R&D (ePME). The purpose of this initiative is to: 1) simplify and unify the Department's R&D tracking, management and reporting processes; 2) facilitate more strategic investment decisions; and 3) implement the technology solution to support those processes in an electronic, distributed information environment. The scope of this project includes all types of R&D instruments – grants, contracts, and DOE laboratory contracts. One of the ePME modules supports an electronic merit/peer review process.