Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board

Overview of the Grants Information Reporting Project

GRIP

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Recovery.gov

FederalReporting.gov

Overview of Completed Project

GRIP project a small proof-of-concept to test:

- If FederalReporting.gov could be used to centrally collect non-ARRA grant data including Federal financial reporting data
- If centralized reporting reduced reporting burden
- If a machine readable filing methodology increased reporting efficiencies
- If FederalReporting.gov could pre-populate its reporting module
- If a unique award identifier could be assigned centrally

Overview of Participation

Nine federal grant recipients participated:

- University of New Mexico
- University of Washington
- Colorado State
- University of Wisconsin
- University of North Carolina—Wilmington
- North Carolina State University
- State of Nebraska
- Lake County Community College of Illinois
- City of Bowie, Maryland

All reported on 25 federal grants
Represented 11 different agencies, EPA, USDA, NSF, NIH, HUD,DOC, Education, DOI, DOJ, DOL, DoD

Overview of Findings

GRIP showed:

- FederalReporting.gov can handle central reporting
- Did not demonstrate burden reduction
- A machine readable format (XML) improved reporting, especially for bulk reporting
- Pre-population of data can be used in FederalReporting.gov and by other government systems to enhance reporting
- A unique identifier can be generated and assigned

Use of Central Reporting—Financial Reporting

GRIP project focused on central reporting of financial data:

- It found it could collect the SF-425 data centrally
- SF-425 was formatted in a machine readable format (XML)
- Participants could choose between different reporting methods
  web form, XML single submission or XML bulk submission

Agency Perspective: USDA input—could collect the data electronically rather than on paper; did not have to run and create reports for stakeholders; and a central reporting concept would provide public stake-holders a place to go to get data, eliminating the need to constantly reproduce the data

Use of Central Reporting—Burden Reduction

GRIP results inconclusive:

- Used both SF425 and ARRA reporting requirements that included vendor and sub-award calculations
- Financial reporting is not standard across government; use of the SF425 is not used consistently
- Recipients reported normal reporting took from 40 minutes to 8 hrs.
- Recipients reported GRIP process took from 30 minutes to 8 hrs.

In general recipients thought if a government-wide standard was implemented it would provide some level of burden reduction.

Use of Central Reporting—Machine Readable Language

GRIP provided several reporting filings:

- Web Form submission
- XML single file submission
- XML bulk file submission

Participants indicated using a standard format for transmission of data would increase efficiency in reporting—allow for system-to-system reporting

Use of the bulk upload for reporting would increase reporting efficiency

Use of Central Reporting—Data Pre-Population

GRIP pre-populated data from USASpending.gov and System for Award Management (SAM) and found:

- Not all data from source systems was accurate
- Data formats were not the same, e.g., award numbers

If the source systems had all the required data and in a recognizable format pre-population could be a valuable enhancement for reporting

Use of Central Reporting—Unique Identifier

GRIP tested use of assigning a unique award identifier:

- Each award was assigned a unique award ID based upon an algorithm of establishing a random number

- GRIP used current RATB recommendation of having an agency identifier, type of funding instrument, fiscal year and random number

Proof-of-Concept provided the opportunity to test a central assignment of a unique award ID based on proposed standard and found it could be done

GRIP: Recommendations

Government with FDP and other recipients should explore a full reporting pilot

Financial reporting and use of the SF-425 should be reviewed by the government in consultation with recipients

Use of machine readable language for reporting and various formats should be made available web submission, XML files and bulk upload

Standardize award numbering scheme across federal assistance

Questions?

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