

2006 P.L.106-107 Annual Report to Congress Environmental Protection Agency

General

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) awarded 2,704 discretionary grants for \$450,092,337 during Fiscal Year 2006. EPA also awarded 1,959 Continuing Environmental Program grants for \$1,041,783,392, 1,388 earmark awards for \$717,687,244 and 174 non-discretionary awards for \$1,651,525,168 during Fiscal Year 2006.

The EPA has participated in a number of interagency work groups related to P.L.106-107. These groups include the Pre-Award and Post-Award, the Grants Policy Committee, the Grants Executive Board, the Mandatory Grants group, the Research and Related group, the Post Award Reporting Task group, and the SF 424 V2 work group. In addition, EPA chairs the task group of the Grant Policy Committee that is developing government-wide policy on the use of the Central Contractor Registration in assistance management.

In April 2003, EPA issued its first-ever long term Grants Management Plan (Plan). Goal 3 of the Plan, "Leverage Technology to Improve Program Performance", commits the Agency to support P.L. 106-107 initiatives. In furtherance of this goal, EPA's E-Gov Workgroup meets quarterly to discuss E-Gov initiatives such as Grants.gov and GMLoB. This group is an oversight group of senior managers tracking progress in implementing E-Gov activities.

Grants.gov

EPA embraced Grants.gov very early and is actively encouraging applicants and EPA staff to increase usage of Grants.gov. EPA required, as part of the Agency's Assistance Agreement Competition Policy, that synopses for EPA competitive grant announcements be posted to Grants.gov. The site is well received by the EPA applicant community.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 EPA posted 195 open competitive opportunities and 100% of them were posted on Grants.gov. All 195, which represent 100% of the posted competitive opportunities, were available for electronic application through Grants.gov. In addition, EPA posted mandatory application packages in three regions covering over ten different programs for each region. Other regions are encouraged to post their mandatory opportunities on Grants.gov and a list of Grants.gov best practices and frequently asked questions is available on the EPA intranet as guidance in adopting Grants.gov for non-competitive applications.

EPA received approximately 5,600 competitive applications during 2006. Applications submitted via Grants.gov totaled 2,250, representing 40% of the competitive applications. The agency received approximately 9,100 applications from all programs, including

mandatory and earmarked projects. The total number of applications received via Grants.gov is 2,271, or 25% of all applications received.

Training is provided to EPA recipients as well as to EPA project officers, grants management staff and senior management. The Grants.gov initiative is an important part of all training and citizen outreach efforts. In FY 06 the Office of Grants and Debarment (OGD) developed an on-line training program for managers and supervisors in grants management, which includes Grants.gov information and training. Two training sessions were staged for EPA grant recipients in addition to EPA project officer training which is continuous throughout the year in the ten regions and Headquarters offices. Six specific Grants.gov presentations were provided to program offices and program conferences with project officers and grants management staff.

EPA is working to enhance its grants management infrastructure and framework for communication, participation, and training within the Agency. Outreach to internal and external constituencies is provided through the internet, training, conferences, and other forums. A full-time staff person in the Grants Administration Division (GAD) of OGD maintains the intranet and internet pages which are used to provide current information on grants management policies, OMB notices, and electronic grants issues. A national Grants Customer Relations Council, which is comprised of program and grants staff and managers, convenes each month to discuss current and pending matters in grants management (e.g., audit issues, new requirements, etc.) The GAD Director, or the Chief, Policy, Information and Training Branch, GAD, chairs each meeting.

OGD has communicated all new requirements, especially DUNS and Central Contractor Registration, to the national Grants Customer Relations Council and reinforced communication with memos, fact sheets, and policy directives. OGD is also keeping the Agency's senior-level Grants Management Council apprised of Grants.gov issues.

In July 2006 a letter was sent to 4,200 EPA grantees encouraging them to register now and use Grants.gov for EPA grant opportunities. Additionally, a brochure was developed for use by EPA project officers and grants management staff. The brochure reinforces Grants.gov training and encourages EPA staff to promote the use of Grants.gov. EPA also included language in all Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) program descriptions, encouraging applicants to use Grants.gov for EPA grant opportunities.

GMLoB

EPA is a Member in the GMLoB effort. During the past year EPA participated in demonstrations from Consortia Lead agencies Education and HHS/Administration for Children and Families. EPA also received a demonstration of the Commerce NOAA system.

An agency wide GMLoB work group was created and produced a baseline assessment tool for ranking Consortia Lead systems. A list of functional requirements was created by the group and included in a matrix with evaluation criteria for an alternatives analysis

of the Consortia Lead systems. A Gap-fit analysis is in progress as we learn more about the GMLoB and wait for the declaration of additional Consortia Leads.

Time lines are beginning to develop as the GMLoB initiative matures. EPA has identified general migration time periods, but has not developed a defined migration strategy plan.

Since GMLoB has yet to be implemented at EPA, we can only identify anticipated savings. One such benefit is improved service to citizens from standardized and streamlined government-wide grants business processes: GMLoB will minimize complex and varying agency-specific requirements and make it easier for grantees and grantors to perform grant award functions efficiently. It is anticipated that increasing grantee and grantor ease of use will allow EPA to more efficiently process awards, saving grants management time and money that is more effectively used for post award monitoring and compliance. GMLoB will help reduce EPA costs associated with building and maintaining systems by sharing costs for a single system with fellow consortia members.

EPA has only one central grants management system, the Integrated Grants Management System (IGMS). This system services the entire Agency's grants management needs.