

Open Government:

Introducing a New FDP Subcommittee

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Today's Goals

- **A Short History of Open Government**
- **FDP Open Government Initiatives**
- **Goals of the new Open Government Subcommittee**
- **Discussion**
 - **Will the committee goals meet your needs?**
 - **How can we balance increasing transparency while reducing burden?**
 - **Are there opportunities for Pilots/Demonstrations?**

A Short History...

- **2006 – Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) –**
 - **Initially focused on Primary Project/Performance Site data**
 - **Information provided on grant applications, processed by Agencies, and published at USASpending.gov**
 - **Required only small burden from grantees**
 - **Many agencies had grant transparency systems in place; FFATA just added/changed a data element**

A Short History...

- **2009 – American Recovery and Reinvestment Act**
 - Quarterly Reporting mandated under Section 1512
 - Provided unprecedented amounts of grant information to the public
 - Fast implementation led to sub-optimal reporting process
 - Imposed significant burden on institutions and PIs, as reported in the FDP ARRA Burden Survey
 - Significant burden on agencies too!

A Short History...

- **2011 – FFATA Subaward Implementation**
 - Included some lessons learned from ARRA quarterly reporting process
 - Information pre-populated from other systems (e.g., CCR executive compensation/address info)
 - Centralized help through Federal Service Desk
 - Requires grantee reporting of subawardees since agencies do not maintain reliable subaward data
 - Some requirements still cause confusion (e.g., incremental vs. cumulative reporting)

Anticipated Future...

- **FFATA Reporting Expansion and Improvements**
 - Some awards still exempted due to technical issues (e.g. NIH awards with New awards before October 1, 2010)
 - Process improvement opportunities
 - Increased pre-population?
 - Federal Service Desk improvements?

Anticipated Future...

- **DATA Act (H.R. 2146)**
 - **Consolidation and increase in Federal reporting**
 - Melding of FFATA and ARRA requirements
 - Standardizing Financial Reporting requirements
 - Continues Subaward Reporting Requirements
 - Program reports may be required - List of all projects or activities
 - **Uniform Federal Identifier**
 - **Stakeholder participation (e.g., FDP) planned during phased implementation. How will this work?**

Agency Transparency Initiatives

- **NIH: CRiSP, now RePORT and RePORTER**
- **NSF Research.gov: Research Spending/Results**
- **NASA**
 - **Earth Science data, Space Science data, and more**
 - **<http://www.nasa.gov/open/data.html>**
- **Data.gov**
- **Involvement with STAR METRICS and FDP**
- **Many, many, many others**

FDP Open Government Initiatives

- **ARRA Subcommittee**
 - **ARRA Listserv**
 - **ARRA Burden Survey**
 - **Web Tools**
- **Plenary Presentation from Nancy DiPaolo (from Recovery Act Transparency Board) at January 2012 meeting**
- **Subaward Committee still on FFATA**
- **STAR METRICS**

Future FDP Open Government Initiatives

- **Inform** FDP Community About Open Government Initiatives
- **Invent** Ways to Reduce Burden of Transparency Reporting on PIs and Grantee Institutions
- **Increase** Public Understanding of Federal Research Spending
- **Improve** Agency and Institutional Accountability for Federal Research Spending

Open Discussion Questions

Inform FDP Community About Open Government Initiatives

“A basic tenet of a healthy democracy is open dialogue and transparency” – Peter Fenn

- Update ARRA Listserv to OpenGovt Listserv?
- Regular Updates at FDP Meetings?
- Other methods to receive information?
- Benefits to Research (e.g., ORCID, Lattes)?
- What are you doing at your institutions?
- Do you have State level transparency reporting?

Invent Ways to Reduce Burden of Transparency Reporting

“Eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.” – Hans Hofmann

- Ideas to eliminate duplication of effort?
- Are there opportunities for agencies to provide additional pre-population to reporting systems?
- Can we synchronize instructions for identical data elements?
- Issues with bulk uploads?
- Specific issues with existing systems?

Improve Accountability for Federal Research Spending

“Sunlight is the best disinfectant”

– William Douglas

- Is there additional information agencies should provide the public?
- Can we use transparency data for subaward monitoring?
- How do we focus reporting on only most important elements for public oversight?

Increase Public Understanding of Federal Research Spending

“Facts and truth really don’t have much to do with each other” – William Faulkner

- How can we better explain the data?
 - Can the public understand financial and scientific information made available in these reports?
 - Can we place research spending in proper context?
- How can transparency highlight the benefits of Federally-funded research?

“Truth never damages a
cause that is just”

Mahatma Gandhi