Grants Quality Service Management Organization (QSMO)
Working to Improve the Receipt Experience with Federal Grants Systems

Speakers:
Chad Clifford, Grants QSMO Executive Director
Andrea Sampanis, Grants QSMO Solutions and Services Lead
Mary Beth Foley, Grants QSMO Customer Engagement Lead

Moderators:
Lynette Arias, Univ of Washington / FDP Res Admin Comm co-chair
Lori Schultz, Univ of Arizona / eRA Comm co-chair

FDP Meeting – Sept 2021
• Research Admin & eRA Committee's co-hosting

• Origin of FDP and QSMO
  • Based on ongoing conversation with the OMB Grants Team
    • And their stakeholder engagement leads
    • Brette Fishman and Chad Clifford
  • Open Government: Res Admin Data Subcommittee
  • Closely followed the grants related areas of the previous Presidents Management Agenda (PMA)
  • PMA included Cross Agency Priority (CAP) Goals
  • CAP Goal #8 – Results Oriented Accountability for Grants
  • 4 Key Strategic Goals
PMA – CAP Goal #8: Results Oriented Accountability for Grants
• Initial conversations via the Res Admin Committee & Open Government: Res Admin Data Subcommittee

• Informal presentations and dialogue with:
  • Research Administration Committee
  • Open Government: Res Admin Data Subcommittee
  • eRA Committee
  • Executive Committee
  • And now, with full membership!

• Hoping for a fruitful ongoing dialogue!
• Keep this in mind as you learn more about QSMO today
Grants Quality Service Management Office (Grants QSMO):

*Working to Improve the Recipient Experience with Federal Grants Management Systems*

Federal Demonstration Partnership (FDP) – September 23, 2021
Overview of the Grants Quality Service Management Office

Recipient Seamless User Experience (RUX)

Feedback from FDP Members
Overview of the Grants Quality Service Management Office (Grants QSMO)
Four Areas Identified for Centralized Mission Support

As demonstrated by OMB Memos and recently published Circular A-11 Part 6, the QSMO concept is good government and supported across Presidential Administrations:

- “Provide a new, enhanced strategic blueprint for sharing quality services within the Federal enterprise.” - M-19-16, April 26, 2019
- “Agencies are required to consult with the relevant QSMO, prior to developing new or modernized technology, or considering an existing provider, to support execution of ARP” - M-21-20, March 24, 2021

**Grants Management**
- HHS designated as the Grants QSMO January 2021
- Designated for entire grants management lifecycle, including agencies & external applicant/recipients

**Financial Management**
- Treasury designated as FM QSMO June 2020
- Initial focus on core financial management systems (SaaS and Cloud), professional services (e.g., Integration), and Treasury Centralized Services (e.g., E-Invoicing)

**Cyber Security**
- DHS CISA designated as Cyber QSMO April 2020
- Initial offerings include a Vulnerability Disclosure Platform and Protective Domain Name System (DNS) Resolver

**Civilian HR**
- GSA designated as Civilian HR QSMO June 2020
- Initial offering is NewPay shared service offering for payroll

Source: https://ussm.gsa.gov/qsmo, agency websites
Grants QSMO works across the grants ecosystem to **empower and enable applicants, recipients, and federal awarding agencies to efficiently and effectively deliver on the grants mission.**

**WE ARE NOT**
- A policy-making office
- The Standards Setting Agency for Grants Management

**EASE BURDEN AND DRIVE EFFICIENCIES**

**RESPOND TO CUSTOMER NEEDS**

**LEVERAGE DATA AS A STRATEGIC ASSET**
Current Grants Systems Landscape: Fragmented, Customized, Aging Technology

1. 2019 NGMA, GWU, REI Annual Grants Management Survey Results and Analysis
2. Department of Education, Fiscal Year 2019 Grantee Satisfaction Survey
3. GAO Key Issues, “Federal Grants to State and Local Governments”
4. Jessica Hoban, Office of the Chief Information Officer of the State of Nevada, NGMA/REI/GW Grants Breakfast Forum (5/30/19)

- Fragmented recipient experience
- Expansive footprint with 300+ systems and some adoption of shared services
- Many manual and time-consuming processes
- Highly customized systems with limited interoperability

...not user friendly and not easy to navigate
...requirements are duplicative, unnecessarily burdensome, and conflicting
...We have to take that same information and re-enter it...into any one of the other dozen or so systems
...critical information in 3 or 4 different places makes it very cumbersome
Seamless user experience for applicants / recipients
Enable a seamless user experience

Modular design by FIBF service activities
Mix of mandated, centralized, and standardized systems available across grants management lifecycle
For select functions, alternative systems available with differentiated capabilities to enable competition in the marketplace

Interoperability
Technology and data connectivity through a common platform, e.g., technical design standards, API management, data infrastructure

As of 9/23/2021
7 Guiding Principles For Grants Technology Modernization

- Adhere to CIOC, Security, & Emerging Technology Standards
- Employ Agile Development of Interchangeable, Interoperable Solutions
- Guide Agencies on Adoption of Business and Data Standards
- Customer Focus & Improved Mission Delivery
- Balance Promoting Innovation with Stability of Operations
- Make Purposeful and Strategic Investments
- Treat Data as a Strategic Asset

As of 9/23/2021
Recipient Seamless User Experience (RUX)
Today: ~100 Recipient-Facing Grants Systems Used Across the Grants Lifecycle

SYSTEM INTERACTIONS – CURRENT STATE

- Find / Apply System 1
- Find / Apply Shared System 1
- Award Mgmt. System 1
- Award Mgmt. Shared System 1
- Pay Mgmt. System 1
- Pay Mgmt. Shared System 1

Multiple Disparate System Logins

SYSTEM INTERACTIONS – FUTURE STATE

- Find / Apply System 1
- Find / Apply Shared System 1
- Award Mgmt. System 1
- Award Mgmt. Shared System 1
- Pay Mgmt. System 1
- Pay Mgmt. Shared System 1
- Award Mgmt. System 2
- Award Mgmt. Shared System 2

1 Single RUX Login

Case Study: State of Nevada interacts with at least 25 systems across the grants management lifecycle (in addition to program oversight systems)

As of 9/23/2021
The Grants Community Agrees....

Surveyed Grants Management Professionals agree that a **unified portal holds the most promise for dramatic improvement** to grants management in the next five to ten years.

"A portal like this would **save me so much time**. If my bosses knew how much they're paying me to simply log in to sites, they would be shocked."

"Having a **one-stop-shop** saves us issues with losing logins and **finding our way around federal systems**."

"Since federal agencies began implementing systems for research administration more than 20 years ago, **research universities have been waiting for something like this!**"

Source: Annual Grants Management Survey: Results and Analysis (REI Systems, National Grants Management Association (NGMA), and the George Washington University (GWU))

As of 9/23/2021
Improve Applicant/Recipient Experience and Reduce Burden

Iterative approach to improve Recipient Seamless User Experience (RUX)

**Single Sign-On (SSO)**
Authentication via a single ID/password

**Minimally Invasive Portal**
User testing a portal prototype

**Seamless User Experience**
Single point of entry to platform of interoperable solutions

As of 9/23/2021
Steps for Recipient Seamless User Experience

Clickable RUX Prototype
Developed a minimally invasive portal designed to improve the user experience for applicants/recipient who are interacting with federal grants systems via a single point of entry.

User-Centered Design Sessions
Presented the RUX prototype to various organizations that interact with grant systems to solicit feedback on its ease of use, user interface (UI), features, functionality, and effectiveness in reducing burden.

Updated RUX Clickable Prototype
Refined the existing RUX clickable prototype to incorporate and address the feedback gathered from the user-centered design sessions.

View Prototype here:
RUX 1min Demo (vimeo.com)

RUX TMF Proposal and Market Research
Submitted final proposal to the Technology Modernization Fund (TMF) board to fund the implementation of the Recipient Portal and Login.gov Adoption.

Conducting market research in advance of an IT development acquisition in Q1 FY22.

As of 9/23/2021
Rate your perceived usefulness of the RUX portal

(1 - not useful, 5 – extremely useful)
What do you like about the prototype?  
What is missing?
Feedback from FDP
What is the biggest frustration with federal grants IT systems?
What are the best examples of IT solutions in grants management (both within and outside federal)?
Discussion Question # 3

What would your ideal solutions be for federal grants management?
How To Get Involved

• **Recipients and Applicants:**

  We are always interested in understanding how to best engage with the community and obtaining feedback on the current grant management landscape, your frustrations with the processes and systems, and/or any ideas you have for improving federal grants management. If you have insight or suggestions, please reach out to us at GrantsQSMO@hhs.gov.