Grants QSMO Will Improve the Grants Experience

How the Grants QSMO will help reduce recipient burden and improve the grants experience

March 18, 2021
National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) Grants Management Symposium
1. Overview of the Grants Quality Service Management Office
2. Grants QSMO Early Term Priorities: Setting the Stage for a More Seamless Grants Experience
3. How Grantor Agencies and Grant Recipients Can Get Involved to Help Out
Overview of the Grants
Quality Service
Management Office (QSMO)
Four Areas Identified for Centralized Mission Support

Grants Management
- HHS designated as the Grants QSMO January 2021
- Designated for entire grants management lifecycle
- Customers include Grantor 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
Today’s Federal Grants Ecosystem

As of 3/18/2021

- 1.5K+ grant programs
- $1.4 T federal funds
- 38 awarding agencies
- 1M+ Applicant / grantor users

State, local & tribal governments
Colleges & universities
Non-profit organizations
Scientific researchers
For-profit, small businesses & private institutions
Foreign entities

Source: USASpending.gov
Grants 2030 Vision

Empower and enable applicants, recipients, and federal awarding agencies to efficiently and effectively deliver on the mission

Grants 2030 Vision and Its Pillars

**Pillars of 2030 Vision**

**EASE BURDEN AND DRIVE EFFICIENCIES**

Enabled by the Grants QSMO through standardization, modernization, and streamlining technology footprint

**RESPOND TO CUSTOMER NEEDS**

Enabled by the Grants QSMO through continuous engagement and robust feedback loops

**LEVERAGE DATA AS A STRATEGIC ASSET**

Enabled by the Grants QSMO through adoption of data standards and increased system connectivity
Grants QSMO Mission

Empower and enable applicants, recipients, and federal awarding agencies government-wide to maximize mission impact through facilitating development and adoption of customer-focused, innovative, and efficient solutions and services for grants management.

Driving Goals of the Grants QSMO

- Manage a Marketplace of Solutions
- Procure Interoperable Solutions and Services
- Promote User Experience
Role and Responsibilities of the Grants QSMO

**Market Coordinator**
Execute responsibilities as outlined in OMB memo M-19-16

- Establishing a marketplace for grants systems and designating high-quality services based on standards
- Overseeing investments in grants systems and making recommendations to OMB's Investment Review Board

**Solution Manager**
Bring grants management solutions to the marketplace and oversee operations for QSMO-approved solutions and systems

Examples of potential solutions:
- Risk Management
- Recipient Seamless User Experience

**Community Builder**
Establish and foster a community of practice for grant professionals, for example:

- Creating a repository of training resources for grants professionals and recipients
- Supporting the adoption of best practices by creating a central repository of forms, sharing forums, etc.
Guiding Principles For Investments In Grants Technology Modernization

Maintain customer focus and enable mission delivery

Guide agencies on adoption of business and data standards

Adhere to CIOC, security, & emerging technology standards

Make purposeful and strategic investments

Balance promoting innovation with stability of operations

Employ agile development of interchangeable, interoperable solutions

Treat data as a strategic asset

As of 3/18/2021
How the Grants QSMO is Unique (and How it Impacts You)

As of 3/18/2021
Current Grants Systems: Fragmented, Customized, Aging Technology Landscape

- 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

Quotes:
- “…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”

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)

As of 3/18/2021
Case Study:
Recipients Interact with Many Federal Systems Due to Fragmentation

State of Nevada

- FY19: $5B received from 24 federal agencies
- 20+ departments within state gov’t received funds

Nevada interacts with 8+ distinct award management systems…

…and 4+ payments/financial systems

While Federal Audit Clearinghouse is mandatory for Report Intake, case management is highly manual

Register, Find & Apply

Primary award management system

Payments

Reporting

Single Audit

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<th>SAM.gov</th>
<th>Grants.gov Find</th>
<th>Grants.gov Apply</th>
<th>Other Apply</th>
<th>Grant Solutions</th>
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While Grants.gov "Find" function is mandatory, some programs post only award synopsis

Grants.gov "Apply" usage varies by program

Though select mandated systems, many financial and performance reporting capabilities are decentralized across grants lifecycle

1. Awarding agencies listed in descending order by $ awarded to recipient (Source: USASpending.gov FY19); list of awarding agencies is not exhaustive
2. Multiple systems include reporting modules/capabilities (e.g., GrantSolutions, eRA, PMS)
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
Grants QSMO Early Term Priorities: Setting the Stage for a More Seamless Grants Experience
Recipient Support for a Seamless User Experience

How it is for Lisa ....

- Inefficient and time-consuming
- Needs to remember multiple logins and passwords
- Needs to interact with multiple grant systems
- Relies heavily on the Help Desk to troubleshoot login

How it could be for Lisa ....

- Logs in once to access grants information
- Saves her time
- Saves her organization money
- Saves the federal government money

Recipients are invested.

Lisa Maher is the Director of Grants and Contracts at the Children’s Aid Society of Alabama. She frequently searches for and applies for federal grants that are crucial to her organization’s mission.
Initiatives Underway:
Improve Applicant/Recipient Experience and Reduce Burden

As of 3/18/2021

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
Initiatives Underway: Improve Applicant/Recipient Experience and Reduce Burden

- Single Sign-On (SSO): Authentication via a single ID/password
- Minimally Invasive Portal: User testing a portal prototype

As of 3/18/2021

**US AI is using login.gov to allow you to sign in to your account safely and securely.**

**Login.gov**

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**DASHBOARD**

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**ORG ABC'S GRANT APPLICATIONS**

**ORG ABC'S ACTIVE GRANTS**

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As of 3/18/2021
Stakeholder Engagement is Central to the Grants QSMO Success

Implementation plan developed through extensive stakeholder engagement

>90%
Of total grant dollars and awards represented on Grants QSMO stakeholder groups across 17 federal awarding agencies

20+
Working Group meetings including Steering Committee, Federal Awarding Agencies, and Federal Service Providers Work Groups

1,000+
Comments from stakeholders on the draft implementation plan

The Grants QSMO is committed to continued engagement with the broad and diverse set of stakeholders

Applicants & Recipients
Thousands of grantees interact with and benefit from federal grants management

Federal Awarding Agencies
Customers of marketplace, engaged, including through a customer advisory board, to ensure marketplace solutions meet needs

Federal Providers & Industry Advisors
Inform technical approach and allow the government to access best of private-sector

As of 3/18/2021
How Grantor Agencies and Grant Recipients Can Get Involved to Help Out
Initiatives Underway: Grants QSMO Collaboration Site

For Federal Grants Management Staff, we have the **Grants QSMO Collaboration Site** - the source of truth for the Grants QSMO Program.

**Federal employees**: visit our Grants QSMO Collaboration site (https://community.max.gov/x/xyikfw)

**The Collab page includes**:
- Overview of the Grants QSMO and the Other QSMOs
- Links to the Federal Awarding Agencies
- Marketplace 1.0 - existing shared services aligned to FIBF framework
- Investment Action Plan Resources
- Resources from the QSMO working groups
- Feedback mechanisms
- Innovation Hub (*coming soon*)
Future Initiatives: Connect Grant Recipients and Other Awarding Agencies

We are planning to build a forum for both federal and non-federal Grants grant recipients to connect with one another, gain best practices, and share tools and insights with the broader community.

The Innovation Hub
Pilot efforts of cross-collaboration to establish a forum to share innovations and build a culture of transparency and trust

Our goal is to connect other initiatives and innovations available in the market to the Grants QSMO community.
How To Get Involved

• **Applicants/Recipients:**
  We are looking for volunteers to be a part of our Recipient Seamless User Experience user centered design testing. If you are interested, please reach out to us at GrantQSMO@hhs.gov.

• **Federal Awarding Agencies:**
  Visit our Grants QSMO Collaboration site (https://community.max.gov/x/xyikfw), explore the available resources, and keep an eye on the site for updated content.

• **Everyone:**
  Email us at GrantsQSMO@hhs.gov to ask us any questions you have on the Grants QSMO and marketplace of solution/service offerings, volunteer for user centered design sessions, provide feedback, and more!
Q&A