

NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION (NASA)
P.L. 106-107: NASA's Report on Implementation 2006

This is NASA's report on the Government-wide "Annual Progress Report on Implementation of Public Law 106-107". This is the fifth annual progress report to Congress, and covers the period of June 2005 through August 2006. This report covers NASA's efforts to streamline and simplify the award and administration of Federal grants and cooperative agreements.

General

- During the reporting period, NASA awarded 2,171 discretionary grants and cooperative agreements for a total amount of \$588,980,312.
- NASA is actively participating in all facets of the P.L. 106-107 efforts and in the interagency initiatives targeted to streamlining research administration, such as the Federal Demonstration Partnership and the National Science and Technology Council's Research Business Models Subcommittee. NASA senior management is fully committed to supporting these efforts.
- NASA staff also serves on the Grants Policy Committee of the Chief Financial Officers' Council and the Grants Executive Board. The CFO Council's Grants Policy Committee is responsible for coordinating proposals resulting from grants streamlining initiatives and serves as the decision-making body for grant policies. The Grants Executive Board serves as the executive sponsor of the Grants.gov and Grants Management Line of Business (GMLoB) E-Gov initiatives. The Grants Policy Committee and Grants Executive Board work closely. The following bullets detail the activities under way in the P.L. 106-107 workgroups and related committees where NASA participates:
 - P.L. 106-107 Pre-Award Work Group. This group studied the existing Government-wide grants-management rules. It also recommended how to streamline and re-package the rules in the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) new location at 2 CFR.
 - Research and Related Work Group. This group developed and tested application packages for use by Federal agencies that solicit research applications. Continues to identify and address concerns of the research agencies related to Grants.gov.
 - Training and Certification Work Group. This group addresses issues concerning the federal workforce responsible for implementing the changes resulting from P.L. 106-107 and the Grants.gov and GMLoB initiatives. We benchmarked grants management training courses to determine the current

baseline and identify best practices to developed competencies for the workforce.

Grants.gov

As indicated in our report last year, in October of 2004, NASA began using Grants.gov FIND. NASA issued a directive requiring all announcements of grant and cooperative agreement funding opportunities to be synopsized using the standard set of data elements prescribed by OMB. Currently, 100 percent of all discretionary and competitive funding opportunities are announced in Grants.Gov. Of the thirty (30) funding opportunities announced on Grants.gov, 100% of these grant programs were available for electronic application through grants.gov. During fiscal year 2006, NASA received a total of 9,435 grant applications electronically of which 3.2% or 305 grant applications were received electronically via Grants.gov. The other 96.8% was received through the NASA Solicitation and Proposal Integrated Review and Evaluation System (NSPIRES). NASA, with the support of the Grants.gov Program Management Office, successfully integrated NASA's peer review system (NSPIRES) with Grants.gov. NASA is able to electronically retrieve proposals submitted through Grants.gov because of this integration.

NASA internal outreach and training efforts included the issuance of a Grant Information Circular (GIC) to inform all grant specialists and officers at the NASA Centers of the requirement to post applications on Grants.gov. In addition, a fact sheet for grant specialist/officers on the use of Grants.gov and other information was given to prepare them to assist potential applicants with the use of Grants.gov with NASA specifics. External outreach efforts included participating on a panel discussion at the November 2005 National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) conference; presenting of NASA's status and progress with Grants.gov at the January 2006 Federal Demonstration Partnership meeting held in Washington DC; developing and posting Grants.gov application submission instructions on NASA Sponsor Research Business Activity (SRBA) and NSPIRES websites; and updating the NASA Research Announcement (NRA) Proposer's Guidebook to include instructions on how to apply through Grants.gov. Prior to Grants.gov, NASA used FedBizOpps to advertise research grant and cooperative agreement opportunities and did not require the mandatory use of paper formatted applications for grants; therefore, the Grants.gov portal has not provided savings for this Agency.

GMLoB

In August 2006, NASA declared its intent to become a GMLoB Consortia Member. As a customer of a grants management service center, NASA expects the service provider to support the various systems that we currently use including our core financial system. The grants management system would need to have an interface with our existing systems. NASA is currently gathering information about the Contract Management Module (CMM), NSPIRES, our financial system, and other related programs in our effort to formulate a comprehensive grants program. In addition, the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) has

consolidated all the grants awards here at NASA. All new grants will be coordinated through the NSSC. However, all existing grants awards that currently reside at the Centers will continue to be administered at the Centers until they are closed, which will not be until 2010. Until that time, NASA will not be in a position to migrate to the GMLoB service center.

Other Activities

NASA has developed a contract writing system, Contract Management Module (CMM), as part of its existing Integrated Enterprise Management Program (IEMP) to support the creation, editing, execution, administration, distribution, workload management, and federal data reporting requirements of contracts, grants, and cooperative agreements. This contract/grant writing system will help streamline the process for writing and distributing grants and cooperative agreements and will create greater consistency across the Agency. This contract/grant writing system is currently scheduled for NASA-wide implementation in November 2006. Once implemented, CMM will provide a comprehensive tool to support contract/grant writing, contract/grant administration, procurement workload management, and data reporting/management for NASA. The functionality provided by CMM will provide added efficiency to procurement processes, and will be integrated with existing IEMP components.

NASA established the NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC) to award and to administer the majority of all Agency grants and cooperative agreements. The NSSC went live on March 1, 2006. The consolidated Center, located on the grounds of Stennis Space Center, Mississippi, was established in an effort to achieve efficient and effective service, improve data quality, standardize processes, leverage skills and investments, and provide economies of scale. The NSSC supports the Agency's internal effort to create an environment conducive to streamlining and simplifying grants and cooperative agreements in accordance with the requirements of Public Law 106-107. The NSSC is working collaboratively with NASA Centers to meet their service needs. This allows NASA Centers to focus more time on their core work and strategic initiatives.

Briefly, NSSC responsibilities include: award and administration of grants and cooperative agreements to institutions of higher education, hospitals, and other non-profit organizations; award and administration of grants with commercial firms; award and administration of grants and cooperative agreements with State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments. The NSSC does not award cooperative agreements to commercial firms and cooperative agreements to establish and/or maintain existing science and research institutes. Responsibility for these Center specific cooperative agreement awards remains at the respective NASA Centers.

NASA Centers and the grant community at large now have access to the NSSC Grants Status Query System (<http://www.nssc.nasa.gov/grantstatus/>). The system is intended to provide superior service and quality information to NASA Centers and the grant community at large.