Current State of Grants Management
ANNUAL GRANTS SURVEY RESULTS WEBINAR

PRESENTED BY:
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REI Systems, NGMA, and GWU Conduct an Annual Grants Survey

- Identify issues and priorities
- Let you see how you fit
- Help advocate for what you need
The National Grants Management Association provides tools and resources for grants professionals to support and maintain high levels of grants management competency and to establish standards of excellence for grants managers. Visit ngma.org

The Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration is a focal point for public affairs education, research, and public service at the George Washington University. Visit tspppa.gwu.edu

REI Systems provides grant management solutions, analysis, and advice. We digitize government to produce healthier citizens, safer communities, and better lives. Visit REIsystems.com
What are the Biggest Findings?

Many trends continued, while new legislation brings more challenges.

- New legislation continues to challenge strained grant-making organizations.
- Performance improved for Federal Grants after drop from the prior two years due to Pandemic.
- Well-trained and capable staff remains a significant success factor.
- Modern, affordable, and adaptable grants management systems desired by both Grantors and Grantees.
- Leadership buy-in needed to overcome current challenges with people, processes, and technology.
AGENDA

- Introduction and Methodology
- About the Respondents
- Grants Lifecycle
- Systems and Data
- Training
- Legislation and Directives
- Success Factors and Challenges
- Key Takeaways
Introduction and Methodology

Purpose
Inform the grants community of crosscutting issues and trends to help improve grants management and to support advocates for better grants management.

Survey Design
GWU, REI, and NGMA developed a survey of grants managers in 2016 to help identify key practices, major challenges, and related topics that could help inform the grants management community. Revisions were made to the survey every year to maximize the opportunity to evaluate the trend of responses over time.

Survey Administration
More than 15,000 professionals in grants management and related fields were invited to take the survey online.
Survey Demographics
Respondents Included a Mix of Federal, State, Local, and Nonprofit Grants Managers

643 Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Type</th>
<th>Total Count</th>
<th>Grant Maker</th>
<th>Grant Recipient</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Government</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Years of Experience

- 0-2 Years: 14%
- 3-5 Years: 16%
- 6-10 Years: 53%
- More than 10 Years: 17%
1.4. What percentage of the annual value of grants processed by your organization does [your organization’s] administrative budget constitute?
Grants Lifecycle
Grants Managers’ Work Is Consistent: The Biggest Task Is Still Compliance Monitoring

2.1. How much time do you spend on the following grants management activities?

- Work not related to grants
- Other grant related activities
- Evaluating overall grant program outcomes and impact
- Evaluating individual recipients’ outcomes and impact
- Monitoring recipients' programmatic outputs
- Monitoring non-financial administrative requirements
- Monitoring financial administrative requirements
- Application submission/reviews and other pre-award activities
- Program policy and design

Administrative requirements monitoring still take more time than any other activity – 35%

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Organizational Ability to Meet Mission Objectives Remains High

2.2. What is your assessment of how well equipped your organization and its operational environment is?
Federal Grant Performance Significantly Improving After Last Year’s Decrease Due to Pandemic

2.4. Have your organization’s/your recipients’ outcomes improved over the past 12 months?

- Federal
  - Performance Improved: 57%
  - Performance Fell, or Don’t Know: 43%

- State & Local
  - Performance Improved: 56%
  - Performance Fell, or Don’t Know: 44%

- Non-Government
  - Performance Improved: 41%
  - Performance Fell, or Don’t Know: 59%

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Systems and Data
Grant Reporting Automation Needs More Attention

3.2 How would you describe the method used by your grantees to submit reporting?

- No progress from last year
- Reporting varies by grant, and even by grantee

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Satisfaction with Technology and Ability of Recipients to Cover Costs Remains Consistent from Year-to-Year

3.1 If you have a Grants Management System (GMS), please rate your satisfaction with the technology, your program, or your organization’s use of it and the costs for your staff, recipients, and sub-recipients to use it.
There Is Strong Agreement on the Importance of Automated Data Sharing

3.5 What kind of data should local, state, and tribal governments and federal agencies share in an automated manner?
Few Grantmakers and Recipients Are Leveraging Latest Advances in Technology Related to Data

3.6 Do you currently leverage any of the following in your Grants Management Systems?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Technology</th>
<th>Grantmaker</th>
<th>Grant Recipient</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Artificial Intelligence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Robot Process Automation (RPA)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blockchain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Data Standards for Grants Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Machine Learning</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Training
About Half of Organizations Offer Grant Training to Grant Recipients

Requiring Training Increased, While No Training Decreased

4.2 Does your organization provide grant training to grant recipients or sub-recipients?

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Few Organizations Require That Their Staff Receive Grants Management Training
And Percentage Requiring Certification Has Dropped

4.1 Does your organization require formal grant training of your staff?

Training Continues to Be a Top Priority But No Progress Being Made
Training New Resources Takes Significant Time

34% Indicated It Takes Between 1-2 Years To Fully Train

4.6 In your estimation, how long does it typically take to fully train or ramp up a new resource to independently execute grants management actions?

Duration Required to Fully Train

- 0-6 Months: 19%
- 7-12 Months: 38%
- 1-2 Years: 34%
- 2+ Years: 9%
Legislation and Directives
Federal Legislation and Executive Directives Have Had a Moderate Impact on Grants Management

5.1 Please rate the impact of each of the following federal legislative and/or executive branch directives on your **day-to-day grants management**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directive</th>
<th>Very Negative or Negative</th>
<th>Neither Positive nor Negative</th>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Very Positive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uniform Guidance</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DATA Act</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single Audit Act Amendment</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GREAT Act</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IIJA/BIL of 2021</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IIJA/BIL causing some challenges for Agencies
Federal Legislation and Executive Directives Have Had a Smaller Impact on Recipient Innovation

5.2 Please rate the impact of each of the following federal legislative and/or executive branch directives on recipient innovation.

- Uniform Guidance: 22% Very Negative or Negative, 29% Neither Positive nor Negative, 42% Positive, 7% Very Positive
- DATA Act: 11% Very Negative or Negative, 29% Neither Positive nor Negative, 56% Positive, 4% Very Positive
- Single Audit Act Amendment: 15% Very Negative or Negative, 30% Neither Positive nor Negative, 51% Positive, 3% Very Positive
- GREAT Act: 11% Very Negative or Negative, 25% Neither Positive nor Negative, 59% Positive, 5% Very Positive
- IIJA/BIL of 2021: 10% Very Negative or Negative, 27% Neither Positive nor Negative, 54% Positive, 8% Very Positive
Multiple IIJA/BIL Legislation Impacts, with Adapting to New Reporting Requirements Marginally Higher

5.3 If you rated the IIJA/BIL legislation anything other than 'Not Familiar', select the biggest area(s) of impact to your processes.

Type of Impact

- No familiarity with grants application process (new applicants)
- Not enough administrative budget
- Urgency in issuing/receiving the funding
- Inadequate grants management technology
- Adapting to new reporting requirements
- No change
Success Factors and Challenges
Successes

6.1. What are the most significant factors in the success(es) your organization has had in grants management in recent years?

Qualified staff remains the key to success, and the impact of passionate and skilled recipients increased.

- Data linking grants to improved mission results
- Strong process for selecting recipients and avoiding risk
- Efficient methods for overseeing recipient performance
- Passionate and skilled recipients
- Org structure to support agency-wide coordination
- Effective training/technical assistance for recipients
- Clear law/authorization to make the grant
- Clear communication about the mission of grants
- Well-qualified grant management staff

Write-in answers included:
- Retention of qualified staff
- SOPs, consistent systems and processes
- Buy-in from leadership and staff
- Cash flow
Challenges

6.2. What do you think are the most significant challenges facing grants management?

Concerns over retaining well qualified staff significantly increased while funding uncertainty challenges and recipient inexperience declined.

- **Cost of Grants Systems**
- **Risk of fraud**
- **Hesitance to adapt to changing environment/context**
- **Disconnect between grantee needs and agency priorities**
- **Recipients who are ineffective financial managers**
- **Recipients who are inexperienced at managing programs**
- **Inefficient/bureaucratic processes**
- **Attracting/retaining well-qualified grant management staff**
- **Funding uncertainty/susceptibility to politics**

Write-in answers included:
- Changing priorities
- Lack of training
- Inadequate grants staff
Suggestions from Survey Respondents – Priorities for Effort to Improve

6.4. What should be the highest priorities/best ways to improve grant management?

**PEOPLE**
- Well-trained and capable staff with on-going training
- Capacity Building
- Increased and clear communications
- Support from Leadership

**PROCESS**
- Standardize and streamline processes and reporting
- Better collaboration and coordination
- Reduce bureaucratic blocks
- Enhance transparency

**TECHNOLOGY**
- Affordable and adaptable
- Unified, full-lifecycle GMS
- Automation and standardization in data reporting
- Integration with financial systems
Increasing staff, more training, and streamlining processes continue to be priorities.
Key Takeaways
# Takeaways from Our Analysis

1. The IIJA/BIL Legislation introduced challenges including adapting to new reporting requirements.

2. Performance up 25% for Federal Grants after last year’s drop due to Pandemic.

3. 70% said that qualified staff is the most significant success factor for grants management and 54% said retaining them is the biggest challenge.

4. Grant Makers and Grant Recipients want more standardization and simplification.

5. No progress with grant reporting automation despite the desire to fully automate.

6. People, processes, and technology continue to be heavy focus areas for improvement.
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Thank you!