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The National Grants Partnership (NGP)

www.thengp.org

Proposed Charter June 2011

I. The National Grants Partnership

The National Grants Partnership was established in 2004 to bring together government and non-government individuals with an interest in improving the federal grants process in the United States. The NGP works to improve the exchange of information between federal grantees (and sub-recipients) and federal grants policy makers. The NGP seeks to identify projects related to streamlining the grants process, funding the grants process more efficiently, and communicating new developments in applying, accounting and reporting for grants. Under this Charter, the NGP is reconstituted to serve as a venue for governments and nonprofit organizations that are interested in improvements to grants management processes or participate in grant programs to discuss, research and recommend improvements to federal grants process. Stakeholders representing federal agencies, state, local and tribal governments, nonprofit entities, and private-sector vendors working in the governmental or nonprofit grants arena are eligible to join the NGP and participate in projects sponsored by the Partnership.

II. Current Partnership Member Organizations

AFP
Association of Fundraising Professionals

AGA
Association of Government Accountants

FDP
Federal Demonstration Partnership

GPA
Grant Professionals Association

GWSCPAs
Greater Washington Society of Certified Public Accountants

NASACT
National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers, and Treasurers

NASCIO
National Association of Chief Information Officers

NCCS
National Center for Charitable Statistics, The Urban Institute

NCN
National Council of Nonprofits

NGMA
National Grants Management Association

Federal Funds Information for States (invited)

National Governors Association (invited)

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III. Purpose

The Federal government annually distributes $744 billion (FY 09) to state and local government and nonprofit organizations in grants. The mission of the National Grants Partnership is to foster a partnership among state, local, and tribal government and nonprofit stakeholders and federal grant-making agencies to improve effectiveness of the use of grant funds and reduce burdens associated with grants administration.

The NGP promotes information sharing and, when appropriate, pursues specific projects and activities on behalf of -- and providing leadership and support to – federal, state, local and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations and private sector grants professionals on issues relating to grants administration and management.

IV. Goals of the Partnership

Goals of the partnership include, but are not limited to:

- Enhancing governments' ability to effectively and efficiently serve citizens.
- Improving communication regarding grant matters among, the federal, state, local and tribal governments, and nonprofit organizations executing federal (and State?) programs and private sector representatives working in the governmental or nonprofit grants environment.
- Establishing relationships that will facilitate the adoption of a solution-oriented agenda that is developed through a consensus of leaders representing grant stakeholders at all levels of government and the nonprofit arena.
- Developing generally accepted approaches and best practices for improving the performance and accountability of grant programs administered by federal, state, and local governments and nonprofits, some of which involve administration of federal programs by state agencies. The following objectives are likely to be instrumental in achieving this goal but are not limited to:
    - strengthening internal controls; streamlining grants management;
    - reducing administrative costs;
    - improving communications among the various levels of grant administration; and
    - developing common terminology.
- Helping promote the development and dissemination of valid, reliable and useful financial and program information that decision-makers need to make smart, informed decisions;
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities for programmatic and financial improvement activities.
- Supporting and promoting training programs for officials at the federal, state and local levels of government.
- Supporting common approaches and standards for effective measurement of program performance and focusing performance measures on outcomes, not outputs.

V. Partnership Structure

NGP serves as a neutral third party in fostering cooperation and communication among federal officials, representatives of state, local and tribal governments; their agencies and executive branch grants offices; nonprofit organizations and private sector grant-making organizations; and grant professionals. Federal agencies will provide staff support to facilitate the goals of the partnership.

The Partnership is governed by a Steering Committee that is co-chaired by a federal official, a state official and an official of the nonprofit/local sector. Its membership is comprised of professionals interested in the improvement of grants management, transparency, oversight and

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accountability as well as representatives of state, local and tribal governments, nonprofit organizations and organizations that assist governments and organizations that may benefit from assistance programs.

A. Membership

1. The following may become members of the Partnership:

    a. Federal State, local and tribal government agencies and offices that are stakeholders in assistance programs;

    b. Nonprofit organizations that are stakeholders in federal, state, local, tribal and nonprofit assistance programs;

    c. Nonprofit organizations that provide assistance to stakeholders in assistance programs.

    d. Any individual with an interest in effective grants management.

2. Members must maintain a current electronic mail address. Members who cannot be located are dropped from membership.

3. A Partnership Member organization must identify its representative to the Partnership.

4. Members are encouraged to participate in governance, projects and workgroups but are not required to participate to become a member.

B. Steering Committee

The Steering Committee governs the partnership and is comprised of one representative from each of the Partnership Member Organizations and up to three representatives from each of the following sectors:

- Federal government
- State government
- Local government
- Tribal government
- Nonprofit organizations implementing federal or federal pass-through grant programs
- Other nonprofit organizations that have interests in the field of grants or accountability
- Private sector representatives working in the governmental or nonprofit grants arena.

Representatives should be at a leadership or management level in the areas of program management, fiscal operations and oversight.

The members representing each sector of Steering Committee shall be selected from a pool of recommendations submitted by NGP members. Initially, one half the members will serve a term of two years and one half will serve a term of three years. Thereafter, all members will serve a term of two years. A Steering Committee member will serve up to two consecutive terms though extensions may be provided upon approval of the Steering Committee.

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C. Steering Committee members; Replacement

(THIS WOULD NORMALLY NOT BE PART OF A FORMAL CHARTER, BUT IS INCLUDED IN THIS DRAFT FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES)

1. Current Members of the NGP Steering Committee include:

   Elizabeth Boris, Nonprofit Co-Chair (invited), Director, Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy, The Urban Institute
   Eric Brenner, State Co-Chair, Director, Maryland Governor's Grants Office
   Cara Whitehead, Federal Co-Chair, Deputy Director, Financial Assistance Policy & Oversight, Office of the Chief Financial Officer, U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security
   Cornelia Chebinou, Past NGP State Co-Chair, Washington Director, National Association of State Auditors, Comptrollers and Treasurers
   Jesse Buggs, Director, Office of Grants Development, Bowie, Maryland
   * David Cassidy, Vice President, TCG, Inc.
   Jason Lee, General Counsel, Association of Fundraising Professionals
   Bill Levis, Affiliated Scholar, The Urban Institute
   Merril Oliver, Deputy Director, Maryland Governor's Grants Office
   Sandra Swab, Recovery and Accountability Board
   Gail Vertz, Chief Executive Officer, Grants Professionals Association
   Peter Wathen-Dunn, Federal Grant Attorney
   Andrew Watt, CEO and President, Association of Fundraising Professionals

   Appropriate individuals should be solicited from each of the sectors to round out the steering committee. Steering committee meetings are open to any NGP member who chooses to participate.

   (*) TCG sponsors the NGP website and webinars.

2. If a Steering Committee member is unable to complete his/her term, the members of the Steering Committee shall select a person to serve as a replacement who is representative of the same sector as the person who did not complete his/her term of office. To the greatest extent possible, the Steering Committee must consult with a relevant NGP Partnership Member organization to select a replacement representative of the affected sector.[1]

D. Co-Chairs

The steering committee will be lead by three co-chairs chosen from federal and state government and nonprofit (or local government) organizations whom are elected by the steering committee members. The co-chairs selected upon the establishment of this Charter must be chosen by the members of the steering committee. The duties of the co-chairs are as follows:

1. Federal Co-Chair

- Securing/hosting Federal meeting space with webcasting capabilities for the NGP meetings and Webcasts.

[1] As the NGP Grows and more partners join the organization, the Steering Committee will develop more formal procedures to elect the Steering Committee members from each sector represented on the Committee and plans to revise this Charter to reflect the new procedures.

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- Securing Federal support for the NGP mission, and function as Liaison to the GPC.
- Securing Federal speakers and Federal stakeholder participation on the NGP Webcasts and projects
- Collaborate and function as communications conduit between Federal Grants Management leadership and NGP
- Work with the State co-chair to set agenda's and chair the NGP Webcasts and meetings

2. State and Nonprofit/Local Co-Chairs

- Collaborate and function as communications conduit between Federal Grants Management leadership and the NGP
- Secure participation from senior leadership representing State, Tribal, Local, and Municipal governments; nonprofit organizations; and private sector representatives in grants management
- Work with the Federal co-chair to set agenda's and chair the NGP Webcasts and meetings

E. Other Officers

1. Secretariat and Other Officers

a. There shall be a Secretariat of the NGP, who shall have the following duties:

- Manage and update the NGP website
- Manage and update the NGP membership database
- Send electronic communications to the NGP membership
- Other secretariat duties as needed to support the mission of the NGP

b. The Secretariat shall be selected by the members of the Steering Committee to serve such time as the Committee finds appropriate. The Steering Committee may, after the establishment of this Charter, establish a term of office for the Secretariat.

2 The Steering Committee may establish such other officers as needed to ensure the continued vitality of the NGP, assign those offices such duties as the Steering Committee finds appropriate, and establish a term of office for each officer.

VI. Projects

The Steering Committee determines which projects the Partnership will undertake and appoints special work groups to complete these projects. The work groups report to the Steering Committee on a periodic basis.

A. Current Partnership Projects

- Webcasts, 3 time/year. Current topics include: Recovery Act Reporting and the States; FFATA reporting via FSRS, grants management streamlining for nonprofits, regular updates from OMB, Recovery.gov, and USASpending.

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B. Previous Projects

- FFATA Pilot Project for Reporting at Prime and Sub-recipient levels
- Using Federal Grant Data to Inform State and Local Planning [PDF]
- NGP Recommendations to the Administration Transition Team [Word]
- GAO-06-566 *Grantees' Concerns with Efforts to Streamline and Simplify Processes* - PDF
- NGP Summary of GAO-06-566 - Word
- Uniform Data Elements and Definitions (UDED) - Word Version, PDF Version
- White Paper: *Accelerating Grants Streamlining: Furthering the Recommendations of the GAO Grants Streamlining Report*
- Report: *DUNS Number Management Survey*
- White Paper: *The Need for Federal Grants Management Standards*

C. Process for Establishing New Projects

The Steering Committee shall establish the milestones, outcomes, duration and expected achievement of each project.

Members are encouraged to suggest projects that meet the purpose and goals of the Partnership.

The Steering Committee will also approve the agenda for upcoming webinars.

D. Criteria for Selecting New Projects

Criteria for selecting Partnership projects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The project should be related to issues common among partnership members and relate to improvement of grants administration, as opposed to private-sector issues.
- There must be a clearly definable role for the Partnership, whether it is education, training, the publication of best practices, or the development of common approaches to addressing an issue.
- There must be a consensus among Steering Committee members to proceed with a project.
- The Partnership will not authorize any project that might be construed as involving lobbying executive or legislative personnel.
- At the request of governmental agencies, Congress, or other legislative bodies, NGP may provide technical assistance for common efforts to streamline, consolidate, simplify grant processes to reduce burden, measure performance, and improve efficiency of grant policy and procedures.
- The Partnership should avoid projects that duplicate initiatives of other organizations.

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