State of Grants status reports distribution underway

Individualized reports reveal trends and guide grant management improvements

Following up with the successful launch of the State of the Grants reports earlier this year, the Office of Grants and Federal Resources (GFR) staff is sending reports to all agencies currently using eCivis. Each agency's individualized State of Grants document lists all open projects and programs in eCivis; this allows state agencies to identify any gaps and capture needed updates. The report is comprised of two files: a detailed spreadsheet and a PDF that provides a narrative overview of the spreadsheet data. The spreadsheet has four tabs of eCivis data: timeliness of closeout, using eCivis, all awarded funding in eCivis, and using eCivis as the eFiling system. The final tab lists all of the agency's eCivis users, allowing the Department Master Account Holder (DMAH) to review the list and remove users in eCivis who no longer require access. The State of Grants document also includes a recommended action plan for improving areas of deficiency.

From the first round of State of Grants reports, GFR was able to assess the data, examine trends and created a State of Grants Findings to measure the progress of eCivis usage for grant management. This information is available for review under Appendix A of the State of Grants report. The appendices in the reports going out now also include comparisons to reported federal revenue and/or expenditures in fiscal year 2018 as included in the Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) [Statement of Federal Funds Report (2018-2020)](). All reports will be distributed by Dec. 23, 2019.

In reviewing the data, Grant Compliance Manager Veronica Peralta learned that timeliness of closeout was an area where most state agencies can improve. As a reminder, grants should be closed out within 90 days of the grant's end date. The [Grants Management Manual]() (GMM) includes a section that covers award closeout. Likewise, the [State of Arizona Accounting Manual]() (SAAM) has a policy within its grants section that addresses grant close-outs and record retention laws.

Since the first reports went out, Peralta has noted an increase in compliance of data entry and the necessary information entered correctly for a successful interface between eCivis and the AFIS GLM system. As a result, there has been a significant reduction of interface issue and an overall decrease in the percentage of projects that should be closed out.

In reviewing the data, Peralta notes that the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) is doing a good job using eCivis to manage its grants—they have no outstanding close-outs and they are using advanced functionality tasks in the system.

The process improvement at ADEQ has earned a shout out from Peralta. "Environmental Quality, you are doing a good job here! Your work is acknowledged and is helping the State of Arizona reach our targets and goals, which is to ensure there is a complete statewide representation of grant activities in eCivis. Thank you!"

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OMB releases Standard Grants Management Data Elements

In October, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued Version 1.0 of the Standard Grants Management Data Elements. The data elements were published for public comment from November 2018 to February 2019; the federal government received more than 1,100 comments. The standards were developed per Cross Agency Priority (CAP) Goal 8: Results-Oriented Accountability for Grants. On behalf of the CAP Goal 8 Executive Steering Committee (ESC), OMB published a companion fact sheet that provides an overview of the data element development process and implications of adoption of the standards for grants professionals. The Standard Grants Management Data Elements (more than 400 common grants management terms and definitions) list is the first step toward standardization of grants management data in an effort to streamline reporting processes for all federal grant programs. Our eCivis Grant Management System (GMS) vendor is currently evaluating prospective updates to come into compliance with these defined data elements. **If your team(s) use another system or set of processes than the eCivis GMS, please review the linked information above and begin the process of working with your vendors and stakeholders to ensure the future state required compliance. It's never too early to start!**

Please use eCivis to solicit grants; APP is used for contracts

State policy (SAAM 70.05) mandates that "grants shall be established in eCivis." Only eCivis or an agency's legacy grants management solution may be utilized for soliciting grant applications. Please note: Grant program managers are not permitted to use procurement systems such as the Arizona Procurement Portal (APP) for grant solicitations. APP is used for contracts.

eCivis training videos coming in January

GFR is in the process of developing a series of eCivis user training videos to help users understand how eCivis is used to research, apply for and manage grants. These videos are specific to Arizona grant managers. The videos are short and cover specific tasks (i.e., SPOC Clearinghouse, Creating Project Tasks, etc.). The tutorial videos run less than five minutes in length and walk the viewer through a step-by-step process for each related grants management task in eCivis. The tutorial videos are another resource for allowing state grants program managers to use eCivis to its fullest potential.

eCivis resources, including user guides, are available on the GFR website

Please visit GFR website for eCivis User Guides, by selecting Grants & eCivis Resources tab then selecting eCivis User Guides from the menu. Guides might come in handy for the recommended actions in the State of Grants Report. Likewise, the Grants Management Manual provides policy and procedures for grants management and aligns with functions in eCivis, providing grant program managers the tools for success and compliance.

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