UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Chief Financial Officer and
Assistant Secretary for Administration
Washington, D.C. 20230

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE MEMORANDUM 2022-02

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR: **DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE GRANTS COUNCIL**

FROM: Olivia J. Bradley
Senior Procurement Executive
and Director for Acquisition Management

OLIVIA BRADLEY Digitally signed by OLIVIA BRADLEY Date: 2022.09.06 17:33:43 -04'00'

SUBJECT: Department of Commerce Requirements for Certifying Financial Assistance Data

1. Purpose. Financial Assistance Memorandum (FAM) 2022-02 sets forth Department of Commerce (DOC) requirements for financial assistance data reporting to USAspending.gov[1] in accordance with the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006[2] (FFATA), as amended by the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014[3] (DATA Act or FFATA, as amended), and in furtherance of Federal spending transparency. Additionally, this FAM addresses the requirements of Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memorandum M-18-16, Appendix A to OMB Circular No. A-123, Management of Reporting and Data Integrity Risk;[4] and OMB memorandum M-21-20, Promoting Public Trust in the Federal Government through Effective Implementation of the American Rescue Plan Act and Stewardship of the Taxpayer Resources.

2. Background. The Office of Inspector General contracted with KPMG LLP, an independent public accounting firm to examine the Department's second quarter, FY 2017 DATA Act submission. As part of this audit, KPMG's report noted a material weakness related to improvements needed in the DATA Act submission processes and recommended that "…the Department continue to develop and implement new controls and improve existing controls over the DATA Act submission process."

In December 2020, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) completed its review of DOC's Data Quality Plan (DQP) and recommended DOC document procedures for reporting award descriptions in plain English and consistent with the government-wide data standard for the *Award Description* data element, defined as a brief description of the purpose of an award – the public needs to have a clear understanding of the purpose of the award.

[1] This Memorandum's requirements apply to reporting of required data for posting on USASpending.gov or its successor website. Any reference to "USASpending.gov" means USASpending.gov or a successor system.
[2] Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 Pub. L. No. 109-282, 120 Stat. 1186 (codified as amended at 31 U.S.C. § 6101 note).
[3] Digital Accountability and Transparency Act of 2014. Pub. L. No. 113-101, 128 Stat. 1146, (codified as amended at 31 U.S.C. § 6101 note).
[4] In accordance with OMB Memo M-18-16, dated 06 June 2018, "Pursuant to [FFATA], as amended by the DATA Act, agencies must provide full disclosure of Federal funds. Agencies must have controls in place to assure the data reported in accordance with the law meets the strategic objective of providing reliable information connecting financial information to awards for management decision making and for public accountability. Further, agencies should have controls to assure that award descriptions meet the standard of "[a] brief description of the purpose of the award." These data should be reported in accordance with the standards maintained by OMB and Treasury pursuant to FFATA, as amended by the DATA Act."

3. Policy. The Economic Development Administration (EDA), National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) grants offices are responsible for generating their respective Financial Assistance Broker Submission (FABS) files (data files), for all applicable financial assistance actions approved by the Grants Officer in the previous reporting period. It is the policy of DOC that these data files will be reviewed and validated in accordance with the procedures outlined in this FAM and that all award descriptions will be in plain English and consistent with the government-wide data standard for the *Award Description* data element, defined as a brief description of the purpose of an award.

The following FABS data files will be generated:

a. NOAA's Grants Online Program Management Office (PMO) will generate data files for NOAA, Census, Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), International Trade Administration (ITA), and applicable National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) awards managed through Grants Online;

b. EDA will have two data files; one generated by NOAA's Grants Online PMO for EDA awards managed through Grants Online and the other generated by EDA for awards managed through the Operations Planning and Control System (OPCS); and

c. NIST's data file will include NIST and applicable NTIA awards managed through the Grants Management Information System (GMIS). Beginning in FY2023, NIST will also include Census awards managed through GMIS.

4. Required Actions.

a. Each grants office (EDA, NIST and NOAA) is responsible for designating a Grants Office Point of Contact (POC). The Grants Office POC is responsible for establishing a process to ensure that the data files are reviewed and validated prior to being uploaded to USAspending.gov. The current Grants Office POCs are –

   i. EDA – Bryan Borlik
   ii. NIST – Jannet Cancino
   iii. NOAA – Arlene Simpson Porter

b. Each grants office (EDA, NIST and NOAA) is responsible for designating a FABS File Coordinator (Coordinator).

c. Every month, on or about the 1st and 15th of the month, the FABS file must be generated and distributed for review and validation.

5. Contact. Questions regarding this FAM may be directed to John Geisen at jgeisen@doc.gov or (202)-482-0602.

6. Cancellation. FAM 2021-01, *Department of Commerce Requirements for Certifying Financial Assistance Data*, dated 16 April 2021, is hereby cancelled.

Attachment – DOC Monthly and Quarterly DATA Act Certification Processes for Financial Assistance

<u>ATTACHMENT</u>

DOC
Monthly and Quarterly
DATA Act Certification Processes for Financial Assistance

MONTHLY

A. Data Review and Validation

1. Every month, on or about the 1st and 15th of the month, the Coordinator for each grants office will generate the FABS data files. As determined by each bureau's internal review and validation process, the Coordinator will ensure the data files are forwarded to the applicable bureau personnel for review and validation PRIOR to uploading to USAspending.gov.

   Note: For EDA grants managed through OPCS, EDA personnel validate the data in OPCS prior to the data file being generated.

   It is recommended that the following note be included when forwarding the data files for review and validation:

   NOTE: A non-response indicates acceptance of the data – uploading of the data to USAspending.gov will be completed on or about the 5th (or 20th as applicable) of the month.

2. The data files generated on or about the 1st of the month will be submitted **by the 5th of the month** and include all actions, as well as any updates/corrections to the data uploaded on the 20th of the previous month.

3. The data files generated on or about the 15th of the month will be submitted **by the 20th of the month** and include all actions, as well as any updates/corrections to the data uploaded on the 5th of the current month.

4. In completing the review and validation of the data files, the applicable bureau personnel are required to ensure that the *Award Description* data element for each award is consistent with the standard definition – a brief description of the purpose of the award (and <u>**not**</u> the award action). The *Award Description* data element should not include acronyms, technical terminology, agency-specific terms that are unclear to the public or be identical to the program title. Simply put, the *Award Description* data element answers the question, "what is the purpose of this award?" Additionally, the *Award Description* data element should stay consistent throughout the period of performance of the award.

5. No later than the 5th and 20th of the month, the Coordinator will ensure that any required updates to the data files are incorporated and that the upload to USAspending.gov is completed.

B. Certification

1. By 1pm on the first business day following the 5th and 20th of each month, the Coordinator will report via email on the status of uploading the data files to USAspending.gov to their respective Grants Office POC, the CBS Service Center (CSC) DATA Act Team (doc-dataact@doc.gov), and the Department's Financial Assistance Policy and Oversight Division (FAPOD) (BC-OAM-GRANTS@doc.gov).

QUARTERLY

A. CSC DATA ACT Team. The CSC DATA Act Team will compile the DOC Quarterly DATA Act certification materials and include the three bi-monthly reports received. Grants Office POCs are not required to submit a separate quarterly report for the DATA Act certification materials.