



No. 2003-11  
December 08, 2003

# PROGRAM GUIDANCE

---

**PROGRAM:** All Programs

**FOR:** Tribal Government Leaders and Tribally Designated Housing Entities

*R.J.B.*

**FROM:** Rodger J. Boyd, Deputy Assistant Secretary, PN

**TOPIC:** Grants.gov (E-Grants) Initiative; Use of a Universal Identifier (DUNS Number) for Application for All Federal Grants

---

**Purpose:** The purpose of this Guidance is to provide information regarding the Department's transition to the Federal government's new Grants.gov system, how it will affect federal grant programs for tribes and tribally designated housing entities (TDHE); and how tribes and TDHEs should prepare for this new on-line grant application system.

**Background:** On November 29, 1999, the Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-107) was signed into law. The Act is intended to improve the effectiveness and performance of federal financial assistance programs by simplifying application and reporting requirements for federal grants; improving the delivery of services to the public; and facilitating greater coordination among federal agencies delivering such services by implementing one, universal electronic format for applying for grants from all federal agencies. This standard electronic format is to have information organized in a consistent way in program announcements for the hundreds of federal programs that make financial assistance awards to non-federal recipients.

This initiative, known as the Grants.gov Initiative, is an effort by the federal agencies to develop a common electronic grant application and reporting system. For clients this system will be a "one-stop" shopping center for funding opportunities for all federal programs. The first segment of the Grants.gov Initiative focuses on allowing the public to easily find funding opportunities from all 26 agencies that provide grants via the website [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov). It is planned that this will be upgraded in FY 2005 to allow clients to apply for all grants on-line at this same government-wide website. Funding decisions would still be made by the federal agency sponsoring the specific grant program.

**References:** The Federal Financial Assistance Management Improvement Act of 1999 (P. L. 106-107); E-Government Act of 2002 (P. L. 107-347); and the following Federal Register Notices:

- Office of Federal Financial Management; Government-Wide Guidance for Use of Grants.gov FIND To Post Funding Opportunity Announcement Synopses published Monday, June 23, 2003.
- Standard Data Elements for Electronically Posting Synopses of Federal Agencies' Financial Assistance Program Announcements at Grants.gov FIND published Monday, June 23, 2003.
- Office of Federal Financial Management; Policy Directive on Financial Assistance Program Announcements published Monday, June 23, 2003.
- Office of Federal Financial Management; Government-Wide Guidance for Use of Grants.gov FIND To Post Funding Opportunity Announcement Synopses published Monday, June 23, 2003.
- Use of a Universal Identifier by Grant Applicants published Friday, June 27, 2003.

**Grants.gov:** The website [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) became operational as of October 31, 2003. This one website will eventually allow grantee organizations to search for, apply for and manage grant programs from all federal agencies on-line. There are two main features to Grants.gov: FIND and APPLY. As the name implies, FIND is where you will go to find grant opportunities from all 26 federal grant-making agencies from one on-line location. You will also soon be able to register there to be automatically notified via e-mail of future grant opportunities as they are added to the site. APPLY is the on-line feature where you will actually download and submit applications for grant programs.

**Use of a Universal Identifier by Applicants for All Federal Grants:** On July 27, 2003, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published in the Federal Register a requirement that all entities applying for federal grants or cooperative agreements submitted on or after October 1, 2003, will be required to include a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet. This includes applications or plans under mandatory (competitive or formula based) grant programs. No grant application is to be considered complete, whether submitted electronically or in paper format, until a valid DUNS number is provided by the applicant. If your organization is planning on applying for any federal funding in FY 2004 from any federal agency, you will need to obtain a DUNS number as soon as possible.

The DUNS number will eventually be used in electronic submissions to link to fixed applicant data, such as name and address fields, maintained in a central federal registration repository. This will allow the data to automatically populate corresponding fields in the electronic application. It is the intent of OMB to eventually expand the use of the DUNS number throughout the grant's entire life-cycle incorporating use of the DUNS number as a universal identifier in financial reporting, payments and auditing.

Sub-grantees do not need to obtain and submit DUNS numbers. Only the entity that makes application to the Federal government, or is the recipient of a block grant, will need to submit a DUNS number.

**Obtaining a DUNS Number:** The DUNS Number is a unique nine-digit identification number issued by Dun & Bradstreet. Organizations can obtain a DUNS number at no cost from Dun &

Bradstreet on-line at: <https://www.dnb.com/product/eupdate/requestOptions.html>, or by telephoning 1-800-234-3867 or 1-800-333-0505 and then choosing option #3. You will need to provide answers to the following questions:

1. Name of the organization
2. Organization's business address
3. Telephone number
4. Name of the CEO
5. Legal structure of the organization
6. Year legally organized
7. Primary line of business
8. Total number of employees (full and part time)

If you apply on-line, it takes about 30 days to receive your DUNS number. If you apply by telephone, it will only take about ten minutes to get your DUNS number. It is the responsibility of the organizations applying for federal grants to obtain a DUNS number prior to grant application. If the DUNS number application is made by a federally recognized tribe, the tribe should be sure to use the tribal name as it is listed on the BIA's list of Federally Recognized Tribes.

**Applicability for HUD grant applications:** For all competitive HUD grants (e.g. ICDBG, ROSS, RHED), whether published in the SuperNOFA or individually, a DUNS number will need to be included with your application or the application will be considered incomplete. A revised version of SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance, will be available soon that will provide for the inclusion of the applicant's DUNS number. It is also anticipated that the Department will soon be publishing proposed regulations in the Federal Register covering the use of DUNS numbers.

The requirement for a DUNS number is also applicable to the submission of Indian Housing Plans (IHP) for the Indian Housing Block Grant. ONAP will be required to submit to Congress at year's end funding reports by DUNS number. It is, therefore, our recommendation that you obtain a DUNS number and provide it (either in writing or by e-mail) to your local Area ONAP Office as soon as possible. Additional information will be provided on the use of a DUNS number for the IHBG program as soon as it is available.

**Inquiries:** Additional information regarding the Grants.gov Initiative will be made available on HUD's eGrants Web Page at: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/egrants/egrants.cfm>

**Other Useful Websites:**

- Central Contract Registration  
<http://www.ccr.gov/>
- Dun & Bradstreet  
<http://www.dnb.com/us/>
- eGov (The Official Web Site of the President's E-Government Initiatives)  
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/egov/>
- Grants.gov

<http://www.grants.gov/>

- HUD's eGrants  
<http://www.hud.gov/offices/adm/grants/egrants/egrants.cfm>
- The Inter-Agency Electronic Grants Committee  
<http://www.iaegc.gov/>