Grant Innovation Forum:
Reducing Reporting Costs, Delivering Transparency

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AGENDA

Registration and Light Breakfast (9:15 am - 9:30 am)

I. Welcome and Introductions (9:30 am - 10:00 am)
II. Federal Grant Reporting: Current Landscape and Future Data Standardization (10:00 am - 10:45 am)

Coffee Break (10:45 am - 11:00 am)

III. Breakout Group Discussions (11:00 am - 11:45 am)
IV. Breakout Group Reports (11:45 am - 12:00 pm)
V. Closing Thoughts and Adjournment (12:00 pm - 12:15 pm)

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

- Data Foundation
- Aspen Institute
- MorganFranklin
- Participants
FEDERAL GRANT REPORTING: Current Landscape and Future Data Standardization

- Key Findings from *Transforming Federal Grant Reporting* Paper
- The Administration’s Cross-Agency Priority Goal on Results-Oriented Accountability for Grants
- GREAT Act and Congressional Oversight of Grantmaking
- Implications Beyond Federal Grant Reporting
- Views from Grantee Community

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Key Findings from *Transforming Grant Reporting*

- **Grant reporting is expensive.** Research grantees, for instance, report spending 42% of their time on compliance, rather than active research. (GAO)
- **Grant reporting is duplicative.** Grant reporting forms are often “highly duplicative,” with over half of data elements matching another form, and 15 forms are entirely duplicative. (OMB)
- **Grant reporting can be changed through policy reforms.** Both the White House and Congress have introduced initiatives to standardize data in order to reduce reporting costs and deliver transparency.
Key Findings from *Transforming Grant Reporting*

- **Better data means cheaper compliance.** Interviewees agree that a standardized data structure, imposed government-wide, could reduce reporting costs through automation.

- **Federal grant leaders are ready for change.** We uncovered no serious opposition to the idea of a government-wide data structure for grant reporting. In fact, our interviewees themselves often identified solutions to the challenges they raised, when asked.
Key Findings from *Transforming Grant Reporting*

- **Technical Challenge 1**: Some data elements are common across all or most federal grant reporting, but every program imposes unique requirements.
- **Technical Solution 1**: Standardization should begin with “core” data elements.
- **Technical Challenge 2**: Grant programs are governed by a wide range of laws that impose disparate reporting requirements.
- **Technical Solution 2**: A scalable data structure can accommodate unique reporting requirements.
Key Findings from *Transforming Grant Reporting*

- **Technical Challenge 3:** Grantor agencies have already deployed a range of disparate systems to collect information from their grantees; system upgrades are expensive and complex.
- **Technical Solution 3:** Data standardization should not require significant system changes.
- **Technical Challenge 4:** Some grantees lack the technical capacity to comply with electronic reporting requirements.
- **Technical Solution 4:** Standardization should enable the development of automated platforms for even the smallest grantees.
Key Findings from *Transforming Grant Reporting*

- **Technical Challenge 3:** Grantor agencies have already deployed a range of disparate systems to collect information from their grantees; system upgrades are expensive and complex.
- **Technical Solution 3:** Data standardization should not require significant system changes.
- **Technical Challenge 4:** Some grantees lack the technical capacity to comply with electronic reporting requirements.
- **Technical Solution 4:** Standardization should enable the development of automated platforms for even the smallest grantees.
Key Findings from *Transforming Grant Reporting*

- **Cultural Challenge 1:** Grantees and other stakeholders must be consulted extensively, yet standardization requires choices to be made.
- **Cultural Solution 1:** The DATA Act’s agile consultation process shows how standardization can be transparent and open.
- **Cultural Challenge 2:** Grantees, especially small local and tribal governments and nonprofits, lack resources to track and manage significant changes.
- **Cultural Solution 2:** Standardization changes the format, but not the content, of information grantees report.
Key Findings from *Transforming Grant Reporting*

- **Cultural Challenge 3**: Open data requirements raise privacy concerns.
- **Cultural Solution 3**: Privacy concerns can be alleviated through clear privacy protections in legislation and rulemaking and intentional stakeholder engagement.
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BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. Atri, Bajaj, Del Toro, Martens, Peckham, Terry
2. Brandon, Chamberlain, Dobrzeniecki, Soltis, Spencer, Wall
3. Bhartiya, Burrell, Chebinou, Goroff, Thottungal, Waknis
4. Conley, Durrer, Garman, Kinn Bennett, Tomasko, Wang
5. Cronin, Endy, Haddad, Porres-Hernandez, Zachary
6. Boris, Giblin, Harper, Kershaw, Rother
7. DeAngelo, Goodfriend, Johansen, Schuman, Slebrch

Floaters: Anuci, Bolger, Hoehner, Hollister, Kerner, Luckett, Mhatre, Nelle-Davis, Yabsley, Sauers, Jean, Kordel

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BREAKOUT GROUP DISCUSSIONS

1. Did the *Transforming Grant Reporting* paper capture all of the major challenges facing the federal government’s grant data standardization initiatives? List any additional challenges and propose solutions to each.

2. Assuming the federal government successfully adopts a comprehensive data taxonomy for all reports by grantees, should it then seek to centralize all grant reporting using a single portal?

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CLOSING THOUGHTS AND ADJOURNMENT

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- Aspen Institute
- MorganFranklin