

What is Grantor?

Grantor is a holistic agreement management system that was first developed by FAS a couple of years ago. Implementing it for APHIS is one of the goals of the Business Process Improvement initiative for Cooperative Agreements. It started as an agency-by-agency implementation effort but has turned into an Enterprise solution for USDA. APHIS is fully represented by a cadre of folks across our program units and functions who serve as subject matter experts and have been providing input into how the system will work. APHIS and NIFA are implementing Grantor simultaneously and having joint sessions to flesh out system requirements that will work for both agencies as well as sessions for APHIS-only to design areas that need customization to accommodate our processes.

Functionality

The system's functionality and benefits include all programmatic and financial aspects of managing grants and cooperative agreements from the pre-award stage all the way through closeout. The system will provide a fully functioning external portal that our cooperators will be able to access to prepare their application forms, requests for reimbursement, financial and accomplishment reports, etc. as well as digital signature capability. This should allow transparency and a streamlined process to cut down on the time it takes to get an agreement awarded, a request for reimbursement paid, tracking down accomplishment and financial reports, etc. which should help with our A-123 internal control testing that we endure annually.

Implementation

The subject matter experts have been involved in the assessment phase of this Cooperative Agreement and Grants process throughout the Spring and finalized the APHIS requirements for Grantor this past Summer. This Fall, we have been in the design phase of the system based on the APHIS requirements. Starting in Spring 2016, once the Enterprise solution has been developed, we will begin system testing.

Outreach and Education

There is a huge outreach effort that is in its beginning stages to start to educate our cooperators. APHIS plans to have a presence at larger meetings with our stakeholders to let them know what's coming and how it will work for them. There will be many additional outreach efforts in 2016 to bring our recipients on board. The projected implementation timeframe for APHIS to go live with Grantor is August 2016.

In addition, we will need to train our APHIS employees on Grantor. The vendor that is developing the system will provide training materials that can be customized for APHIS use. More to come on how APHIS will train our people.

The Future

The Grantor System will be implemented over multiple years to encompass the full gambit of agreement types; grants & cooperative agreements, inter-agency and reimbursable agreements, and MOUs. Currently the system that has been developed for other USDA agencies is fully capable to process Grants & Cooperative Agreements and APHIS will implement Grantor for our grants and cooperative agreements first. We will participate in the development for our other agreement types as they are scheduled in the future.

There will be some changes that come with Grantor, some will be easy to adapt to and others may take some time. Overall, implementing Grantor is going to be an activity that is going to take all of us to ensure its implementation is successful.