

FAQ—EDA’s Single Application (Form ED-900) and www.grants.gov

Q: Are applicants required to submit all EDA applications via www.grants.gov?

A: No. EDA accepts applications both electronically and in hardcopy format. There are several important advantages to using www.grants.gov, however, including the ability for the applicant to re-use and edit standard forms (e.g. the SF-424) previously used in other grant application packages, the ability for the applicant to generate and save to his/her computer or network a fully screen-fillable grant application package, and the system’s generation of an confirmation email to the applicant that the grant application package has been received by EDA.

Q: What do I need to do to get started with www.grants.gov?

A: First, if you intend to submit an application via www.grants.gov, you should request a user id and password by clicking on the link “Get Registered” on the left-hand menu. Note that although you do not need to register in order to download EDA’s application package, you will need to register in order to submit an application via www.grants.gov; it is a good idea to do this up front as it can take several days. Second, ensure that you have Adobe Acrobat Reader version 8.1.2 or higher installed on your machine. EDA recommends using Adobe Acrobat Reader version 9, which can be downloaded for free from Adobe’s website.

Q: Why am I getting a pop-up screen asking me to update my user profile?

A: In January, 2009, Grants.gov will be terminating service with the current Grants.gov credential provider, Operational Research Consultants (ORC), and providing its own credentials (user name and password) to Grants.gov registrants. As a result, when clicking on the ‘For Applicants’ link, existing and new Grants.gov registrants will get a pop-up screen asking them to update their user profile. The information requested is similar to the information that was previously provided to ORC or one of the other credential providers. In addition to updating their user profile, registrants will be asked to enter a Secret Question and Secret Answer. The Secret Question and Secret Answer portion of the information provides for increased security for future inquiries about the registrants account and allows registrants to reset their own password on their own.

Q: How long does a www.grants.gov registration last?

A: An organization only needs to register once. Registration does not expire. However, there is an annual update process with the Central Contractor Registry (CCR). Contact the www.grants.gov helpdesk for more information.

Q: Can an EDD or another third party complete and submit an application on behalf of an applicant through www.grants.gov ?

A: Yes, although each organization involved with completing a grant must go through the registration process with Grants.gov. This means that both the applicant(s) and any third party (such as an EDD, consultant, or engineering firm that will complete the application) must register (the central registry, or CCR process). In addition, if an EDD or other third party is going to complete an application on behalf of an applicant, they have to go through a process to become an "Authorized Organization Representative" (AOR) on behalf of an applicant(s) once they (and the applicant(s)) have completed initial registration. Once this is completed, an email is sent by www.grants.gov to the original applicant's e-business contact, asking that they certify that the third party is in fact authorized as their representative. If approved, the third party can complete an application in behalf of the original applicant.

Q: If an EDD completes several applications for an applicant, is it necessary to have the applicant approve the EDD as an Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) every time an application will be submitted?

A: No. Once an entity has been granted AOR status for an applicant, that AOR status is good until the privilege is revoked or removed by the applicant's e-business representative. Grants.gov does advise that, prior to submitting an application through www.grants.gov, an EDD might want to verify it is still an authorized representative for the applicant(s). It is possible that the applicant's e-business representative may have gone into the system to make an adjustment to its account and inadvertently removed an AOR from the list.

Q: Can an applicant share the application package file among different members of the organization (e.g. to make edits, obtain senior-level approvals, etc.)?

A: Yes, if the individual who downloads the application package saves it to his or her computer and then sends it to others for their review and/or comments. Alternatively, the application could be made available to members of the organization by downloading and saving it to a shared drive. However, only individuals with Adobe Acrobat Reader version 8.1.2 or higher will be able to make and save edits to this application package. Note that any changes made in this manner are not stored by www.grants.gov, but rather on the individual's computer or network. Applicants should be sure that the application package submitted is the final version. Only the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR) will be able to submit the application package via www.grants.gov.

Q: How do I download, complete, and submit a grant application via www.grants.gov?

A: The steps are as follows:

- a) Select "Apply for Grants" from the left-hand menu on www.grants.gov.
- b) Select the link "Download a Grant Application" package.
- c) Enter the appropriate Funding Opportunity Number and click on [Download Package].
- d) Click on the "download" link.
- e) Click on "Download Application Package."

- f) Save the application package to your computer or network drive. Note that the application package file can be shared among multiple users; however, they all must have Adobe Acrobat 8.1.2 or higher in order to save changes to the application package.
- g) Click on each of the documents in the “Mandatory Documents” box and, after selecting each one, click on the arrow to move these into the “Mandatory Documents for Submission” box.
- h) In the “Optional Documents” box, click on each of the additional documents that are required based on the project type and, after selecting each one, click on the arrow to move these into the “Optional Documents for Submission” box. If you will be submitting any forms not available on www.grants.gov (e.g. Form CD-346 for non-profit applicants) or any supplementary information not on the forms you have already selected, also select ‘attachments.’ EDA is able to accept up to 10 attachments in addition to the forms submitted. The application package should now pre-populate with all selected forms embedded.
- i) Complete all mandatory fields (highlighted in yellow) on the forms. Note that mandatory fields will vary based on the type of applicant and the type of assistance sought. On Form CD-511, type “not awarded yet” in the “project number” field. **Save the application package at regular intervals to avoid losing work.**
- j) Attach any attachments, as necessary. EDA will accept attachments in PDF, WordPerfect, Microsoft Excel, or Microsoft Word. (Note: Applicants will only be able to do so if they selected ‘attachments’ as one of the optional documents for submission in step h.)
- k) When all mandatory fields have been completed, scroll to the top and click on [Check Package for Errors].
- l) Click [Save].
- m) Click [Save and Submit]. At this point, you must be connected to the Internet and you will be asked to enter your www.grants.gov logon in order to submit via www.grants.gov.

Q: What does it mean if I receive an error and Adobe Acrobat suddenly closes while I am completing the application package?

A: Most often errors are caused by either insufficient memory or inadequate Adobe permissions. EDA recommends taking the following steps:

- a) First, un-install your Adobe Acrobat Reader and re-install Adobe Acrobat Reader version 9. Make sure you are not using Adobe Acrobat Professional, as this will increase the already large file size and make the application more unstable.
- b) Second, close all other documents open on your desktop to ensure your computer has sufficient memory available. Right click on the toolbar at the very bottom of your screen and select ‘Task Manager’ to view the available memory. The available physical memory should be at least 250,000K to accommodate the application package’s large file size.

- c) If these two steps still do not resolve the problem, call the www.grants.gov help desk at 1-800-518-4726.

Q: When will I receive a validation message from www.grants.gov?

A: You will receive a validation message within 24-48 hours of submitting an application via www.grants.gov. This message will tell you if the application has been received and validated or if it has been rejected and why. EDA encourages applicants to apply at least 72 hours before the deadline in order to allow the applicant to correct submission errors and re-submit the application if the application does not validate correctly.

Q: How can I check the status of my www.grants.gov submission?

A: Once you have submitted an application, you can check the status by clicking on the “Applicants Login” link on the www.grants.gov homepage, logging into the system, and clicking on “Check Application Status” on the left hand side of the screen.

Q: What are the most common reasons an application is rejected by www.grants.gov?

A: There are five common reasons: (1) the Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number entered in the SF-424 is not the same as the DUNS number used to register for www.grants.gov; (2) a virus was detected in a file attachment; (3) the application was submitted after the deadline for receiving applications; (4) the submitter is not approved to submit grant applications on behalf of the organization; and (5) the organization was not registered in the CCR and submitted an invalid DUNS number.

Q: Is there a character limit for the boxes in the Form ED-900?

A: Yes. While EDA encourages applicants to generally stay within the character limits, applicants requiring additional space to answer particular questions should choose ‘Attachments’ as one of the ‘Optional Documents for Submission’ on the first page of the full application package. This will add an ‘Attachments List’ page to the end of the application package, to which applicants can upload attachments. Applicants using this as a means to answer particular questions in greater depth should attach a single document labeled ‘ED900continued’ and clearly label each answer with the section and question number (e.g. A.1) to which it corresponds. Note that www.grants.gov will reject any application package containing attachments that have file names with special characters (hyphens, commas, etc.).

Q: Is it possible to complete more than one SF-424 when there is more than one applicant on a project?

A: Yes. You can download an extra SF-424 from the Forms Repository at <http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/FormLinks?family=15>. Click on the PDF link in the row corresponding to the PDF, download this form, complete it, and then upload it to the

application package using the ‘Attachments’ form. (Note that you must select ‘Attachments’ from the ‘Optional Documents for Submission’ box on the first page of the application package in order to upload any attachments.)

Q: Can I use www.grants.gov to download a screen-fillable application package but submit this package in hardcopy format?

A: Yes. The steps are as follows:

- a) Select “Apply for Grants” from the left-hand menu on www.grants.gov.
- b) Select the link “Download a Grant Application” package.
- c) Enter the appropriate Funding Opportunity Number and click on [Download Package].
- d) Click on the “download” link.
- e) Click on “Download Application Package.”
- f) Save the application package to your computer or network drive. Note that the application package file can be shared among multiple users; however, they all must have Adobe Acrobat 8.1.2 or higher in order to save changes to the application package.
- g) Click on each of the documents in the “Mandatory Documents” box and, after selecting each one, click on the arrow to move these into the “Mandatory Documents for Submission” box.
- h) In the “Optional Documents” box, click on each of the additional documents that are required based on the project type and, after selecting each one, click on the arrow to move these into the “Optional Documents for Submission” box. The application package should now pre-populate with all selected forms embedded.
- i) Complete all mandatory fields (highlighted in yellow) on the forms. Note that mandatory fields will vary based on the type of applicant and the type of assistance sought. On Form CD-511, type “not awarded yet” in the “project number” field. **Save the application package at regular intervals to avoid losing work.**
- j) Print the application package.
- k) Attach any attachments, as necessary.
- l) Mail the completed application package to the appropriate EDA regional office. For a list of EDA regional offices, please see <http://www.eda.gov/AboutEDA/Regions.xml> .

Q: Can I download a complete screen-fillable application package from EDA’s website?

A: No. Only the EDA-specific application form, the ED-900, and the CD-511 are available in screen-fillable format from EDA’s website. The standard forms referenced on EDA’s website include links directing the applicant back to Forms Repository on www.grants.gov. Note, however, that the forms in the Forms Repository are not screen-fillable. The only way to obtain all forms in screen-fillable format is to download a complete EDA application package from www.grants.gov using the “Apply for Grants” feature.

Q: What other www.grants.gov resources are available?

A: For assistance in navigating www.grants.gov and list of useful resources, consult http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_help.jsp. For www.grants.gov Frequently Asked Questions, consult http://www.grants.gov/help/general_faqs.jsp and http://www.grants.gov/applicants/applicant_faqs.jsp. The Applicant's User Guide is available at <http://www.grants.gov/assets/ApplicantUserGuide.pdf> and the User Guide for the registration process is available at <http://www.grants.gov/assets/OrgRegUserGuide.pdf>.

If you still are unable to find an answer, please contact the www.grants.gov helpdesk at support@grants.gov or 1-800-518-4726 Monday-Friday 7 am to 9 pm Eastern Time (except for federal holidays).