



FEDERAL DEMONSTRATION PARTNERSHIP

Redefining the Government & University Research Partnership

Open Government and the DATA Act

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Timeline & Agenda

Timeline

- DATA Act passed May 2014
 - January FDP
 - OMB, Treasury, DHHS panel update
 - Launch of Open Gov/eRA Joint workgroup effort
 - Data Elements workgroups – 2 groups, 20 or so volunteers
- THANK YOU!
- 4/1/15 webinar – pilot info

Today's Agenda

- Review of Workgroup Response
- Updates on DATA Act Section 5 Pilot
- Preview of Working Session on Data Elements



Workgroup Response 1

Which data elements are central to your reporting or analysis processes?

- Data elements are **not** central to their own analysis processes.
 - All focused on the impacts on the Federal reporting they are required to do
 - As the subcommittee has heard anecdotally that the data elements tracked and reported for Federal government transparency purposes do not provide any managerial or oversight benefit to the institutions themselves, we do not expect institutions to use it for these purposes.
- Respondents emphasized that data elements considered **mandatory are most central** to their processes
 - Those are the elements institutions will develop systems and processes to track.
 - institutions will pay less attention to data elements considered optional or not mandatory since they do not gain any managerial or oversight benefit from tracking them.



Workgroup Response 2

In setting standards, what are industry standards the Treasury and OMB should be considering?

- Some preferred **XML and JSON**.
 - Both of these are technical standards for electronic data communication, and define how data is transmitted, but do not define the content of individual data elements.
 - Many larger FDP member institutions are expected to modify or create electronic systems to assist with any tracking or reporting requirements. For this reason, established, commonly-used electronic data standards were preferred over proprietary or custom standards developed by the government.
- XML, JSON, etc. may present an additional burden to **smaller institutions** and those that rely on a centralized IT environment for systems and ETL [Extract, Transform, and Load] processes. Those technologies would require **SMEs** [Subject Matter Experts] at both the institutional level and the receiving unit. Instead **STAR Metrics exchange** requirements may be a usable model whereby a specified text formatted file is required.
- Common to both is the need for data exchange protocols that can be easily utilized by institutions **regardless of their size** or available financial resources.



Workgroup Response 3

What factors should the Treasury and OMB take into account as they establish data standards?

- **Common Data Standards:** Implement common data standards used in a consistent manner across all Federal agencies.
- **Shared Data Elements:** Subcommittee has heard that Federal agencies do not always use shared data elements consistently even when developed with common definitions and standards. For this reason some members have proposed OMB develop a mechanism for grantees to report on and request modifications to data elements agencies may be using in a non-standard manner.
- **USA Spending:** *(next slide)*



Workgroup Response 3

What factors should the Treasury and OMB take into account as they establish data standards?

- **USA Spending:** Establish standards that will reduce the variety of similar data fields and ensure data use from USA Spending matches data elements from other systems.
 - Panel suggested this is the end point for the DATA Act
 - Changes have already started. Significant revamp.
 - Search reduced, number of fields reduced, download mechanism changed
 - Reaction: Some functionality added back. Dedicated [Github](#) under transparency



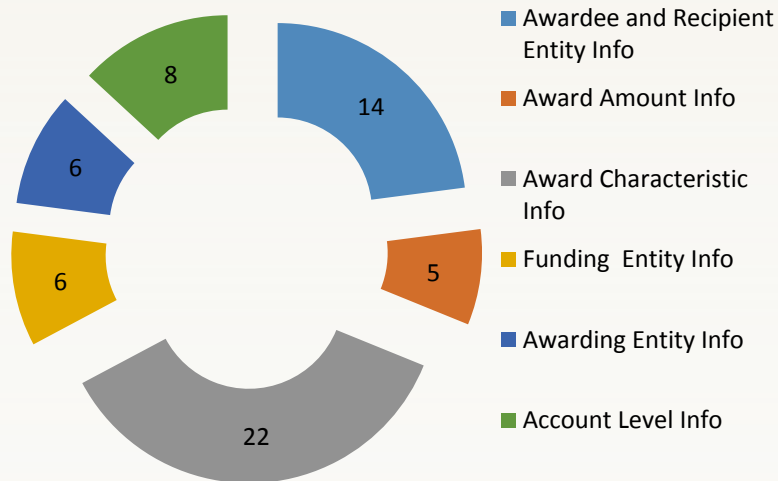
Data Element Analysis

- **Compared proposed DATA Act elements** to those used in other Federal reporting systems (FSRS.gov, SF-425 Federal Financial Report, ARRA Section 1512 Quarterly Reports, Grants Reporting Information Program (GRIP) pre-pilot, Research Performance Progress Report, and STAR Metrics). These were organized by type and compared against each other.
- Of particular note is that despite the variety of data elements included (overall) and the subtle differences of definition or title used between similar data elements, there is still a lot in common. **Utilizing much of this existing infrastructure** may be useful in both developing consistent definitions and in creating definitions that are simpler for grantees to implement.



Data Element Analysis

DATA ACT elements



	Comment Period		
	Comment Period Closed	Comment Period Open (05.15)	Comment Period Open Soon
Awardee and Recipient Entity Info	2	4	8
Award Amount Info			5
Award Characteristic Info	3		19
Funding Entity Info			6
Awarding Entity Info	2		4
Account Level Info	7	1	



Additional Workgroup Issues

Data Elements Details

- Which fields will be populated by federal agencies vs institutions? Several reference SAM.gov as a place to look for pre-populated data elements. Especially special items like Treasury account symbol.
- What are data elements titled "ultimate awardee" and "record type"?
- The easiest way to capture some financial information (such as "unobligated amount" and "outlay") is to create a centralized FFR system whereby data elements can be uploaded via a spreadsheet or other automated means. This would theoretically at least be relatively neutral in terms of administrative time (more accounts to report, but fewer places to send the information).
- Current GitHub elements are clearly Award focused. There are not any sub award and subcontract elements (yet?). Given that FFATA triggered expenditure based subcontract SEFA reporting this list may not be complete.
- There is no indication of such challenging manual input challenges like PI or vendors status reporting.
- Approve workgroup FDP recommended response (*to be linked*)



DATA Act Pilot

- OMB, Treasury, and HHS discussed preliminary thoughts at April 1 webinar
- The DATA Act “Pilot” will not be a traditional pilot.
 - Will be a series of initiatives to develop recommendations on standardized data elements and reduce recipient reporting burden and costs
 - Not a “test” of a newly-developed system
- Specific details not yet available. We only have a broad outline of the goals of each module.



DATA Act Implementation Goals

- **Expand the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA)** to disclose direct Federal agency expenditures and link Federal contract, loan, and grant spending information to programs
- **Establish Government-wide data standards** for financial data and provide consistent, reliable, and searchable Government-wide spending data that is displayed accurately
- **Simplify reporting** for entities receiving Federal funds by streamlining reporting requirements and reducing compliance costs while improving transparency
- **Improve the quality of data** submitted to USASpending.gov by holding Federal agencies accountable for the completeness and accuracy of the data submitted
- **Apply approaches developed by the Recovery Accountability and Transparency Board** to spending across the Federal Government
- **Require agency Inspectors General and the Comptroller General government watchdogs to audit and report** on agency compliance with the law's mandates



DATA Act Implementation Approach

Data-centric

- Avoid massive system changes, focus on managing data

Incremental

- Release data as it becomes available

Reuse

- Maximize and leverage use of existing processes and investments

Collaborative

- Feedback drives improvements

Iterative/Agile

- Conduct many small scale pilots



DATA Act Implementation (Data Standards)

Importance

- Other elements of DATA Act are dependent on data standards
- Affects all stakeholders and downstream recipients of Federal funds

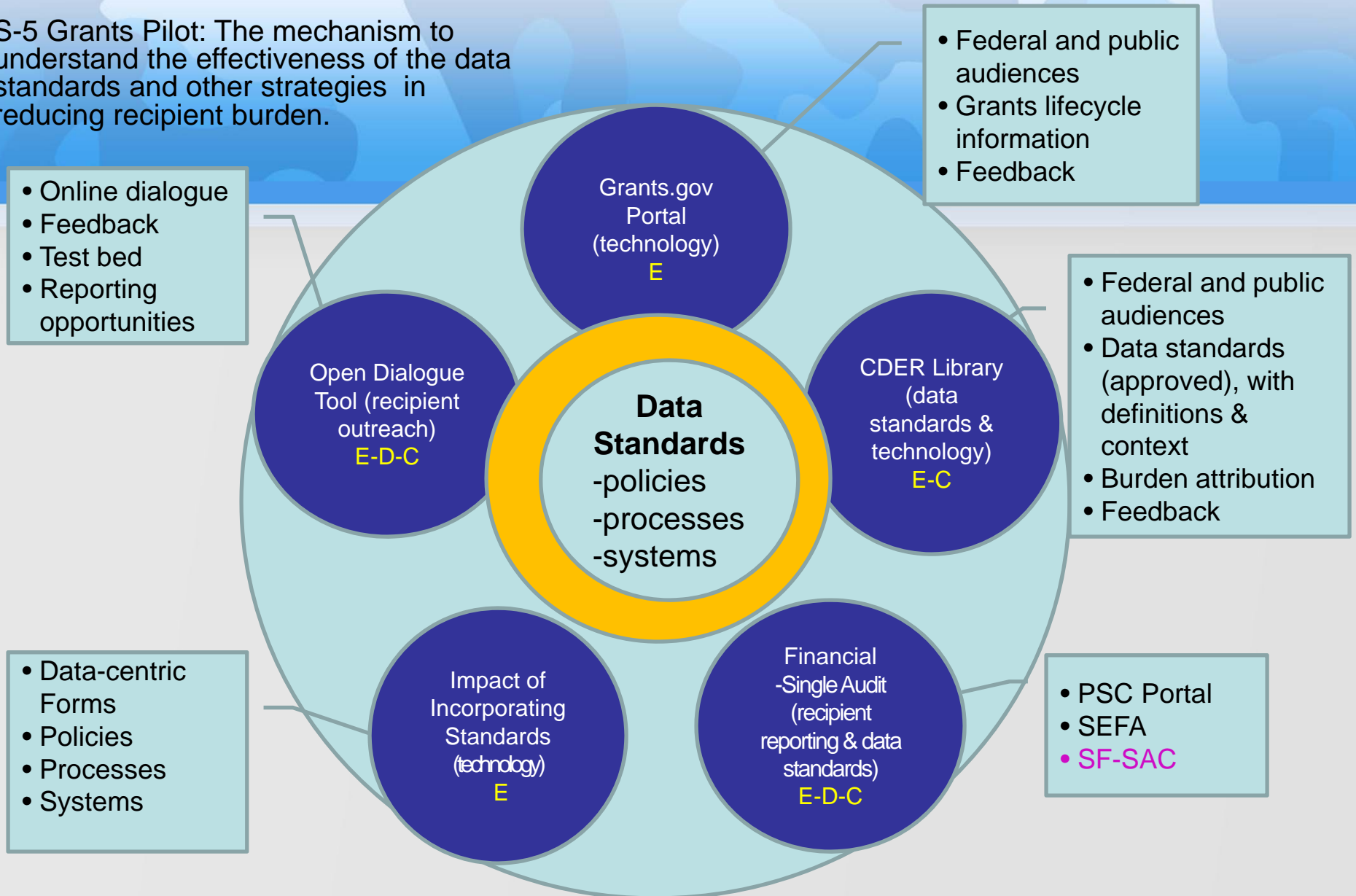
Goals

- **Standardize data definitions** – collaborate with Federal and non-Federal stakeholders to define common data elements across communities
- **Look at industry standards** – during implementation, carefully examine common practices and uses to maximize positive impact
- **Consider implications** – use collaboration tools and outreach processes to understand and consider potential implications for stakeholders in their future reporting and compliance based on standards

Accomplishments-to-date

- Compiled list of FFATA and DATA Act elements which must be defined according to DATA Act
- Established Interagency Advisory Committee (IAC) to coordinate cross-community collaboration within Federal government

S-5 Grants Pilot: The mechanism to understand the effectiveness of the data standards and other strategies in reducing recipient burden.



E = pilot standardized reporting elements (DATA Act §5(b)(1)(A))

D = pilot elimination of unnecessary duplication in financial reporting (DATA Act §5(b)(1)(B))

C = pilot reduction of compliance costs for Federal award recipients (DATA Act §5(b)(1)(C))



DATA Act Pilot – Grants Information Gateway

GOALS:

- Provide a framework and content to establish a knowledge sharing site for the grants community.
- Expand the Grants.gov portal to allow “click and go” access to a full range of grants-related resources/websites
- Summarize and provide links to new and important grants information such as policies, processes, funding, and other information needed throughout the grants lifecycle.
- Provide information that puts federal grants in context of other types of assistance and direct citizens to the proper source that matches their needs.
- Promote the standardization of grants terminology and data.



DATA Act Pilot – Open Dialogue

GOAL: Creation of Open Dialogue Tool, a web-based technology designed to provide opportunities for community feedback.

- Management of federal grant business arrangements requires multiple layers of reporting across multiple agencies.
- Lack of standardization results in variations that create additional administrative and burdensome requirements for awardees that could be readily rectified.
- Dialogue is intended to identify opportunities for reducing burden, standardizing processes and forms, and actions to reduce costs and eliminate duplication for awardees.
- Interested parties may submit ideas, comment on others, respond to questions posed by moderators, and vote to indicate which ideas they think are most promising and impactful



DATA Act Pilot – CDER Library

GOAL: Provide an on-line, searchable resource of Data Elements and their source and definitions. Data Elements based in “Policy” become accessible through an electronic repository

WU6

- Put Data Elements into the context of their definitions and authoritative sources
- Facilitates access to approved data standards
- In the future, will enable new Information Collections to be built, or to easily identify existing similar instruments vs. designing a new one – reducing duplication. And by associating burden to Data Elements, create the ability to understand and calculate the costs of information collection

Slide 17

WU6

redundant with bullets below

Windows User, 5/8/2015



DATA Act Pilot – Standardized Data Elements

Goal: Analyze the impact of data standards on the recipient community.

- Understand the impact of standardized reporting elements on the recipient community's policies, processes, and systems.
- Imbed new data standards into financial assistance forms and understand the impact of the standards on the transmission of that data via systems throughout the grants lifecycle.



DATA Act Pilot Single Audit Reporting

Goal: Research efforts to address post-award reporting – the SEFA and the SF-SAC

- Identify impacts to the post award reporting
- Identify options to facilitate streamlined reporting
- Reduce duplication of effort and compliance costs



Section 5 Grants Pilot and Recipient Engagement

Pilot Component	What it is	Who is engaged	Why are we doing it	Anticipated benefit/outcome	DATA Act Reference
Grants.gov Information Gateway	On-line web page designed to provide a single point of entry to the public interested in learning more about the federal grants lifecycle	Federal and public audiences	To foster greater public transparency and access to the federal grants lifecycle, reduce stakeholder burden associated with trying to learn, find and apply for federal grants	The public will have a one-stop shop to access federal grant information	DATA Act Sect 5(b) (1)(A)
Open Dialogue	An electronic communication tool to solicit feedback on a particular topic related to the Section 5 Pilot activities	Grants and Contract Recipients	The purpose of the open dialogue is to engage grant and contract recipients to better understand opportunities for streamlined recipient reporting	A list of recommendations for streamlined federal reporting in the grants and contract arena	DATA Act Section 5 (b) (1) (B, C)
Common Data Element Repository Library (CDERL)	Single Electronic repository to serve as the authoritative location for agreed upon data standards across the grants community, as well as other portfolio's such as budget, finance, acquisitions, loans.	Federal and public audiences	To create a single location where both feds and the public can access agreed upon data standards; and thru increased access promote the use of common data standards	Increased access & understanding of data standards and promotes use of data standards in info collection and more standard information collection and reporting requirements	DATA Act Section 5 (b) (1) (A)



Section 5 Grants Pilot and Recipient Engagement

Pilot Component	What it is	Who is engaged	Why are we doing it	Anticipated benefit/outcome	DATA Act Reference
Data Standardization	Imbedding new data standards into standard government-wide forms and understand the transmission of that data via systems throughout the grants lifecycle. Understand impact of standards on policies, processes, and systems.	Federal stakeholders utilizing forms; recipient organizations utilizing forms	To understand the burden associated with imbedding agreed upon data standards into systems and associated forms.	Both the federal community and recipient community will understand the resource investment required to incorporate new data standards into existing systems and business processes; new data standards will be incorporated into the Grants.gov application forms.	DATA Act Section 5 (b) (1) (A)
Federal Financial Report and Single Audit Act Reporting	Research efforts to address two major aspects of post-award reporting – the FFR and the SEFA	Federal community; leveraging feedback from the recipient community as gained thru the open dialogue	To understand the impact of data standards in the post-award reporting environment and explore ways to streamline the reporting experience	Identify impacts to the post award reporting; identify options to facilitate streamlined reporting	DATA Act Section 5 (b) (1) (A, B, C)



Follow-up Session

Join us to discuss the proposed and finalized data elements and Section 5 Pilot information listed on USA SPENDING.GOV at:
<https://www.usaspending.gov/Pages/data-act.aspx>.

- Where: Liaison Capital Hill
- Time: 2:30 – 3:30



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Thank You

Questions?