

Grants Management Training Agency Guide



November 2012



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Introduction: Using This Guide

The *Grants Management Training Agency Guide* aims to ensure that federal employees have the skills and training necessary to effectively and efficiently manage the more than \$300 billion in grants the federal government awards annually. This guide informs federal agencies of the best practices for training grants managers and informs federal employees of the knowledge and skills they need to progress in the field of grants management.

The guide also identifies, defines, categorizes, and ranks various *competencies*—the skills and knowledge that federal agencies seek in their grants managers. In a 2008 governmentwide study, 26 federal grantmaking agencies through the Grants Policy Council (GPC) provided the information now compiled in this guide. The result is a tool that agencies can use to bring their own practices into line with those of the federal community at large. This tool is likewise a resource for federal employees to identify training courses that would benefit them in their current careers or help them obtain the skills and knowledge needed to enter a new career in the field of grants management.

In an effort to standardize the language of grants management training within the federal community, it defines the particular terminology used. The remainder of the guide describes each area of competency, identifies the relative importance of each as determined by the 26 federal agencies, and establishes a crosswalk to the General Schedule (GS) grade levels. The guide is structured to enable each of those agencies to determine the actual grade level associated with the level of proficiency the employees need. Finally, the guide identifies relevant training courses and describes the technical competencies the courses address.

Throughout the guide, reference tables compile the array of information into an easy-to-read format. These tables enable agencies hiring or training grants management staff to readily identify the competencies they seek, and the tables aid employees as they map out the training that will enable them to reach their career goals.



Table 1 presents the results of the 2008 assessment of skills of federal grantmaking agencies, in which agency representatives voted on the relative importance of each competency. Table 2 displays the general and technical competencies required of grants managers, broken down by GS grade level.

Tables 3 and 4 provide greater detail on the information in Table 2, indicating the level of proficiency (numbered 2 through 5) at each competency that the various grade levels require of employees at those levels. Table 3 lists the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) requirements; Table 4 indicates the recommendations of the Senior Executive Service (SES) Leading EDGE Government Performance Project (GPP). Table 5 then defines those levels of proficiency as basic, intermediate, advanced, or expert.

Table 6 lists training courses and the corresponding technical competencies each course addresses. Agencies and their employees can use Table 1 to plot a strategy for meeting their grants management needs and objectives.

Grants Management Training Agency Guide

In August 2012, a governmentwide SES initiative called Leading EDGE (Executives Driving Government Excellence) brought together executives from across the federal agencies to develop projects and proposals to improve government performance and efficiency. The federal government awards more than \$300 billion in grants each year. To ensure that these funds are managed effectively and efficiently, the federal government must ensure that the employees who administer and manage these grants have the necessary skills and knowledge.

This guide—

- Improves information sharing about how agencies develop the competencies of their grants management professionals to create a more consistent approach governmentwide.
- Helps agencies plan and purchase grants management training, either on their own or in conjunction with other federal agencies in “smart buys.”
- Creates a more flexible and agile workforce that gives government employees the opportunity to move among and across jobs in the federal government.

This guide can also help employees plan and sequence career path training and development by providing valuable information in the following areas—

- Identifying competencies and subject areas typically used in the field of grants management and outlining a broad progression of avenues for employees to move among and across jobs in the federal government. Note: The competencies and offerings provided in this guide are not an exclusive listing and currently represent only a handful of all federal grantmaking agency efforts and training available in the field of grants management.
- Identifying key work behaviors, training paths, and development opportunities associated with competencies. This guide can provide supervisors and managers the opportunity to know about training resources and to determine coursework and developmental experiences that best meet the needs of the agency and the employee.
- Identifying transferrable skills that employees can use in different knowledge areas and on different career paths.
- Identifying knowledge-based skills that employees can acquire through on-the-job training or experience as a practitioner, resulting in an increased knowledge base on which to base judgments.



Past Efforts To Establish Grants Management Competency Standards

The Grants Policy Council

The federal grantmaking agencies, under the auspices of the GPC, attempted to define a set of traits and competencies found in the cadre of staff that served as grants officers, government technical representatives, and program office staff charged with managing grants. That work resulted in a listing of characteristics and skills (competencies) needed to be an effective grants manager.

The following list includes the GPC-defined general competencies and definitions of some other terms this guide uses.

accountability

Ensures the development and maintenance of effective controls on the integrity of the organization. Holds self and others accountable for rules and responsibilities; can be relied on to ensure that projects within areas of specific responsibility are completed in a timely manner and within budget; monitors and evaluates plans, focuses on results, and measures the attainment of outcomes.

arithmetic

Performs computations such as addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division; correctly uses whole numbers, fractions, decimals, and percentages.

attention to detail

Is thorough when performing work and is conscientious about attending to details.

career map

The progression of jobs in an organization's specific occupational fields, ranked from lowest to highest based on level of responsibility and pay.

certificate

A written declaration documenting the successful completion of a course or a specific program of study.

certification program

A credential awarded for demonstrating a satisfactory level of professional knowledge, skills, and experience when measured against a set of consensus criteria.

competency

An observable, measurable pattern of knowledge, skills, abilities, behaviors, and other characteristics that an individual needs to perform work roles or occupational functions successfully.

competency model

A framework that describes the full range of competencies required for a person to be successful in a particular occupation. These models usually describe the required occupation-specific or technical competencies and the general cross-occupational competencies (for example, analytical competencies).

competency progression

A description of the criteria that demonstrate the attainment and sustainment of a competency through increasing levels of relevant, timely, and applicable experience, education, or learning. These levels of capability range from basic through mastery.

computer skills

Uses computers, software applications, databases, and automated systems to accomplish work.

conflict management

Manages and resolves conflicts, grievances, confrontation, or disagreements in a constructive manner to minimize negative personnel effects.

creative thinking

Uses imagination to develop new insights into situations and innovative solutions to problems; designs new methods when established methods and procedures are inapplicable or are unavailable.

curriculum

A program of related courses or experimental learning opportunities organized around a central theme or subject.

customer service

Works with clients and customers (that is, any individual who uses or receives the services or products that the employee's work unit produces, including the general public, individuals who work in the agency, other agencies, or organizations outside the government) to assess their needs, provide information or assistance, resolve their problems, or satisfy their expectations; knows about available products and services; is committed to providing high-quality products and services.

decision-making

Makes sound, well-informed, and objective decisions; perceives the effect and implication of decisions; commits to action, even in uncertain situations, to accomplish organizational goals; causes change.

equivalency process

The process of mapping training, education, and experience to learning objectives to identify areas in which a candidate can receive credit toward completion of a curriculum or certification program for previous education and experience.

external awareness

Identifies and understands economic, political, and social trends that affect the organization.

flexibility

Is open to change and new information; adapts behavior or work methods in response to new information, changing conditions, or unexpected obstacles; effectively deals with ambiguity.

influencing/negotiating

Persuades others to accept recommendations, cooperate, or change their behavior; works with others toward an agreement; negotiates to find mutually acceptable solutions.

information management

Identifies a need and knows where or how to gather information or information management systems.

integrity/honesty

Contributes to maintaining the integrity of the organization; displays high standards of ethical conduct and understands the effect of violating these standards on the organization, self, and others; is trustworthy.

interpersonal skills

Shows understanding, friendliness, courtesy, tact, empathy, concern, and politeness to others; develops and maintains effective relationships with others; effectively deals with individuals who are difficult, hostile, or distressed; relates well to people from varied backgrounds and different situations; is sensitive to cultural diversity, race, gender, disability, and other individual differences.

leadership

Influences, motivates, and challenges others; adapts leadership styles to a variety of situations.

learning

Uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills; uses training, feedback, or other opportunities for self-learning and development.

learning objective

A statement of what the participants will be expected to do when they have completed a specified course of instruction.

mastery

The highest level of proficiency in a competency; demonstrated knowledge or skill.

mathematical reasoning

Solves practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical and statistical techniques.

memory

Recalls information that has been presented previously.

oral communication

Expresses information (for example, ideas or facts) to individuals or groups effectively, taking into account the audience and nature of the information (for example, technical, sensitive, controversial); makes clear and convincing oral presentations; listens to others; attends to nonverbal cues and responds appropriately.

organizational awareness

Knows the organization's mission and functions; knows how the organization's social, political, and technological systems (including programs, policies, procedures, rules, and regulations) work and how to operate effectively within them.

partnering

Develops networks and builds alliances; collaborates across boundaries to build strategic relationships and achieve common goals.

problem-solving

Identifies problems; determines accuracy and relevance of information; uses sound judgment to generate and evaluate alternatives and to make recommendations; makes correct inferences or draws accurate conclusions.

proficiency

The ability to perform a specific behavior, such as a task or learning objective, to the established performance standard.





proficiency level

The range of the competency in behavioral terms that enables segmentation of the competency into different levels of performance.

proficiency standards

The minimum experience or education that an individual must have to demonstrate a level of proficiency in a competency.

reading

Understands and interprets written material, including technical material, rules, regulations, instructions, reports, charts, graphs, and tables; applies what is learned from written materials to specific situations.

reasoning

Identifies rules, principles, or relationships that explain facts, data, or other information; analyzes information and makes sound decisions and judgments.

resilience

Deals effectively with pressure; remains optimistic and persistent, even under adversity; recovers quickly from setbacks.

self-management

Sets well-defined and realistic personal goals; displays a high level of initiative, effort, and commitment toward completing assignments in a timely manner; works with minimal supervision; is motivated to achieve; demonstrates responsible behavior.

strategic thinking

Formulates effective strategies consistent with the business and competitive strategy of the organization in a global economy; examines policy issues and strategic planning with a long-term perspective; determines objectives and sets priorities; anticipates potential threats or opportunities.

stress tolerance

Deals calmly and effectively with high-stress situations (for example, tight deadlines, hostile individuals, emergency situations, dangerous situations).

teaching others

Helps others learn through formal or informal methods; identifies training needs; provides constructive feedback; coaches others on how to perform tasks; acts as a mentor.

teamwork

Encourages and facilitates cooperation, pride, trust, and group identity; fosters commitment and team spirit; works with others to achieve goals.

technical competence

Uses knowledge acquired through formal training or extensive on-the-job experience to perform one’s job; works with, understands, and evaluates technical information related to jobs; advises others on technical issues.

training mechanism

A broad set of methods for delivering learning. This set can include, but is not limited to, instructor-led training, eLearning, virtual classrooms, distance learning, video instruction, and text-based learning.

training needs assessment

A means for identifying gaps between the knowledge, skills, and abilities or competencies employees have and those they need to do their work effectively. A training needs assessment helps determine which employees need training and in what areas, and it forms the basis for agency training plans. Many sources of information are available to help agencies conduct a training needs assessment, including employee skills assessments conducted against established competencies, Individual Development Plans, focus groups, workforce surveys, and organizational performance data.

vision

Understands where the organization is headed and how to make a contribution; takes a long-term view and recognizes opportunities to help the organization accomplish its objectives and move toward the vision.

writing

Recognizes or uses correct English grammar, punctuation, and spelling; communicates information (for example, facts, ideas, or messages) in a succinct and organized manner; produces written information, which may include technical material that is appropriate for the intended audience.

* * * * *

The GPC also identified additional competencies, in addition to general competencies, specific to the field of grants management. These technical competencies fall into one of two categories—

Grants management competency model—systems and tools

Grants management professionals must have a working knowledge of governmentwide and agency-specific information systems. This operational knowledge of specific systems and tools complements, but is distinct from, general knowledge of computers and common applications and from technical knowledge of the statutes governing grants management.

Grants management competency model—subject-area knowledge

Grants management professionals may require some degree of subject-area knowledge to perform their duties, such as in determining whether certain costs are allowable or allocable.

* * * * *

The technical competencies are—

compliance

Knows procedures for assessing, evaluating, and monitoring programs or projects and for compliance with federal regulations and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) circulars.

financial analysis

Knows financial methods, procedures, and practices to assess the financial stability of those applying for or receiving federal grants or agreements.

financial assistance mechanisms

Knows the differences between acquisition and financial assistance purposes and requirements; knows federal assistance instruments, techniques, and procedures for grants (for example, block, mandatory, and discretionary) and agreements (for example, cooperative and interagency).

grants management

Knows the requirements, practices, and procedures for soliciting, receiving, reviewing, and processing proposals and for awarding and administering grants and agreement.

grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines

Knows the principles, laws, regulations, policies, practices, and guidelines (for example, Executive Orders, Code of Federal Regulations, and OMB Circulars) of grant or cooperative agreement programs, including their order of precedence.

planning and evaluating

Organizes work, sets priorities, and determines resource requirements; determines short-term goals and strategies to achieve them; coordinates with other organizations or parts of organizations to accomplish goals; monitors progress and evaluates outcomes.

project management

Applies principles, methods, or tools for developing, scheduling, coordinating, monitoring, evaluating, and managing projects and resources, including technical performance.

* * * * *

As part of the GPC work group effort, the agencies made recommendations as to the competencies that grants managers require and ranked those competencies in order of importance. Table 1 presents the results.



Table 1. Competency Importance Ratings

Competencies	2009 Importance	Future Importance
Integrity/honesty	1	1
Attention to detail	2	3
Customer service	3	4
Accountability	4	2
Interpersonal skills	5	5
Reading	6	7
Writing	7	10
Self-management	8	6
Computer skills	9	8
Oral communication	10	12
Teamwork	11	9
Technical competence	12	11
Compliance	13	14
Arithmetic	14	21
Problem-solving	15	13
Decision-making	16	15
Reasoning	17	20
Planning and evaluating	18	17
Flexibility	19	16
Grants management	20	22
Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines	21	19
Learning	22	23
Information management	23	18
Stress tolerance	24	24
Resilience	25	25
Financial assistance mechanisms	26	26
Memory	27	28
Organizational awareness	28	27
Project management	29	29
Creative thinking	30	30
Influencing/negotiating	31	33
Partnering	32	32
Teaching others	33	34
Conflict management	34	35
Leadership	35	31
Financial analysis	36	36
Mathematical reasoning	37	39
Vision	38	37
External awareness	39	38
Strategic thinking	40	40

Source: The Grants Policy Council work group



The U.S. Office of Personnel Management

In October 2008, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management initiated a governmentwide study to identify critical competencies for grants management work. On September 24, 2009, OPM issued the *Competency Model for Grants Management*, which listed those competencies in two categories: general and technical.

Table 2 presents the competencies that OPM adopted as appropriate for selecting a governmentwide basis for grants management work at the GS grades indicated.

In issuing the *Competency Model* to agencies, OPM recognized that agencies are responsible for conducting a job analysis for work responsibilities outside the grants management function. Similarly, agencies must determine the applicability of these competencies to positions that do not perform the full range of grants management work.

Table 2. List of Required General and Technical Competencies by GS Grade Level (1 of 2)

Grade 7	Grade 9	Grade 11	Grade 12
General Competencies			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability Arithmetic Attention to detail Computer skills Customer service Flexibility Integrity/honesty Interpersonal skills Learning Memory Oral communication Reading Self-management Stress tolerance Teamwork Technical competence Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability Arithmetic Attention to detail Computer skills Customer service Decision-making Flexibility Information management Integrity/honesty Interpersonal skills Learning Memory Oral communication Problem-solving Reading Reasoning Resilience Self-management Stress tolerance Teamwork Technical competence Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability Arithmetic Attention to detail Computer skills Customer service Decision-making Flexibility Information management Integrity/honesty Interpersonal skills Learning Mathematical reasoning Memory Oral communication Organizational awareness Problem-solving Reading Reasoning Resilience Self-management Stress tolerance Teamwork Technical competence Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountability Arithmetic Attention to detail Computer skills Customer service Decision-making Flexibility Information management Integrity/honesty Interpersonal skills Learning Memory Oral communication Organizational awareness Partnering Problem-solving Reading Reasoning Resilience Self-management Stress tolerance Teaching others Teamwork Technical competence Writing
Technical Competencies			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and evaluating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and evaluating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance Financial assistance mechanisms Grants management Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines Planning and evaluating Project management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compliance Financial analysis Financial assistance mechanisms Grants management Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines Planning and evaluating Project management

Table 2. List of Required General and Technical Competencies by GS Grade Level (2 of 2)

Grade 13	Grade 14	Grade 15
General Competencies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Arithmetic • Attention to detail • Computer skills • Conflict management • Creative thinking • Customer service • Decision-making • Flexibility • Integrity/honesty • Interpersonal skills • Leadership • Learning • Mathematical reasoning • Memory • Oral communication • Organizational awareness • Partnering • Problem-solving • Reading • Self-management • Strategic thinking • Stress tolerance • Teaching others • Teamwork • Technical competence • Vision • Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Arithmetic • Attention to detail • Computer skills • Conflict management • Creative thinking • Customer service • Decision-making • External awareness • Flexibility • Integrity/honesty • Interpersonal skills • Leadership • Learning • Mathematical reasoning • Memory • Oral communication • Organizational awareness • Partnering • Problem-solving • Reading • Self-management • Strategic thinking • Stress tolerance • Teaching others • Teamwork • Technical competence • Vision • Writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Arithmetic • Attention to detail • Computer skills • Conflict management • Creative thinking • Customer service • Decision-making • External awareness • Flexibility • Integrity/honesty • Interpersonal skills • Leadership • Learning • Mathematical reasoning • Memory • Oral communication • Organizational awareness • Partnering • Problem-solving • Reading • Self-management • Stress tolerance • Teaching others • Teamwork • Technical competence • Vision • Writing
Technical Competencies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance • Financial analysis • Financial assistance mechanisms • Grants management • Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines • Planning and evaluating • Project management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance • Financial analysis • Financial assistance mechanisms • Grants management • Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines • Planning and evaluating • Project management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance • Financial analysis • Financial assistance mechanisms • Grants management • Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines • Planning and evaluating • Project management

GS = General Schedule.

Source: U.S. Office of Personnel Management memo

The *Competency Model* also established a matrix of each competency and the level of proficiency required, by GS grade, which Table 3 shows.

Table 3. OPM-Required Proficiency Level by Competency Type and GS Grade Level

	GS Grade Level						
	7	9	11	12	13	14	15
General Competencies							
Accountability	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Arithmetic	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Attention to detail	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Computer skills	3	3	3	4	4	4	3
Conflict management	2	2	3	3	3	4	4
Creative thinking	2	2	3	3	3	4	4
Customer service	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Decision-making	2	2	3	4	4	4	4
External awareness	2	2	2	3	3	3	4
Flexibility	3	3	3	3	3	3	4
Influencing/negotiating	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
Information management	2	3	3	3	4	4	4
Integrity/honesty	4	4	4	4	4	4	4
Interpersonal skills	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Leadership	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
Learning	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Mathematical reasoning	2	2	3	3	3	3	3
Memory	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
Oral communication	2	3	3	4	4	4	4
Organizational awareness	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
Partnering	2	2	3	3	3	4	4
Problem-solving	2	3	3	4	4	4	4
Reading	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Reasoning	2	3	3	4	4	4	4
Resilience	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
Self-management	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Strategic thinking	2	2	2	3	3	3	4
Stress tolerance	3	3	3	3	4	4	4
Teaching others	2	2	3	3	4	4	4
Teamwork	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Technical competence	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Vision	2	2	3	3	3	4	4
Writing	3	3	4	4	4	4	4
Technical Competencies							
Compliance	2	3	3	4	4	4	4
Financial analysis	2	2	3	3	3	4	4
Financial assistance mechanisms	2	3	3	4	4	4	4
Grants management	2	3	3	4	4	4	4
Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines	2	3	3	3	4	4	4
Planning and evaluation	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Project management	2	2	3	3	4	4	4

GS = General Schedule. OPM = U.S. Office of Personnel Management.
Source: OPM memo

Leading EDGE Grants Management Training for Fiscal Year 2013 and Beyond

In 2012, the Senior Executive Service Leading EDGE Government Performance Project team looked at past work and built on those efforts to construct an approach to grants management and training that placed a greater emphasis on skills needed and acquired than on GS grade level and cross-walked competencies, skill levels, and proficiency levels. In addition, the team added competencies that grew in importance in the years since 2008–2009. These competencies place increasing emphasis on program effect, evaluation

of effect, and making evidenced-based grant funding determinations. In doing its work, the GPP team looked at the agencies' current practices in grants management training.

Table 4 reflects the GPP-recommended proficiencies by competency type and career level. This table allows for greater alignment with existing efforts by the Federal Acquisitions Institute (FAI) and is particularly relevant for agencies that share grant officer and acquisition officer functions.

Table 4. GPP-Recommended Proficiency Level by Competency Type and Career Level (1 of 2)

	Career Level		
	Entry Level (Professional)	Journeyman	Expert
General Competencies			
Accountability	3	4	5
Arithmetic	3	4	4
Attention to detail	3	4	5
Computer skills	3	4	4
Conflict management	2	3	5
Creative thinking	2	3	5
Customer service	3	4	5
Decision-making	2	4	5
External awareness	2	3	5
Flexibility	3	3	5
Influencing/negotiating	2	3	5
Information management	3	3	4
Integrity/honesty	4	4	5
Interpersonal skills	3	4	5
Leadership	2	3	5
Learning	3	4	5
Mathematical reasoning	2	3	4
Memory	3	3	4
Oral communication	3	4	5
Organizational awareness	2	3	5
Partnering	2	3	5
Problem-solving	3	4	5
Reading	3	4	5
Reasoning	3	4	5
Resilience	3	3	5
Self-management	3	4	5
Strategic thinking	2	3	5
Stress tolerance	3	3	5
Teaching others	2	3	5
Teamwork	3	4	5
Technical competence	3	4	5
Vision	2	3	5
Writing	3	4	5



Table 4. GPP-Recommended Proficiency Level by Competency Type and Career Level (2 of 2)

	Career Level		
	Entry Level (Professional)	Journeyman	Expert
Technical Competencies			
Compliance	3	4	5
Financial analysis	2	3	5
Financial assistance mechanisms	3	4	5
Grants management	3	4	5
Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines	3	3	5
Planning and evaluation	3	4	5
Project management	2	3	5

GPP = Senior Executive Service Leading EDGE Government Performance Project.

Table 5 assigns definitions to the numbered proficiency levels in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 5. Proficiency Level Scale Definitions

Proficiency Level	General Competencies	Technical Competencies
6 = Master	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates, develops, designs, and/or formulates new methods or means for applying the competency. Applies and/or adapts the competency in exceptionally difficult and/or unprecedented situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies and/or adapts the competency in exceptionally difficult and/or unprecedented situations. Serves as key resource and advises others. Demonstrates comprehensive, expert understanding of concepts and processes.
5 = Expert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations. Serves as key resource and advises others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations. Serves as key resource and advises others. Demonstrates comprehensive, expert understanding of concepts and processes.
4 = Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies the competency in exceptionally difficult situations. Generally requires little or no guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies the competency in considerably difficult situations. Serves as key resource and advises others. Demonstrates comprehensive, expert understanding of concepts and processes.
3 = Intermediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies the competency in difficult situations. Requires occasional guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies the competency in difficult situations. Requires occasional guidance. Demonstrates understanding of concepts and processes.
2 = Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations. Requires frequent guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies the competency in somewhat difficult situations. Requires frequent guidance. Demonstrates familiarity with concepts and processes.
1 = Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies the competency in the simplest situations. Requires close and extensive guidance. Demonstrates awareness of concepts and processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies the competency in the simplest situations. Requires close and extensive guidance. Demonstrates awareness of concepts and processes.

The Grants Management Training Practices Across Government

The GPP team also reviewed the work of the GPC. In fiscal year 2008, the 26 federal grantmaking agencies identified the following major components in the grants life cycle—

- Preapplication/program development.
- Application (formula, entitlement, competitive).
- Review/assessment.
- Award.
- Monitoring.
- Program management (including financial management and assessment, monitoring and evaluation, and closeout).
- Financial management of grants (can include audit and resolution of audit findings, budget review, and cost analysis).

The GPP team found that grantmaking agencies offer a variety of training for staff that manage and award grants. Most of the training is geared to provide solid, fundamental knowledge in dealing with the responsibilities associated with the grants management life cycle and to provide the skills needed by grants management professionals. Agencies focus the training based on how the agency functions; for example, functions of grant officers and acquisition officers combined, grant officers working in conjunction with program officers, and program officers managing the entire process. Training often follows functions and can be delivered in various tracks associated with program management, financial management, or a combination of the two.

To update the previous work, the GPP team recently conducted a brief survey of federal agencies. The results indicated that agencies take advantage of off-the-shelf training, primarily



offered by Management Concepts, FAI, and Graduate School USA. Many agencies also supplement the off-the-shelf training with agency-specific courses. Most agencies providing certification in one or more tracks of study require a minimum number of core courses that provide a foundation for understanding the grants management life cycle functions. Most agencies also require some elective courses that provide further detailed knowledge of specific functions, such as environmental requirements; construction financing and underwriting; and financial management, such as audit, understanding financial statements, and setting indirect cost rates.

The training that the survey identified includes the core, elective, and customized courses that Table 6 lists alongside the associated areas of grants management that the courses address.

The GPP team believes that the competencies and training courses this guide identifies offer a way forward for grant-making agencies, which can use the guide to establish a cadre of trained employees who can move not only within an organization across program areas but also from their agency to another federal agency. Establishing training standards would also ensure more consistent responses by the federal agencies to grants management issues and concerns, making it easier for grantees to understand federal rules and regulations and to better manage their programs.

Table 6. Core and Elective Courses and Technical Competencies

Course Name	Technical Competencies
Core Courses	
Appropriations Law for Federal Grants	Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines
Introduction to Federal Grants and Cooperative Agreements	Financial assistance mechanisms; grants management
Cooperative Agreements and Substantial Involvement	Financial assistance mechanisms; grants management
Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements (OMB Circulars)	Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines
Cost Principles (OMB Circulars)	Financial assistance mechanisms; grants management
Advanced Cost Principles	Financial assistance mechanisms; grants management
National Policy Requirements Affecting Grants	Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines
Procuring Goods and Services Under Grants	Grants management
Federal Assistance Law	Grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines
Accountability for Federal Grants	Compliance
Grants Administration for Federal Program Personnel	Grants management
Monitoring Grants and Cooperative Agreements	Compliance
Project Management	Planning and evaluation; project management
Managing Changes to Awards	Compliance; grants management
Elective Courses	
National Environmental Policy Act Process Objective	Compliance; grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines
Environmental Laws and Regulations	Compliance; grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines
Uniform Relocation Requirements	Compliance; grants management laws, regulations, and guidelines
Risk Management and Assessment	Project management
Performance Measurement	Compliance; project management
Evidenced-Based Grants Management and Evaluation	Compliance; project management

OMB = U.S. Office of Management and Budget.

