

Subject: VERY IMPORTANT changes to how you will receive NAWCA/NMBCA payments

This letter contains important information and dates pertaining to the Department of the Interior's (DOI) deployment of a new accounting system called the Financial and Business Management System (FBMS) and its impact on your NAWCA or NMBCA grant and any other U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service grant you may have. The deployment of FBMS will consolidate more than 80 DOI legacy accounting systems, including those of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and modernize the way DOI does business.

Commented [ag1]: This is helpful for foreigners who do not know that we are part of DOI.

The FWS deployment of FBMS is expected to "go live" November 18, 2011. Current grantee organizations and their representatives will need to begin taking actions to prepare for FBMS changes well in advance of the "go live" date. FWS will discontinue using the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS), Payment Management System (PMS), SMARTLINK, for disbursement of electronic payments and instead, utilize the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP) system. As the FWS deploys FBMS, the following will affect the processing of grant awards, reporting, payments, and close-out over the next eight months:

Central Contractor Registration (CCR) – As of October 1, 2010, each grantee organization is required to register with the CCR (<http://www.ccr.gov>) (except for individual grantees and non-domestic grantees receiving less than \$25,000 per award). If your organization is not already registered, please ensure that it registers as soon as possible. Existing CCR information must be updated every 12 months after the initial registration. Registration is required to enable FBMS payments to grantees.

Payments to U.S. recipients – If not already registered, U.S. grantees must register in ASAP for FWS awards no later than October 1, 2011 in order to begin drawing funds on November 18, 2011. In the near future, we will provide detailed guidance on ASAP registration.

Payments to non-U.S. recipients – ASAP does not currently pay non-U.S. recipients. We will provide information on an alternative payment system as soon as we can. Non-U.S. recipients should not attempt to register in ASAP.

Grants.gov – FBMS will interface with the federal government grants web site (www.grants.gov) to advertise grant opportunities and receive applications. Grant applications and associated data received in Grants.gov will be imported into FBMS for processing by FWS. We strongly encourage grantees to start making preparations for submitting grants via Grants.gov beginning November 18, 2011. Submittal of grant applications via Grants.gov is the preferred and most efficient method for processing grants in FBMS. Information on applying through Grants.gov will be provided on the NAWCA and NMBCA application/proposal web pages.

No Grant Modifications – As a result of the FBMS deployment, we will not be able to process modifications/amendments from August 25, 2011 through November 17, 2011. In order for us to complete the review and approval process before this blackout period, you must submit all modification requests by August 1, 2011 for grant actions occurring through December 1, 2011. This includes extension and other amendment requests. *If your project is scheduled to end between August 1 and December 1, 2011 and you will not finish all work by your end date, please request an extension now.* If you do not submit grant actions by August 1, 2011, approval will be delayed until FBMS goes live on November 18, 2011.

Grant Reporting and Close-out – Please determine if any of your grants will expire between now and December 1, 2011. If the work has been accomplished and funds fully drawn, please close the grant by sending in the final Federal Financial Report and Performance Report by August 1, 2011.

Payment Blackout period - You will not have access to grant funds between September 19 and November 17, 2011. Please plan your grant activities accordingly, especially if you are scheduling a real property closing.

Cash Advances Option in SMARTLINK –You will not have access to grant funds through SMARTLINK after September 19, 2011 at 8 p.m. Eastern time. If your organization has the ability to drawdown cash advances in SMARTLINK, they are allowed, subject to requirements detailed in the Cash Management Improvement Act of 1990 (31 CFR 205) and Administrative/Audit/Cost Principles for DOI

Programs (43 CFR 12). We strongly suggest you utilize this option if your organization needs cash to meet operating needs or pay for real property during the September 20, 2011 through November 17, 2011 payment blackout period. This option must be implemented on a grant by grant basis. ***Please do not over-forecast your needs on each grant, as this would require a complicated payback process.*** Unexpended grant funds must be held in an interest bearing account, and interest earned over \$100 for States and Local Governments (43 CFR 12.61[i]) and \$250 for Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Non-profit Organizations (43 CFR 12.922[k][2]) on cash advances must be returned to FWS.

In summary, below, are key FBMS dates to remember and a glossary.

We hope this information is helpful for planning. We will provide updated information throughout the FBMS deployment. In addition you may receive information from a central point of contact in FWS.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in this complex transition. If you should have any additional questions, please contact me or Anna-Marie York (703-358-1881 or anna-marie_york@fws.gov).

KEY FBMS DATES TO REMEMBER

August 1, 2011 – Deadline for grantees to submit modification requests for grant actions occurring through December 1, 2011.

August 25, 2011 – Last day to obligate new grants until November 17, 2011.

August 25, 2011 – November 17, 2011 – FWS will not be able to obligate new grants or process modifications/amendments to grants.

September 19, 2011 (8 p.m. Eastern time) – Last day for grantees to request payments through HHS-PMS SMARTLINK system.

September 19, 2011 (8:01 p.m. Eastern time) – November 17, 2011 – Payment Blackout Period. Grantees have no access to electronic payment systems (either SMARTLINK or ASAP).

October 1, 2011 – Deadline for grantees to register in ASAP for future electronic payments. Registration with CCR is also required.

November 18, 2011 – FBMS goes live for obligations and modifications, and ASAP becomes available for grantee drawdowns.

Glossary:

ASAP — U.S. Department of the Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments

CCR — Central Contractor Registration

DOI — U.S. Department of the Interior, FWS parent agency

FWS — U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

HHS — U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

PMS — HHS's Payment Management System

SMARTLINK — HHS's Payment Request System