



FEDERAL GRANTS MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATION: A CONCEPT PAPER

By Michael S. Peckham

A governmentwide credential for Grants Management Officers & Specialists - modeled on FAC-C, aligned to OPM competencies, grounded in NGMA's GMBok, and strengthened by PMP-level project leadership.





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The Shared Services Leadership Coalition (SSLC) is pleased to publish Mr. Peckham's insightful perspectives as valuable contributions to ongoing efforts to modernize and transform the Federal grant administration process. The views expressed are the author's own and are not necessarily endorsed in their entirety by SSLC.

Executive Summary

The federal government obligates more than \$1.2 trillion annually through grants, yet lacks a standardized, governmentwide framework to ensure that federal Grants Management job series (GS-1109) possess the competencies required for consistent oversight, risk management, and performance improvement and accountability. The proposed Federal Grants Management Certification (FGMC) provides a unified solution by establishing common competencies grounded in the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) GS-1109 job series model, aligned with the Federal Business Integrated Framework (FBIF) for grants management, and supported by accredited, lifecycle-based content such as the National Grants Management Association's (NGMA) Grants Management Body of Knowledge (GMBoK) and Certified Grants Management Specialist (CGMS). This approach creates a defensible, portable credential that strengthens internal controls and elevates the workforce's ability to manage complex, high-risk programs.

FGMC leverages existing high-quality training resources and accredited credentials to reduce implementation burden and accelerate adoption. Recognizing CGMS for advanced standing, incorporating structured assessments tied to validated competencies, and layering in Project Management Professional (PMP)/Program Management Professional (PgMP) aligned project delivery skills for supervisory roles ensures a scalable, rigorous approach adaptable across agencies. This model provides a clear pathway for initial certification, continuing education, and mobility, while modern governance - through the Council on Federal Financial Assistance (COFFA), Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and OPM - ensures accountability, consistency, and regulatory alignment.

The cost of inaction is high: uneven competencies, fragmented training, inconsistent application of 2 CFR 200, and persistent gaps in performance measurement and management undermine public trust. FGMC is not merely a workforce initiative but a foundational internal control that strengthens stewardship of federal funds, reduces operational and audit risk, and enables evidence-informed decision-making across the grants management enterprise. Implementing this credential now positions the federal government to meet rising expectations for transparency, accountability, and continually improving results.

Background: The Case for Urgency

There is extensive grants management training available across the federal and commercial landscape, but no standardized, government–endorsed pathway that qualifies personnel to manage the largest functional spending category in the federal government. Per GAO in fiscal year 2024 the federal government obligated about **\$755 billion** on contracts and roughly **\$1.2 trillion**¹ in grants. Despite this scale, the federal workforce lacks a common competency baseline, resulting in uneven skill levels, inconsistent interpretations of 2 CFR 200, and varied oversight practices that increase financial and programmatic risk. Establishing a FGMC modeled on the proven structure of the Federal Acquisition Certification in Contracting² (FAC-C) would set uniform competencies, require proctored assessment, and sustain capability through continuing education. The competency spine should include OPM’s GS-1109³ Grants Management competency model, align with NGMA’s GMBok⁴ lifecycle structure, and map all training and assessment components to the Grants Management Federal Business Integrated Framework⁵ (FBIF) to ensure consistency across pre–award, award, post–award, and closeout functions. To support supervisory and high–complexity roles, particularly those involving multi–year cooperative agreements or major program launches, the framework should also incorporate project delivery competencies that parallel Project Management Professional⁶ (PMP)/ Program Management Professional⁷ (PgMP) standards.

¹ <https://www.gao.gov/blog/snapshot-government-wide-contracting-fy-2024-interactive-dashboard>

² <https://www.fai.gov/certification/fac-c>

³ <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classification-qualifications/classifying-general-schedule-positions/standards/1100/g1109.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.ngma.org/grants-management-body-of-knowledge/gmbok-guide/>

⁵ <https://ussm.gsa.gov/fibf-gm/>

⁶ <https://projectmanagementacademy.net/pmp-certification>

⁷ <https://www.pmi.org/certifications/program-management-pgmp>

Problem Statement & Opportunity

The key issues in this area are that workforce competencies vary significantly across agencies, training quality is inconsistent, and recent revisions to 2 CFR 200⁸ require rapid and uniform upskilling that current decentralized approaches cannot deliver. OPM's *Grants Management Training Agency Guide*⁹ identifies the need for a competency-based, cross-agency methodology: however, no governmentwide mechanism exists to operationalize such a model.

Recognizing that grants present different requirements than what drive federal contracts, adopting the structured, competency-based model proven through FAC-C and the Federal Acquisition Certification Contracting Officer's Representative¹⁰ (FAC-COR) offers a clear template for establishing a grants management credential that is both rigorous and scalable. Instituting experience thresholds, structured coursework, validated examinations, and continuing-education requirements would create a standardized credential that professionalizes the grants workforce and improves oversight consistency. This approach strengthens career progression by providing an objective, portable credential recognized across the federal enterprise. Ultimately a government-wide credential improves efficiency, risk management, transparency, and stewardship of federal resources by ensuring that personnel are consistently trained and current on statutory, regulatory, and lifecycle requirements.

For higher-level supervisory positions (GS-13/14/15 and SES), project delivery competencies paralleling PMP or PgMP standards should be incorporated to address the planning, scheduling, and risk management demands inherent in complex or multi-year awards. Because many grants function as structured projects such as - launching new program activities, establishing monitoring frameworks, and operationalizing policy - project management skills offer transferable disciplines applicable across award types. While contractors who support the federal government often hold PMP/PgMP certifications, federal managers frequently do not, creating misalignment in risk tolerance, delivery expectations, and communication. Embedding project delivery competencies into FGMC helps address this gap. Furthermore, incorporating project management rigor into FGMC for leadership roles enhances credibility, strengthens internal controls, and improves delivery outcomes for complex grant programs.

⁸ <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200?toc=1>

⁹ https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/training-and-development/reference-materials/grants-management-training-agency-guide.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com

¹⁰ <https://www.fai.gov/certification/fac-cor>

Creating a Baseline to Professionalize Grants Management


A government-wide credential establishes a unified, defensible competency standard for federal grants personnel and provides a clear foundation for consistent oversight and performance management. Following the recent changes in obtaining the FAC-C certification¹¹ FGMC should adopt a similar structure, including minimum experience, required coursework, a validated examination, and Continuous Learning Points (CLP)-based maintenance to ensure sustained competency. Layer in reciprocity for legacy training and experience to ease transition and prevent operational disruption, while ensuring CLP requirements address evolving skill gaps. Complementary credentials – such as Lean Six Sigma, Agile training, or entry-level project management certifications – may also be recognized where they reinforce lifecycle or process-improvement competencies.

Although FGMC is designed around the GS-1109 Grant Management series (often referred to as Grants Management Specialist series), a significant share of federal grant oversight is performed by personnel in adjacent job series – including, but not limited to, GS-343 Program Analysts, GS-501 Financial Specialists, GS-1101 Business and Industry Specialists, and GS-301 Program Support roles - who regularly execute pre-award risk assessments, performance monitoring, financial reviews, recipient engagement, and program analytics. To ensure consistency in decision-making and internal controls across the grants management lifecycle, FGMC should include a structured mechanism for these non-1109 personnel to obtain an appropriate level of certification or micro-credential aligned to their functional responsibilities. This can be accomplished through a tiered model: a full FGMC for GS-1109 specialists and supervisors, and a streamlined “FGMC-Foundational” or “FGMC-Affiliate” pathway for non-1109 staff whose roles intersect with grants management functions.

Under this model, non-1109 personnel would complete only the competencies relevant to their roles - such as cost allowability, internal controls, performance measurement, subrecipient monitoring principles, or risk management - rather than the full depth required of lifecycle grants specialists. Assessments and continuing education would similarly focus on the narrow set of competencies necessary to support compliant and consistent grant operations. This alignment strengthens cross-functional collaboration, reduces variability in program and financial oversight, and ensures that all personnel influencing grant outcomes share a common grounding in federal standards and regulatory expectations.

Including non-1109 personnel within the broader FGMC ecosystem supports improved performance management and internal control integrity by ensuring that analysts, financial reviewers, program leads, and support staff apply the same baseline principles that govern award decisions and oversight. This approach mirrors the acquisition community’s model, where non-1102 personnel can obtain targeted FAC-COR or related credentials to ensure consistent application of acquisition standards. Adopting a similar alignment in the grants management domain strengthens the overall grants governance framework while preserving flexibility for agencies to tailor competency requirements to their organizational structures.

¹¹ <https://www.fai.gov/sites/fai/files/FAC-C-Modernization-Memorandum-19-Jan-2023.pdf>



While FGMC remains a competency-based credential and does not require a college degree for eligibility, relevant academic degrees may be recognized as partial credit toward experience requirements or as satisfying certain prerequisite competencies. Degrees in public administration, business, finance, accounting, or related fields can strengthen readiness for advanced FGMC tiers but do not substitute for proctored assessment, lifecycle training, or demonstrated mastery of FBIF-aligned competencies. This approach preserves reasonable access for the existing workforce while recognizing the value of academic preparation in developing analytical and professional skills important to grants management.

Market Signal & Momentum

NGMA has announced that its Certified Grants Management Specialist¹² (CGMS) program has earned accreditation through the National Commission for Certifying Agencies¹³ (NCCA), signaling maturation of a validated, psychometrically reviewed credential within the grants management profession. This provides an immediate foundation for FGMC, enabling the federal government to align with an externally validated credential rather than develop an assessment ecosystem entirely from scratch.

NGMA recently completed a full overhaul of the CGMS exam – including a job task analysis, updated content outline, and new standard-setting, which demonstrates adherence to modern testing rigor. Public tracking of candidate volumes and pass rates further indicates a scalable pipeline of practitioners already engaging with the credential. The attainment of NCCA accreditation confirms the program’s rigor and gives federal agencies confidence when incorporating CGMS into FGMC equivalency and advanced-standing rules.

NGMA’s NCCA-accredited CGMS should be treated as a validated common foundation for the grants management profession, not as a narrow recipient credential or as a complete substitute for a federal GS-1109 credential. Because CGMS covers both grantor and grantee perspectives across multiple sectors, it provides a credible baseline for lifecycle knowledge. However, a FGMC would still need to add a federal grantor-specific layer covering the unique authorities, decision rights, internal controls, risk judgments, award determinations, monitoring obligations, audit resolution responsibilities, and performance-measurement expectations of federal officials acting as stewards of taxpayer funds.

¹² <https://www.ngma.org/cgms>

¹³ <https://nctrc.org/nctrc-accreditation/national-commission-for-certifying-agencies-ncca/>

Governance

A credible, portable credential for the GS-1109 series begins with clear policy ownership and structured execution. COFFA, OPM, and OMB–Office of Federal Financial Management (OFFM) should jointly establish governmentwide policy for competency design, examination and recertification requirements, ethics attestation, and continuing–education expectations aligned to 2 CFR 200 and recognized lifecycle controls. Agencies would issue the FGMC locally using a uniform, governmentwide playbook to ensure reciprocity and portability across departments. This structure preserves agency–specific flexibility while establishing a common, defensible standard for risk, compliance, and performance–critical decision–making.

To move quickly without rebuilding the training market, COFFA could curate an approved catalog of training providers whose content maps to FBIF outcomes – including pre–award performance management capacity, risk assessment and management, cost principles, subrecipient oversight, procurement under grants, and audit resolution. Accredited programs such as CGMS provide a quality signal that can be recognized for advanced standing with only a brief federal/agency delta module required. Continuing education earned under CGMS can also be cross credited toward FGMC maintenance. Similarly, project management Professional Development Units (PDUs) may count toward FGMC CLPs where competencies align – such as risk management, scheduling, stakeholder engagement, and change control – reducing redundancy for supervisory personnel. A public training catalog, periodic provider audits, and sunset rules will ensure content remains current, defensible, and aligned with evolving federal requirements.

With the many areas of focus within grants management agencies may further tailor elective course work to major categories of grants (see Appendix), enabling personnel to build specialized expertise while maintaining a common baseline credential.

Governance should also include a central registry that tracks credential status and continuing education compliance. Agencies would report credential coverage at key control points – such as risk adjudication, award approval, monitoring leadership, and audit resolution – to enable correlation between credentialing and improved program outcomes. With COFFA/OPM/OMB–OFFM setting requirements; agencies issuing credentials under reciprocity; and accredited pathways accelerating adoption, FGMC becomes a portable, rigorously maintained skill standard that strengthens internal controls and elevates performance measurement.

What this enables for FGMC (immediately)

The recognition of NGMA's NCCA-accredited CGMS credential provides an immediate, low-risk foundation for OMB, OPM, and COFFA to accelerate FGMC implementation while maintaining rigor. Rather than developing equivalency frameworks independently, agencies can use CGMS as a validated, competency-mapped anchor that aligns naturally with the OPM GS-1109 series and the FBIF lifecycle.

Foundational certification can allow CGMS holders advanced standing, recognizing their successful completion of a validated exam. This reduces administrative burden, avoids duplicative testing, and signals that the federal government recognizes high-quality professional credentials already operating in the market. Under this model, agencies would require only a brief "supplemental module" focused on bureau-specific policy, systems orientation, and ethics attestation to ensure alignment with 2 CFR 200, internal control requirements, and mission-specific risk profiles.

The CGMS continuing education requirements of 60 Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits every three years can be cross-walked to FGMC CLP's, enabling a unified and streamlined dual-maintenance model. This minimizes redundancy, reduces compliance burden, and keeps practitioners aligned with evolving requirements such as revisions to 2 CFR 200, emerging audit trends, and risk-based monitoring expectations. By allowing CPEs to flow seamlessly between the two credentials, practitioners can maintain a single, coherent professional development rhythm that supports both federal career progression and broader mobility across the grants management field.

Because CGMS is now an accredited program, FGMC governance can leverage CGMS's validated standards, item-writing discipline, and job-task-analysis foundation when shaping FGMC assessments. Integrating these experts supports alignment of OPM's competency model, NGMA's lifecycle framework, and FBIF-defined outcomes without duplicating the cost and effort of creating a new assessment system. This collaboration accelerates exam readiness, reduces taxpayer expense, and anchors both credentials in a shared set of defensible, job-task-validated objectives. Establishing this common baseline also simplifies reciprocity across agencies and helps prevent future fragmentation in how grants management competencies are defined and tested.

FGMC pilot programs may adopt CGMS as an immediate on-ramp for GS-12/13 Grants Management Specialists, enabling experienced personnel to demonstrate competency without starting from zero. For GS-14/15/SES supervisory or project-lead positions, CGMS may be complemented by project management competencies to ensure both lifecycle mastery and disciplined project execution. CGMS can be coupled with the PMP or PgMP overlay proposed in this concept paper to capture both grants lifecycle mastery and project delivery discipline. Treating CGMS as partial credit reduces friction for early adopters and accelerates up take in high-impact roles, generating evidence to inform refinement and future scaling of FGMC.

Suggested Baseline Competency Framework

A governmentwide certification must be anchored in a defensible, uniform competency model that reflects both statutory expectations and the practical realities of the federal grants lifecycle. The most effective path forward is to adopt a hybrid competency framework that draws from existing federal standards, validated professional taxonomies, and the maturing credential ecosystem in the grants community.

Start with OPM's Grants Management (GS-1109) competency model¹⁴ as the foundational taxonomy, providing a government-endorsed definition of required knowledge, skills, and abilities across grants functions. These competencies - spanning financial management, compliance, performance monitoring, systems proficiency, and stakeholder engagement - offer a consistent baseline aligned with the risk-based internal control environment established under 2 CFR 200.

Next, clearly map competencies to the Federal Business Integrated Framework (FBIF) to align training, assessment, and performance expectations with government-wide definitions of life cycle outcomes and business capabilities. Mapping OPM competencies directly to FBIF processes establishes alignment between how work is defined (competencies) and how work is executed (business capabilities). This ensures that training, assessment, and certification requirements are tied not to subjective agency interpretation but to the federal government's own definition of operational excellence.

Key FBIF-aligned competencies should include but not be limited to:


- **Pre-award:** risk assessment, NOFO design, cost allowability, reviewing budgets
- **Award:** documentation, negotiations, internal controls, approvals
- **Post-award:** expenditure monitoring, performance measurement, subrecipient oversight
- **Closeout & Audit:** financial reconciliation, reporting, resolution of findings, documenting federal involvement, and programmatic coordination

And as previously discussed, to reinforce lifecycle mastery and professional standards, FGMC should align with private-sector certifications such as NGMA's GMBok, which offers accredited, externally validated content mapped to the grants lifecycle. Integrating these domains strengthens technical rigor and accelerates adoption by leveraging a widely recognized lifecycle standard.

By integrating OPM competencies, FBIF business capabilities, and GMBok lifecycle expertise, the FGMC creates a unified baseline of competency system that:

- standardizes what federal grants professionals must know and be able to do;
- aligns training content across agencies and approved providers;
- establishes a defensible basis for exam development and continuing education requirements;
- supports reciprocity, mobility, and consistent oversight across departments and agencies;
- positions the workforce to adapt quickly to regulatory updates, evolving risk trends, and emerging tools such as data analytics, AI-assisted monitoring, and standardized reporting.

¹⁴ https://www.opm.gov/chcoc/transmittals/2009/competency-model-grants-management_508_0.pdf



This baseline framework also creates clarity on where advanced project management credentials (PMP/PgMP) complement grants-specific competencies - particularly for cooperative agreements, major program launches, and multi-year initiatives requiring schedule control, stakeholder engagement, and disciplined change management. Senior-level competencies can be layered onto the baseline, establishing a scalable model that supports both early-career specialists and high-responsibility supervisory positions.

Learning Platforms

The FGMC can be rapidly deployed by curating high-quality existing training resources rather than developing new curricula from scratch. Foundational material is already available through Grants.gov's Learn Grants, while the Department of Education's online courses provide targeted refreshers on allowable costs, procurement under grants, and risk management. For strengthening monitoring, accountability, and transparency competencies central to FBIF and 2 CFR 200, the Department of Labor's SMART training provides a proven federal model suitable for broader adoption across agencies.

A range of established providers also support structured skill development Management Concepts' Grants Management Certificate Program (GMCP)[™], Federal Grants Training.com, Grants Professional Association (GPA) training, and NGMA's GMBok-based offerings together deliver lifecycle instruction, Uniform Guidance updates, and practical application modules. Additional federal and commercial training sources can be incorporated as needed to address specific agency competency gaps.

For supervisory positions and high-complexity award types - including cooperative agreements - FGMC should integrate project delivery preparation, including PMP-aligned course work or equivalent bootcamps. This equips senior staff with disciplined planning, scheduling, change management, and stakeholder engagement skills that complement grants management-specific expertise. Collectively, these curated resources create a scalable, defensible learning architecture to support consistent FGMC implementation.

A rigorous Assessment and Certification Mechanism is essential to ensuring that FGMC reflects the same credibility and discipline found in other governmentwide credentialing programs. Certification should be anchored by an exam blueprint mapping each test item to OPM competencies and GMBok-aligned lifecycle domains, with periodic refreshes to maintain alignment with revisions to 2 CFR 200. Beyond knowledge recall, candidates should demonstrate applied competence through scenario-based assessments evaluating risk and allowability decisions, subrecipient monitoring strategies, procurement under grants, and audit resolution actions. For positions linked to project management responsibilities, candidates may be required to submit project delivery artifacts (e.g., charter, Work Breakdown Structure, schedule baseline, risk register, communications plan, and change log) using predictive or agile methods. To ensure fairness and defensibility, an independent standards board should oversee psychometric validation, establish cut scores, and maintain exam integrity through proctored, closed-book testing modeled on best practices used in established federal and commercial certifications.

Ownership

Effective implementation of the FGMC requires clear policy ownership, coordinated governance, and a structured framework to maintain consistency in training and assessments across the federal enterprise. In this model, **COFFA** should lead in proposing competency requirements, recommending course offerings, and establishing assessment standards with sustained public engagement. **OMB**, as the owner of federal financial assistance policy, and **OPM**, as the authority over governmentwide credentialing policy, would provide concurrence, formal approval, and public notice of the requirements developed through COFFA. Under this hierarchy, agencies would implement FGMC in alignment with COFFA-defined standards, similar to how FAC certifications are implemented through the Federal Acquisition Institute¹⁵. To ensure continued rigor and relevance, a standards board - composed of COFFA, OMB, OPM, federal agencies, and representatives from associations and recipient organizations - should meet at least annually to guide lifecycle updates, exam enhancements, and maintenance requirements, with consultation from the Project Management Institute to align project management cross-crediting and ensure comprehensive competency coverage across ECO-aligned domains.

Supporting this governance structure would include an **approved provider catalog**, an annually updated provider catalog mapping high-quality training offerings to FGMC competencies and exam requirements. This curated inventory ensures agencies have consistent, defensible learning pathways aligned with federal standards while preserving flexibility to incorporate evolving content and emerging best practices.

¹⁵ <https://www.fai.gov/about/about-fai>

Conclusion: Risks of Inaction

Without a standardized, governmentwide certification for grants management, the federal workforce will continue to operate with uneven competencies and fragmented training that cannot keep pace with regulatory updates or evolving oversight expectations. This inconsistency exposes agencies to operational risks, including increased questionable costs, repeat audit findings, program delays, and weakened accountability for more than \$1.2 trillion in annual federal grant obligations. **Most critically, the absence of a unified competency framework will continue to impair performance measurement, limiting the federal government’s ability to assess outcomes, benefits, and impacts needed for evidence-informed decision-making.** The lack of a common credential also leaves federal managers under prepared for complex awards-especially cooperative agreements and multi-year initiatives that require disciplined project delivery and technical coordination.

Failure to act perpetuates systemic challenges that undermine public trust, including uneven monitoring, inadequate subrecipient oversight, and persistent performance-measurement gaps. As the grants landscape continues to expand in scale and complexity, reliance on ad hoc or inconsistent training will widen competency gaps and increase exposure to financial, programmatic, and compliance risk.

Establishing the **FGMC** is not merely a workforce initiative, it is a foundational internal control. It creates a **defensible, portable standard of competency; ensures alignment with statutory and regulatory expectations; and strengthens the federal government’s ability to steward public funds responsibly.** The risks of inaction are clear, and the cost of maintaining the status quo is far greater than the effort required to professionalize the grants workforce through a unified, rigorous certification framework.

Appendix: Categories of Grants – Training & Professionalization Chart

These categories should be matched to and aligned with:

- FBIF Core – aligns with the Federal Business Integrated Framework lifecycle competencies
- GMBok Domain – NGMA’s Grants Management Body of Knowledge
- CGMS Prep – training that maps to the NCCA-accredited Certified Grants Management Specialist exam
- PMP/PgMP Overlay – project management discipline supporting supervisory/complex projects
- Agency/Program-Specific – training required for domain, statutory, or system expertise

A. Research Grants

Subcategory	Potential Training Avenues	Benefits to Workforce & Federal Performance
Basic Research	GMBok research lifecycle modules NIH/NSF proposal review standards Cost allowability under 2 CFR 200 Subpart E	Stronger pre-award reviews Clearer allowability determinations Reduced questioned costs
Applied Research	CGMS-aligned cost principles Risk-based monitoring training PMP for project scheduling	Better milestone tracking Enhanced accountability for outcomes
Clinical Trials	Human Subjects/IRB compliance HHS-specific exceptions Audit readiness training	Fewer compliance violations Strengthened participant protections
Field Studies	Procurement under grants Subrecipient monitoring Fraud risk training	Improved oversight in distributed environments
Social & Behavioral Research	Data privacy/statistical disclosure control Ethics and bias mitigation	Increased data quality More reliable reporting and evaluation

B. Training & Education Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Workforce Development	DOL grantee oversight Performance indicators & outcomes training	Better measurement of job placement and credentialing outcomes
Fellowships & Scholarships	Allowability of participant support costs Prior approval rules	Fewer audit findings related to participant costs
Capacity-Building Programs	Technical assistance design Recipient capability assessments	Improved ability of recipients to scale and sustain programs

C. Construction & Infrastructure Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Public Facilities (water, wastewater)	Environmental & historic compliance (NEPA, NHPA) Capital expenditure allowability	Reduced delays & cost overruns
Schools/Hospitals	Davis-Bacon requirements Construction procurement	Stronger internal controls on high-cost projects
Broadband Expansion	Infrastructure deployment standards Performance metrics training	Better assessment of service coverage and digital equity outcomes
Transportation & Energy Infrastructure	FTA/FHWA compliance Lifecycle cost estimation	Increased transparency and ROI on major capital assets

D. Formula Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Population/Poverty-Based Allocations	Allocation formula design Reporting and statistical validation	Reduced formula errors; defensible allocation decisions
CDBG, Title I, etc.	HUD/HHS-specific compliance Consolidated planning processes	Better alignment of spending to local needs and performance indicators

E. Project (Discretionary) Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Competitive, Merit-Based	NOFO development training (standardized templates) Merit review & conflict-of-interest management	Better competition and improved fairness
Demonstration Programs	PMP (agile/predictive) Change control, stakeholder engagement	Stronger pilot evaluation and replicability

F. Block Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Broad-Purpose Funding	Flexibility vs. compliance boundary training Risk profiling of state systems	Smarter monitoring; reduced burden; better cross-program reporting

G. Planning Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Feasibility Studies	Cost allocation PMP scheduling Alternatives analysis	Higher-quality planning inputs for later project execution
Urban/Regional Development	Community engagement Data-driven needs assessments	More grounded, evidence-informed plans

H. Technical Assistance (TA) Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Organizational Capacity Building	Capability maturity models Internal control assessments	Better federal confidence in recipient operations
Specialized TA (financial, compliance, systems)	Systems integration & data standards (FBIF) Financial reporting (SF-425 reforms)	Improved uniformity and quality of financial reporting

I. Capital Investment Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Equipment & Assets	Depreciation & capital cost rules Procurement under grants	Lower risk of unallowable capital expenditures
Transit/FTA Capital Programs	FTA master agreement Independent cost estimates	Stronger governance and cost control

J. Emergency & Disaster Relief Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Natural Disaster Recovery	FEMA PA/IA training Duplication-of-benefits rules	Faster, cleaner recovery funding
Public Health Emergencies	HHS emergency exceptions Rapid obligation protocols	Timely response and defensible emergency spending

K. Social Services Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Health Services	Outcome measurement Allowability of clinical & supportive services	Improved impact evidence for taxpayers
Housing & Homelessness	HUD compliance Performance-based contracting	Better outcomes and reduced recidivism to homelessness
Food Assistance	Eligibility verification Program integrity	Lower improper payments

L. Agriculture & Rural Development Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Farm Innovation	R&D allowability Rural cost-share structures	More innovation with stronger financial control
Rural Broadband	Buildout metrics Subrecipient oversight	Better measurement of rural connectivity gains

M. Energy & Environment Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Renewable Energy R&D	Environmental compliance R&D reporting	More accurate reporting of emissions reductions
Pollution Reduction	Monitoring & enforcement Performance metric design	Clearer impact attribution
Climate Resilience	Risk assessment tools Infrastructure resilience standards	Better long-term cost avoidance

N. Arts, Humanities & Cultural Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Arts & Humanities Programs	Peer review standards IP and copyright rules	More transparent investment in cultural outcomes
Museums & Libraries	Capital allowability Community engagement metrics	Demonstrated benefit to public access and education

O. Justice & Law Enforcement Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
Police Training & Equipment	Allowability of equipment purchases Civil rights compliance	Reduced misuse and strengthened trust
Court Modernization	IT acquisition under grants Data-sharing standards	Improved case processing efficiency
Reentry Programs	Evidence-based practices Performance indicators	Documented reductions in recidivism

P. Defense & Homeland Security Grants

Subcategory	Training Avenues	Benefits
National Guard Training	Cost-sharing rules Procurement training	Lower audit findings, stronger state–federal coordination
Cybersecurity Preparedness	CISA frameworks Incident reporting	Reduced cyber risk and improved readiness
Border/Transportation Security	Allowability of equipment Interoperability standards	Better operational capability and compliance

Q. Cooperative Agreements¹⁶

Characteristics & Subcategories	Training Avenues	Benefits
Agreements with <i>substantial federal involvement</i> in research, environmental programs, or joint operations	Programmatic collaboration training Documentation of federal involvement Roles and responsibilities training	Clean delineation of responsibilities Reduced disputes and clearer audit trails

¹⁶ Cooperative agreements are treated separately because their *substantial federal involvement* introduces higher programmatic and audit risk, requires more advanced competencies - such as project management, technical coordination, and rigorous documentation - and therefore underscores the need for a standardized governmentwide certification framework to ensure consistent oversight and performance.



Who We Are and What We Stand For

SSLC is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the government’s implementation of shared services business models to improve government efficiency and effectiveness.

We promote a marketplace where government and industry service providers can fairly compete to best deliver capabilities to government customer agencies that fully realize the transformative business value of shared services to enable continuous modernization in service delivery.

We also promote immediate actions to accelerate the government’s adoption of shared services to more fully and rapidly address 21st Century challenges.

Core Mission

SSLC works to advance a federal environment where shared services are the default model for delivering mission-support and mission-delivery functions that are common across agencies. SSLC promotes policies, governance structures, and marketplace conditions that enable shared services to deliver measurable improvements in performance, cost, and customer experience.

Guiding Principles

SSLC works to advance a federal environment where shared services are the default model for delivering mission-support and mission-delivery functions that are common across agencies. SSLC promotes policies, governance structures, and marketplace conditions that enable shared services to deliver measurable improvements in performance, cost, and customer experience.

1. The **default delivery model** for common functions used by multiple agencies.
2. Defined using clear, accurate facts about current capabilities and intended outcomes, and designed to consistent **government-defined performance and data standards, regulations, policies and best practices**.
3. Managed to achieve and track **efficiency** gains, improved effectiveness and enhanced customer experience.
4. Inclusive of a competitive **marketplace** open to both government and industry service providers.
5. Driven by a **transformation vision and roadmap** to realize full operational capability, defined policy and investment strategies, and strong support from Congress and the Executive Branch.
6. Incentivized to **leverage industry solutions** consistent with government “commercial first” policies to enable continuous modernization and industry-leading performance levels.

SharedServicesNow.org