



Attendee Questions & Answers from April 29th Webinar:
OMB Wants You to Use Federal Funds for Data & Evaluation: Learn How to Apply the New Uniform Grants Guidance

1. Where can I find Results for America's summary of changes to the Uniform Grants Guidance?

Results for America's [2024 U.S. Office of Management and Budget Uniform Grants Guidance Resource](#) summarizes top takeaways from the revised guidance and provides concrete action steps to support agency implementation.

2. Do the new guidance provisions that explicitly allow spending on data and evaluation, including for integrated data systems, apply to all federal grants -- including existing grants and future grants -- or only a limited set of grants?

The updated guidance will govern all awards made once it goes into effect on October 1, 2024. This means that the data and evaluation provisions will apply to all grants. Because the updates are meant to clarify what is allowed rather than be new rules, grantees should start a conversation with federal agencies now about existing grants where the terms and conditions might need to change to allow for appropriate spending on data and evaluation. While program statutes set by Congress may impose limitations in some cases, these cases would be exceptions rather than the norm. See [Section 200.455\(c\)](#) of the final guidance for provisions on data and evaluation.

3. Are grants administrative systems part of the allowable costs for data and evaluation?

Yes, provided the administrative system would benefit the work that the federal grant is funding. The guidance states, "Data costs include (but are not limited to) the expenditures needed to gather, store, track, manage, analyze, disaggregate, secure, share, publish, or otherwise use data to administer or improve the program, such as data systems, personnel, data dashboards, cybersecurity, and related items." See [Section 200.455\(c\)](#) of the final guidance for allowable data and evaluation costs.

Depending on the type of cost and how a particular program benefits, spending on data systems may be allowable as either a direct or an indirect cost. See



sections [200.412 through 200.414](#) for guidelines on determining direct versus indirect costs.

4. Is spending on community engagement allowed for all grants or only certain ones?

The updated guidance encourages community engagement (see page 5 of the [OMB Reference Guide](#)). **Spending on engagement, including through participant support costs (see [Section 200.456](#)), is allowed for all federal grants.** In some cases, a statutory limitation may limit this spending, but that would be an exception, not the norm.

Importantly, costs are only allowed for community engagement done as part of the work laid out in successful grants that have been awarded. While OMB encourages community engagement by applicants as they design their proposals (see [Section 200.202\(a\)\(5\)](#)), the costs of developing the application are not allowable.

5. Can funds be used for both in-house data and evaluation teams as well as external vendors or parties?

Yes, funds may be used for both in-house and external teams supporting appropriate data and evaluation activities. While program statutes set by Congress may impose limitations in some cases, these cases would be exceptions rather than the norm. See [Section 200.455\(c\)](#) of the final guidance for details on allowable data and evaluation costs.

6. What are the methods through which agencies will coordinate to give uniform interpretations/guidance? Will it be big-picture collaboration between agencies? What happens when an individual organization gets conflicting instruction about their situation, how do they ask to get a single response?

The Council on Federal Financial Assistance (COFFA) will serve as the hub for coordination across agencies. The COFFA will establish subcommittees to focus on particular topics that need a concentrated focus. As Acting Controller Deidre Harrison described, “For the first time, we are bringing together senior leadership at all of the agencies that provide financial assistance to make sure that when we get questions asked of us, we are answering it in a consistent way.



That implementation as one government should be felt by recipients everywhere.”

OMB speakers also noted questions will surely remain about the updated guidance – and some parts of it may create inadvertent complications. They encourage continued participation in public events as well as communication with agencies and OMB to make sure that these issues can be addressed. For specific concerns, please reach out to CFOC.support@gsa.gov.

7. Could these grants be used for infrastructure project management and construction management for a wastewater treatment utility (for example, software such as Procore)?

Yes, provided the project management and construction management systems benefit the federal grant that would pay. The guidance states, “Data costs include (but are not limited to) the expenditures needed to gather, store, track, manage, analyze, disaggregate, secure, share, publish, or otherwise use data to administer or improve the program, such as data systems, personnel, data dashboards, cybersecurity, and related items.” Program statutes set by Congress may impose limitations in some cases, however these cases would be exceptions rather than the norm. See [Section 200.455\(c\)](#) of the final guidance for allowable data and evaluation costs.

Depending on the type of cost and how a particular program benefits, spending on data systems may be allowable as either a direct or an indirect cost. See Sections [200.412 through 200.414](#) for guidelines on determining direct versus indirect costs.

8. Are cities affected as it relates to ballot measures that fund grants? How will we be officially informed?

The OMB Uniform Grants Guidance applies specifically to federally funded grants, including grants that flow to a local government through a state. A state, local, or other ballot measure does not affect the federal spending rules. However in cases such as block grants, the federal government gives a lot of discretion to states, localities, tribes, and territories about how they spend the grant. In these cases, the jurisdiction receiving the grant is the best source of information about spending decisions.



Importantly, grant funds that originate separately from state, local, tribal, or territorial revenues – not from federal sources – would not be subject to the federal requirements.

9. Will the direct and indirect cost rates and the de minimis modifications be applicable now or after October 1, 2024?

The new de minimis indirect cost rate of 15 percent goes into effect on October 1, 2024. Both recipients and subrecipients have a right to negotiate an indirect cost rate instead of using the de minimis rate. Recipients and subrecipients may also choose to use a lower de minimis rate. See [Section 200.414\(f\)](#) for more information on the de minimis indirect cost rate.

10. Can you share a link to where we can apply for federal grants?

Visit [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) for the federal government’s one-stop site with discretionary federal grant opportunities from all agencies as well as technical assistance to learn more about how grants work.

11. If grantees need to explain how they will do “Public Participation and Community Engagement” (PPCE), is there any standard, cross-agency guidance for PPCE? Or is that what OMB is now working on with its current RFI for creating a "federal framework" for PPCE? (If so, when is its Delivery date?)

In March 2024, OMB released a [request for information](#) as it works to develop a government-wide framework, common guidelines, and leading practices for public participation and community engagement. The purpose of the framework is to enable federal agencies to “more frequently, effectively, broadly, and meaningfully involve the public, including underserved communities, in government decision-making.” The RFI seeks insight, best practices, models, and tools from experienced individuals and organizations to inform the federal framework. **Responses to the RFI are due May 17, 2024.**

Below are examples of current federal tools and guidance to support community engagement and public participation. These examples focus primarily on topics or populations for specific program areas, but their principles and applications may be informative to other areas as well.



- The Family and Youth Services Bureau at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services released a February 2024 Information Memorandum [“Leading in Partnership with Youth and Young Adults”](#) about how to include young people with lived experience into program design, implementation, and evaluation. The memo, which applies to grantees of multiple divisions and programs within the bureau, also clarifies that grant funds may be used for these purposes.
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development’s [Community Engagement Toolkit](#) provides people-centered strategies and a roadmap to initiate, carry out, and evaluate a robust community engagement strategy.
- The Department of Transportation’s [Promising Practices for Meaningful Public Involvement in Transportation Decision-Making](#) from November 2023 provides a shared definition of meaningful public involvement and promising practices to help address barriers to inclusion in transportation decision-making.
- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Agency’s [Youth Engagement Guidance](#) from 2016 includes information and tools that can help federal staff and contractors appropriately engage youth before, during, and after government-sponsored events and meetings.

12. Can a department or agency of a government that does not have a current negotiated rate elect to use the de minimis rate pursuant to 2 CFR 200.414(f) in lieu of preparing an indirect cost rate proposal?

Yes, both recipients and subrecipients that do not have a negotiated indirect cost rate may elect to use the de minimis rate. Starting October 1, 2024, the de minimis rate will rise from 10 percent to 15 percent of total modified director costs. See [Section 200.414\(f\)](#) for more information on the de minimis indirect cost rate.

13. I have three questions re data: 1. Who typically owns the data? 2. How is data protected (personal to foreign influence); 3. Is there an analysis regarding risk of violating 31 USC 6301-6303 (principal purpose)?



State, tribal, local, and territorial governments administer many programs using federal funds, and each program collects data to meet its operational and reporting needs. **Data from different programs often resides in different places and may have different rules regarding access and use.** Some of this data is required to be reported to the federal government as part of performance or other compliance. **Importantly, government entities are always responsible for meeting relevant privacy and security requirements for each data set and for complying with all relevant laws.**

State, local, tribal, and territorial governments are increasingly using integrated data systems (IDS), which can link individual-level data from multiple government agencies for purposes of efficient and effective management, research, and evaluation. IDS must always maintain appropriate safeguards for privacy and security. In some cases, an IDS may be structured so that many data sets reside in the same place. In other places, an IDS may connect data across separate systems. The guidance specifically notes that the costs of integrated data systems are allowable for federal grants (see [Section 200.455\(c\)](#)).