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## ACF Policy for Applicants Experiencing System Issues

The grant application submission process requires applicant organizations to register and interact with several federal electronic systems, including Grants.gov and the System for Award Management ([www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov)). On occasion, technical problems with one of these systems could result in an applicant failing to meet the application submission deadline. This page clarifies ACF's policy regarding the submission of late applications if a system issue beyond an applicant's control is the cause of the late application.

Applicants experiencing issues with a federal system that may prevent the on-time submission of their application must follow these guidelines for reporting the issue. System issues are defined as technical problems with federal systems that prevent an applicant from successfully submitting their application by 11:59 p.m., ET on the due date listed in the funding opportunity announcement. Problems with computer systems at an applicant organization or with a non-federal third party (e.g., an organization partnering with the applicant) are not considered federal system issues; nor are the applicant's failure to complete required registrations by the submission deadline.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to complete the electronic application submission process several days before the application due date to ensure the application is successfully accepted by Grants.gov. Applicants should consider that some application due dates will have a high volume of submissions, which may slow down federal systems and increase the time needed for applications to be received and time stamped at Grants.gov. Applications must be received and time stamped on or before the deadline. Applicants must take this processing time into consideration by allowing enough time to make any corrected submissions so that the application is submitted error-free by the deadline. For more information see *Section IV.2. Electronic Submission via [www.Grants.gov](http://www.Grants.gov) and Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission* in the funding opportunity announcement.

### Guidelines for Applicants Experiencing System Issues

To confirm a federal system issue, contact the appropriate system support service **as soon as possible after experiencing an issue. System issues must be fully documented as outlined below by 4:30 p.m. ET, on the federal business day immediately following the application submission due date.**

#### For Grants.gov system issues

1. Contact the [Grants.gov Contact Center](#) to document and receive help to resolve any Grants.gov related submission issues. Applicants will receive a Grants.gov Contact Center ticket number. **This ticket number should be retained by the applicant as**

**part of their documentation of the issue.**

2. Document and explain the issue preventing submission in an email to the following address: [acfogme-grants@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:acfogme-grants@acf.hhs.gov). The email must include:
  - a. The full name of and contact information for the applicant organization;
  - b. The DUNS number;
  - c. The name of the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) and E-Biz POC;
  - d. Grants.gov tracking number, if applicable;
  - e. The full name and number of the FOA to which the applicant is attempting to apply;
  - f. A **detailed** description of the system issue preventing the application's on-time submission;
  - g. A description of the applicant's request (e.g., to submit an application after the deadline);
  - h. The Grants.gov support ticket(s) number;
  - i. Any emails or correspondence with the Grants.gov Contact Center as an email attachment.

**For SAM.gov system issues:**

1. Contact the [SAM.gov Federal Service Desk](#) (FSD) to document and help resolve any SAM.gov related registration issues.
2. Document and explain the issue preventing submission in an email to the following address: [acfogme-grants@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:acfogme-grants@acf.hhs.gov). The email must include the following information:
  - a. Full name of and contact information for the applicant organization;
  - b. The DUNS number;
  - c. The name of the Authorized Organizational Representative (AOR) and E-Biz POC;
  - d. Grants.gov tracking number, if applicable;
  - e. Full name and number of the FOA to which the applicant is attempting to apply;
  - f. A detailed description of the system issue that has prevented the completion of the registration process;
  - g. A description of the applicant's request (e.g., to submit an application after the deadline);
  - h. The FSD support ticket(s) number;
  - i. Any emails or correspondence with the FSD as an email attachment.

**Note:** SAM registration/renewal can be a lengthy process. Failure to allow enough time for registration or renewal is not considered a system issue.

**Additional Requirements**

ACF expects applicants to respond quickly, that is, within one business day, to federal systems' Contact Center/Help Desk requests for actions necessary to resolve issues with completion of registration or application submission.

Reports of system issues will be investigated on a case-by-case basis. If ACF confirms that an applicant experienced a systems issue, which was beyond their control, their application will not be considered late and disqualified as long as the applicant works diligently with the appropriate federal system Contact Center/Help Desk to resolve their problem quickly.

Any application that is allowed to be submitted after the deadline and due date because of a confirmed federal system issue must include a cover letter documenting the confirmed system issues, Contact Center and/or Help Desk ticket(s) number(s), and the action(s) taken to resolve the issue(s).

Late applicants that fail to document their federal systems issues before 4:30 p.m. ET, on the federal business day immediately following the application submission due date will be disqualified from the competitive review and from receiving an award under the announcement.

Problems with computer systems at the applicant organization (barring a widespread or regional electrical failure), failure to follow instructions in the announcement, or failure to complete required registrations by the submission due date and deadline **ARE NOT** considered to be federal system issues.

### **Paper Format Applications**

Applicants that have received an exemption from required electronic application submission at Grants.gov should follow the instructions provided for issues with registration at Sam.gov as this registration is required of all applicants. The deadline for paper format applications with an exemption is 4:30 p.m., ET, on the due date.

### **Examples of events that may be considered federal system issues:**

- Significant Grants.gov service interruption on deadline day lasting multiple hours.
- Failure of Grants.gov to acknowledge receipt of an application within half a business day.
- Inability to complete SAM registration or renewal due to a technical problem at [www.Sam.gov](http://www.Sam.gov).

### **Examples of events that would NOT be considered federal system issues:**

- Failure to follow the instructions in the funding opportunity announcement.
- Failure to complete required applicant registrations prior to the application deadline and due date.
- Failure to correct Grants.gov errors/warnings by the application deadline and due date.
- Failure to re-submit a corrected application by the application due date and deadline when the application fails the validation process at Grants.gov.

- Local internet problem at applicant organization except for widespread or regional electrical failures.
- Grants.gov AOR is not authorized to submit applications for organization.
- The applicant organization has forgotten its credentials.
- Failure to notify the grants management contact in listed in *Section VII.* of the announcement of submission issues before the deadline.
- The applicant did not receive the Grants.gov notification when application's status is available at Grants.gov.