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February 6, 2018

The Honorable Trey Gowdy, Chairman
The Honorable Elijah Cummings, Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
United States House of Representatives
2157 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Gowdy and Ranking Member Cummings:

The Grant Professionals Association (GPA), as the organization representing Grant Professionals who are responsible for the research, proposal development, stewardship, and reporting of results for grants, is encouraged by the bipartisan Grant Reporting Efficiency and Agreements Transparency (GREAT) Act (H.R. 4887). This legislation will improve transparency for grantor agencies and reduce administrative costs for grantees.

Currently federal grant reporting is fragmented and decentralized, which causes grantees to invest significant resources to comply with a form-based reporting system, with information often requested multiple times, in varying formats. The GREAT Act aims to address this issue and provide a streamlined process for both grantors and grantees. We believe that to be effective, any initiative needs to be inclusive of grant programs from all federal agencies (i.e. Department of Labor and Department of Education) as well as those specified in the GREAT Act.

The 2014 Digital Accountability and Transparency Act (DATA Act) (P.L. 113-101) required a two-year pilot project to test this concept. GPA and its members served as participants in this pilot project conducted by the US Department of Health and Human Services. In 2017 the White House Office of Management and Budget reported back to Congress that “a comprehensive taxonomy of standard definitions for core data elements” across all federal grant reporting was possible and necessary. Accordingly, the GREAT Act will transform federal grant reporting from a regime built on disconnected documents into a standardized and structured data-centric process common across all grantor agencies. As a result, agencies and Congress will be able to electronically compare grant finances and results across multiple programs and government-wide.

The GREAT Act will also direct the Office of Management and Budget to adopt a standardized data structure for the most common information grantees must report to agencies. The GREAT Act will thus allow grantees to simplify, and ultimately automate their reporting processes, reducing compliance costs. By enabling automation, the GREAT Act will reduce costs for large

and small grantees, including state agencies, local and tribal governments, universities, and nonprofit organizations. GPA encourages and reminds the Committee and Congress that a number of grant recipients are small organizations with limited technology resources to invest in grant reporting systems. GPA and its membership are aware that the complexity of federal grant programs prohibits a “one size fits all” solution and encourages the Committee to be mindful of this fact.

GPA remains committed to being engaged in the on-going conversation to improve the entire grant process from announcement of financial assistance programs through the application process to post-award reporting and close-out. We commend the work aimed at making the grants process more effective and efficient for all parties, while improving transparency for the public. Considering the many benefits the GREAT Act can provide to the grant recipient community, we respectfully ask the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee and this Congress to consider this bill at the earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Johanna J. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "M".

Johanna J. Miller, GPC
President
Grant Professionals Association

The Grant Professionals Association (GPA) is an international membership association for everyone in the grants industry. GPA and its affiliates work to advance the profession, certify professionals, and fund professionalism. GPA offers continuing professional development through local chapter meetings, regular webinars, the GPA Journal, and an annual conference. The Grant Professionals Certification Institute oversees the GPC credential based on a body of knowledge for the profession. The Grant Professionals Foundation provides scholarships to individuals to advance their career in the grants profession. Find out more at www.GrantProfessionals.org.