

Equity and Innovation in Grants Management

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RFI Process and Comments

- OMB published an RFI on “Methods and Leading Practices for Advancing Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through Government.”
- The deadline is July 6. Comments are public on regulations.gov.
<https://www.regulations.gov/document/OMB-2021-0005-0001/comment?postedDateFrom=2021-06-03&postedDateTo=2021-06-17>
- “Area 4” relates to financial assistance and grants.
- As of June 21, 45 comments posted. Many deal with specific issues for a single program.



RFI Process and Comments

- The Indiana Youth Institute (IYI) presents a good example of a comment providing substantive views.
- On financial assistance, the IYI suggested connecting FAFSA to grants and connecting Pell Grants to other social programs.
- Other comments, for example, highlight the importance of data science and integrating data into operations and performance management.



Other RFIs

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Many agencies are seeking input into their specific programs. Here are just a few examples:

- [“Identifying Barriers in USDA Programs and Services; Advancing Racial Justice and Equity and Support for Underserved Communities at USDA”](#) (Deadline: 7/15). For example:
 - What are the barriers to applying for loan and grant programs? How can USDA make loan and grant processes easier to understand and more accessible to underserved groups?
 - How can USDA, its cooperators, grantees, and partners, better share information with underserved stakeholders about our programs and services? What are the best ways to notify and engage underserved stakeholders about new programs and services or changes to existing services?



Other RFIs

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- “Request for Information on FEMA Programs, Regulations, and Policies” (deadline: July 21)
- “Request for Information, Strategic Opportunities and Challenges for the National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health” (deadline: August 21)
- “Request for Information on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities in NASA Programs, Contracts and Grants Process” (deadline: July 12)



Other RFIs

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- “Request for Information on Transportation Equity Data”
(deadline: July 22)
 - “How should the Department identify and measure the benefits and drawbacks (e.g., safety, wellbeing, and mobility benefits) of Federal transportation investments to underserved communities? How should the Department identify and measure the social cost of inequity in transportation projects or policies in underserved communities?”



Other Actions

- Many agencies or programs published public statements on their review of policies from an equity lens.
- For example, the Department of Transportation issued an “Equity and Access Policy Statement,” <https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/civil-rights-library/equity-and-access-policy-statement>.
- Adjusting “Investment Priorities” for the U.S. Economic Development Administration (Department of Commerce), <https://eda.gov/about/investment-priorities/>.
- Creating more transparency with the Energy Justice Dashboard
 - “DOE is working to better understand how the Department’s funding and investments are distributed to overburdened and underserved communities that have been left behind and unheard for too long.”
 - <https://www.energy.gov/diversity/energy-justice-dashboard-beta>.



Other Actions

- Funding research into equity: NIH's UNITE Initiative
 - “UNITE will perform a broad, systematic self-evaluation to identify elements that may perpetuate structural racism and lead to a lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion within NIH and the larger research community.”
 - <https://orwh.od.nih.gov/in-the-spotlight/all-articles/nih-launches-unite-initiative-and-funding-opportunities-mitigate>
- DOT's “creation and/or implementation of an assessment methodology and platform to address the historic failure to invest sufficiently, justly, and equally in underserved communities, as well as individuals from those communities” for transportation and infrastructure investments.
 - <https://presidentialinnovationfellows.gov/projects/dot-equitable-and-efficient-infrastructure/>.

