



# **Federal Grants to State and Local Governments for Streamlining and Information Technology**

Robert Wible & Associates/Alliance for Building  
Regulatory Reform in the Digital Age

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## I. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT & GRANT RESEARCH

A public private partnership, the Alliance for Building Regulatory Reform in the Digital Age has worked since 2001 to research, document and share with state and local governments the benefits of effective regulatory compliance from streamlining administrative and enforcement processes and applying, where appropriate, information technology. In state and local communities from Oregon to Florida, regulatory streamlining and IT applied to building, land use and environmental protection programs have enhanced regulatory compliance while at the same time reducing the amount of time to move through such processes by 70% - saving governments and permit applicants hundreds of millions of dollars each year.

Surveys conducted by the Alliance for Building Regulatory Reform in the Digital Age over the past five years have shown that a lack of adequate funding sources has been one of the top five barriers to more jurisdictions streamlining their regulatory processes and applying information technology to improve their effectiveness and efficiency.

Over the past two years, however, a growing number of Federal grants have been made available to state and / or local governments to aid in everything ranging from reduced environmental pollution to greater energy conservation, and to increased homeland security and rebooting the national economy.

The objective of this report is to identify and share recent or pending Federal grants to state and local governments that could be used to streamline their building, land use, environmental or other regulatory and administrative processes and acquire and put in place information technology software and hardware.

To encourage state and local governments to apply for Federal funding for such projects, a hypothetical generic grant application was developed to provide interested state and local governments with a template for their applications.

Over the past two months, with funding from Alliance partner Avolve Software, Robert Wible & Associates has conducted extensive research of potential Federal funding sources. That effort included meetings and calls with 9 Federal agencies and an extensive review of 26 different Federal grants to state and/or local governments.

This report provides for State and local government consideration a listing and detailed background information on 12 possible Federal grants. It also includes a draft generic grant application that can be readily modified by jurisdictions to pursue a number of these grant opportunities. Lastly the report closes with a set of recommendations concerning the ways in which its content can be widely distributed amongst state and local governments.

## II. REPORT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### SUMMARY OF POTENTIAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Screening 26 different grant and collaborative agreements offered by nine different Federal agencies in 2008 and thru August, 2009; Robert Wible & Associates has identified and provides in this report 12 different grant opportunities for state and or local governments to consider applying for either in 2009 or during the next grant cycle in 2010. A spreadsheet summarizing these grant opportunities is provided as Attachment A to this report.

In general these twelve grant opportunities breakout into four distinctive grant categories:

1. Those related to Homeland Security including disaster preparedness response and recovery (6 grants)
2. Those related to enhanced environmental protection (2 grants)
3. Those related to energy conservation and development and use of alternative energy (2)
4. Those related to stimulating the nation's economic recovery and/or community development (2)

Of the above grant opportunities 4 are state (and tribal) only; 7 are for states and/or local governments, and 1 is unrestricted but favors academic institutions.

Nine of the listed opportunities are annual grant competitions and three were single opportunities related either to a given year's national disasters or the nation's economic recovery. These three have been included as similar grant opportunities are anticipated for 2010 (for 2009 disasters or an anticipated second round in 2010 of similar economic stimulus grants).

The award amounts in the grants identified in this report range from tens of thousands of dollars up to \$2,000,000. Grants also vary from 100% federal government awards down to matching grants of 70% Federal and 30% state and or local funding ( most of these include in-kind services).

Of the 12 grant opportunities research has identified that only three have funded some aspect of building codes or environmental regulation administration and enforcement and that two have covered software for enforcement related functions (DHS grant for the California Interoperable Mobile Field inspection for disaster assessments noted earlier and an EPA grant to Arizona for environmental permits).

### GRANT APPLICATION APPROACH & THE GENERIC GRANT APPLICATION

Very few grants have been awarded to state and or local governments to support regulatory streamlining and application of IT to administrative and/or regulatory processes. Jurisdictions seeking funding for such projects therefore will need to craft their grant applications with skill; making the case for the way funding for such work and services meets the specific award criteria for each specific grant. For example the State of California made the argument to the U.S. Department of Homeland Services that having more rapid and

accurate damage assessment data available to the State's Incident Command Center and enabling local jurisdictions to make use of existing mobile field inspection technology, by making their data collection and transmission interoperable, would greatly enhance both disaster response and recovery for communities throughout the state in the aftermath of either a major terrorist or natural (e.g. earthquake) disaster event.

The Grant Opportunities sections of this report (Sections V and VI) offer guidance on how grant applications for each of the 12 specific grant opportunities can be tailored to enable funding to be considered for meeting streamlining and IT needs of state and/or local governments.

The Federal government's own streamlining efforts have resulted in the creation of the [www.gov.grants](http://www.gov.grants) website and agencies consolidation their specific grant opportunities to their own AGENCYNAME.gov.grants sites.

In reviewing all of the 12 different grant opportunities identified in this report it was noted that the most common grant application amongst those grants was the one used on the gov.grants website. Attachment B to this report for state and/or local government consideration as a grant template therefore was drawn from grants.gov and specifically from the grant application used for the Economic Development Administration's Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Recovery. The Generic Grant Application provided shows a hypothetical and fictitious grant application submitted by four Louisiana Parishes for streamlining and IT to assist in the implementation of the statewide building code that was established in 2006 to promote economic recovery and disaster preparedness in response to 2008 Hurricane Gustav which struck that region.

## **GRANT APPLICATION ASSISTANCE**

Section VIII of this report closes with a listing of websites with detailed background information on the benefits of streamlining and IT and connection to technical assistance which state and local governments may wish to access in considering applying for one or more of the grant opportunities.

### III. RESEARCH CONDUCTED AND GRANT SELECTION CRITERIA

Research to assemble the grant information contained in this report was conducted in two phases. Phase I began in mid-September and ran into the end of the first week of October and entailed extensive use of the internet and telephone conversations with key contacts within Federal agencies. That research identified ten potential Federal agencies and a total of 26 possible Federal grants to be evaluated for consideration in this report.

Phase II began in early October and extended through October 23 and involved detailed screening of the above possible grant opportunities, face to face meetings with grant and program staff at the following Federal Agencies: Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce (National Institute of Standards and Technology), Department of Housing and Urban Development, Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Energy, Department of Homeland Security and its Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Science Foundation.

These meetings, subsequent phone calls and further internet research, resulted in the development of the twelve potential grant funding opportunities contained in this report and provided in summary spreadsheet format in Attachment A.

Screening criteria that was applied included only listing grant opportunities that are:

1. Ongoing on an annual basis or involved American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding in 2009 with a possible potential for further grant opportunity through another round of ARRA grants in 2010.
2. Are available for state (including in most cases tribal) and or local government application or partnership in application with academic institutions (e.g. NSF grant listed)
3. Are of direct relevance to subject areas that address state and or local government program administration and enforcement activities to which streamlining and information technology are important.

## IV. OVERVIEW OF GRANTS IDENTIFIED

As noted in the Executive Summary, the 12 grants that finally were selected to be included in this report fall into four basic categories:

1. Those related to Homeland Security including disaster preparedness response and recovery (6 grants)
2. Those related to enhanced environmental protection (2 grants)
3. Those related to energy conservation and development and use of alternative energy (2)
4. Those related to stimulating the nation's economic recovery and/or community development (2)

This section provides a brief description of each grant opportunity and directions on where to go for additional information from the relevant Federal agency. Additional details regarding how state (tribal) and/or local governments might seek to apply for funding from these grant opportunities to address streamlining and information technology needs in their building, land use, or environmental programs are provided under Sections V and VI of this report.

Attachment A to this report provides a spreadsheet summarizing basic grant and contact information data for each of these 12 opportunities. Grants are listed in the spreadsheet in the same order as they appear in the remainder of this section.

### Homeland Security – Disaster Preparedness Response and Recovery

#### #1 – FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program

An annual matching grant program (75% Federal / 25% state or local government), grants are competitively bid from a combined FEMA pool authorized each year by Congress for programs that best address plans/projects that reduce overall disaster risks to people and structures while reducing reliance on funding from actual disaster declarations. Congress sets a pre-determined award amount for each state and territory with State's prioritizing their submissions to be funded down that priority list until funds are all allocated. In Federal Fiscal Year 2009 a total of \$90,000,000 was made available. A slightly higher amount is scheduled to be available for Fiscal 2010 awards. There is an award ceiling of \$3,000,000 per project. Some 75 awards are expected. Applications for FY 2010 are due into FEMA by December 4, 2009. Awards are generally announced in late winter/early spring of each year.

For more information go to: <http://fema.gov/government/grant/pdm/index.shtm>

## **#2 – Economic Development Administration’s Second Supplemental Appropriations Disaster Recovery Grants**

The Economic Development Administration (EDA) funds several disaster relief grant programs to stimulate economic recovery after major natural (or manmade) disasters. There were two funding opportunities for 2008 Federal declared disasters both of which remain open for funding and are rolling grant opportunities with no matching funds required to help disaster areas in their economic recovery.

The EDA Second Supplemental Appropriations Disaster Recovery Grants covers expenses for disaster relief and long term economic recovery for Federally declared disasters anywhere in the US during 2008 and can be applied for by State, regional, local governments. \$400,000,000 in Congressional funds was authorized for grant awards under supplemental appropriations.

The Generic Grant Application form provided in this report uses this EDA grant application form as it is the most common form (SF-424) used by the 12 funding opportunities covered in this report. The Generic Grant covers a hypothetical and fictitious response from SW region of Louisiana in response to damage and economic recovery needs from the 2008 Hurricane Gustav which struck this section of the country on its way into Texas.

Grants are awarded on a rolling basis with applications accepted in 2010. More information is available at: <http://www.eda.gov/InvestmentsGrants/FFON.xml>

## **#3 – Economic Development Administration’s Supplemental Disaster Relief Grants**

This is the second of two 2008 EDA Disaster Relief and economic recovery grants but this one is specifically limited to disasters which caused severe economic distress in the Midwest due to flooding, storms or tornados and other natural disasters.

Open until September, 2010 with acceptance on a rolling basis, the grants are available to State, regional, and/or local governments with special emphasis on awards for regional proposals. A total pool of \$100,000,000 was made available in early 2009 for these grants.

More information is available at: <http://www.07grants.gov/search/searchdo?oppld=42953&mode=view>

## **#4 – FEMA Competitive Training Grants**

Another annual competitive FEMA / U.S. Department of Homeland Security grant, the Competitive Training Grants program is designed to strengthen homeland security preparedness by funding selected applicants who will develop and deliver innovative training programs addressing high priority national homeland security training needs.

Priority training needs areas identified by FEMA for the 2009 awards included Critical Infrastructure Protection and Regional Collaboration. \$27,000,000 was made available in 2009 for this. The application date for 2009 is closed and no dates have been set yet for 2010.

For more information go to: <http://www.fema.gov/emergency/ctgp/index.shtm>

#### **#5 – 2009 Homeland Security Grant Program for States**

The Department of Homeland Security's, Homeland Security Grant Program (HSGP) is the primary funding mechanism for building and sustaining national preparedness capabilities. The program includes several annual grant opportunities two of which are covered here.

The first, and largest, is the State Homeland Security Grant Program. In FY 2009, \$861,137,000 was made available for awards for assistance programs to build capabilities at the state and local levels to implement goals and objectives included in both the State Homeland Security Strategies, and Initiatives in the State Preparedness Report. Those priorities included infrastructure protection, disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

Limited only to State and Territorial governments, the FY '09 grant period closed in August and the 2010 grant period will open again in the spring of 2010.

For more information go to: <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/hsgp/index.shtm#1>

#### **#6 – 2009 Homeland Security Grants for Urban Areas**

The second relevant DHS Homeland Security Grant Program grant is the Urban Areas Security Initiative (UASI). With \$798,600,000 awarded in Fiscal 2009, this grant goes to enhance regional preparedness in major metropolitan areas throughout the United States. This includes DHS' ranked 62 highest risk Urban Areas in the nation. Local governments are eligible to apply for grants (regional cooperative applications are encouraged) to develop integrated regional systems for disaster prevention, protection, response and recovery. The 62 urban areas are divided into two tiers based upon degrees of risk. In 2008 the seven highest ranked urban areas which comprise Tier 1 received \$439 million and remaining Tier 2 areas received \$ 359 million.

Six grant area priorities for 2009 included emphasizing information sharing capabilities, and strengthening preparedness planning, training and exercises. The 2009 grant opportunities closed in March, 2009. An announcement for 2010 grant opportunities is expected in coming months with a tentative closing date in March, 2010.

For more information go to: <http://www.fema.gov/government/grant/hsgp/index.shtm#2>

## Environmental Protection

### #1 – FY 2010 National Environmental Information Grants

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has two annual grant awards programs of relevance to state and local government efforts to strengthen the administration and effective enforcement of environmental protection legislation and regulations.

The first of these two grants is the EPA's 2010 National Environmental Information Exchange Network Grant Program. With a submission date of November 20, 2009, this grant is open to state, territory and tribal governments that are working together to develop the National Environmental Information Exchange Network, a secure internet and standards based way to support electronic data reporting, sharing, and integration of both regulatory and non-regulatory environmental data.

These grants support state and tribal government efforts to develop the information technology and information management capabilities they need to actively participate in EPA's Exchange Network. The grants may also fund standardization, exchange and integration of geospatial information to address environmental, natural resource and human health challenges.

\$10,000,000 is available for this year's program. For more information visit: <http://www.epa.gov/neergprg/>

### #2 – EPA State Innovation Grant Program

The EPA State Innovation Grant Program annually provides state and tribal governments with assistance to help them test innovative approaches to improving results in their EPA permitting programs. The four major elements of the program are to: strengthen EPA 's innovation partnerships with states and tribes; focus on priority environmental problems; diversify environmental protection tools and approaches and, lastly, to foster a more "innovation-friendly" culture and management systems. Continuous process improvement and "beyond-compliance-performance for facilities and communities," are Environmental Management Systems (EMS) projects that receive grant support. This includes projects that explore the relationship between permitting and EMS with a goal of helping businesses and communities reduce their environmental impacts and increase operating efficiency. EPA is especially looking for innovations that can be replicated in other states.

These grants are competitive and an announcement and grant application for FY 2010 awards will be issued in the Federal Register in mid-November, 2009. The announcement will include information on 2010 priority areas and the total amount of grant funding available.

In 2008 EPA awarded one of these grants to the State of Arizona for development and establishing an electronic permitting system for environmental permits.

For more information visit: [www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants](http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants)

## Energy Conservation and Development of Alternative Energy Sources

### #1 – Recovery Act: Community Renewable Energy Resources Grant

This grant was a part of the series of 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grants issued as one time solicitations from state, tribal and local governments to take actions that support the nation's economic revitalization. Under this U.S. Department of Energy grant, projects must address the technical, economic and policy barriers to implementing a combination of renewable energy technologies into one integrated solution for a community to reduce its carbon footprint. Among those technologies are: electric or thermal energy generated from solar, wind, biomass, landfill gas, ocean, geothermal, and new hydroelectric generation capacity. Prior registration with DOE to participate in this grant opportunity was required.

While this was a onetime solicitation closed in September, 2009, there is some speculation within DOE that it may be issued again in 2010. Total funds available for this grant in 2009 was \$100,000,000 with the maximum grant going for \$21,450,000 and the lowest award for \$5,000,000.

For more information go to: <http://www.07grant.gov/searc/searchdo?Oppld=48485&mode=view>

### #2 – Department of Energy State Energy Grant Program

This is an annual competitively bid U.S. Department of Energy Grant only for state energy offices. In 2009 it was linked to the U.S. Congress' American Recovery and Reinvestment Act program with a substantial funding increase in available grant funds going from 2008's \$45,000,000, to \$3.1 billion for the 2009 grants. The grant funds a wide range of state programs designed to strengthen energy code compliance and adoption of the most current editions of the nation's model energy codes and standards.

Among projects of interest to DOE are those which strengthen the ability to enforce and document greater statewide energy code compliance.

Grants in 2009 were awarded to states on a formula basis set by Congressional ARRA legislation. It is anticipated that in 2010 grants will return to their previous competitively bid structure and the amount of funding available will be reduced to somewhere in the magnitude of \$300,000,000.

The 2009 grant application time opened on March 23, 2009 and the proposals were due into DOE by May 12. A similar application due date for 2010 is currently anticipated.

For more information visit: [http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/states//doe\\_grant\\_funding.cfm](http://apps1.eere.energy.gov/states//doe_grant_funding.cfm)

## Economic Recovery and Community Development

### #1 – National Science Foundation Data and Visual Analytics Grants

The National Science Foundation (NSF) annually issues competitive grants that support research by the nation's academic institutions on technical areas of vital national interest. Last issued in January 2009 and closed on April 2, 2009, this grant solicited technical proposals from colleges and universities and other academic institutions to conduct science and technology research in interactive visual interfaces for data mining and management and ability to extract useable data related to homeland security (including disaster preparedness, response and recovery) from massive data sets.

The total pool of funds for the 2009 grants was \$1,725,000 with maximum grant awards going at \$500,000 and minimum awards at \$300,000. A possible similar awards program is being considered for 2010 by the NSF.

For more information visit: [http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm\\_summ.jsp?poms\\_id=50108](http://www.nsf.gov/funding/pgm_summ.jsp?poms_id=50108)

### #2 – HUD Community Development Block Grants

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Community Development Block Grant program is one of the nation's oldest grant awards program. Open to State and local units of government and involving a matching funds requirement of 30% for state and local governments to the Federal government's 70% contribution, CDBG funds have gone for everything from subsidizing low income housing construction to major urban renewal projects.

To date, no CDBG funds have gone to fund building or land use department operations. Recent HUD program support for rapid post disaster rebuilding affordable housing and reducing regulatory costs of housing make it possible for HUD to consider funding a proposal from local communities to implement an action plan of regulatory streamlining and application of information technology to support effective and efficient design and construction of buildings to be affordable and both energy efficient and disaster resilient.

For more information visit: <http://www.hud.gov/offices/cpd/communitydevelopment/programs/>

**SEE THE INCLUDED GRANT SUMMARY SPREADSHEET**

## V. MOST PROMISING GRANTS

In meeting with Federal officials and talking with some recent state and or local grant awardees, Robert Wible and Associates has selected the following five out of the total 12 different Federal Grant opportunities as being the most promising candidates for state and/or local governments to consider applying for in late 2009 or in 2010:

### **Homeland Security – Disaster Preparedness Response and Recovery**

The strong link between better disaster preparedness, response and recovery from disasters and the work of building code agencies in effectively administering and enforcing modern building codes make these two grant proposals good candidates for 2010 funding. Proposals written around a state or local government's efforts to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of their enforcement program through regulatory streamlining and the application of information technology should include a reference to assisting in recovery from a major terrorist event as well as from natural disasters. (For additional guidance in this area download the Alliance "Guide on Benefits of Streamlining and IT to Disaster Preparedness Response and Recovery" from [www.natlpartnerstreamline.org](http://www.natlpartnerstreamline.org) ).

#### **#1 – FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program**

Communities with either a past history or current potential for being impacted by large scale natural or man-made disaster are natural applicants for grants funded by FEMA under this program. Examples of possible grants here would be a multi-jurisdictional submission which included within the overall mitigation proposal management costs for related support IT such as to better assess/evaluate existing structures as potentially hazardous or to develop and link on a regional basis electronic permit processing, mobile field inspections and electronic plan review, with electronic plans stored off site in a secure database so they can be downloaded and used by first responders when they roll up on a building or when they conduct safety assessments on an entire community that has been devastated by a major man-made or natural disaster.

With documented time savings over non-IT based codes administration and enforcement programs of up to 60%, a community with such a system can get back on its feet faster than those that do not deploy information technology.

#### **#5 – 2009 Homeland Security Grant Program for States**

This was the funding source in 2008 for the State of California's undertaking of the Alliance proposed (and subsequently administered) project to design and demonstrate the interoperability of mobile field inspection technology to conduct and centrally report damage assessment reports. Here statewide funding could be available for regulatory streamlining and application of IT to disaster preparedness, response and recovery.

## **#6 – 2009 Homeland Security Grants for Urban Areas**

This program provides funding for projects that are along similar lines as those funded under state grants covered under the previous grant opportunity. The key here is for jurisdictions to apply as a region and demonstrate benefits of streamlining and applying IT to their building regulatory programs that enable them to act cohesively together to address disaster issues.

## **Environmental Protection**

### **#2 – EPA State Innovation Grant Program**

State Environmental Protection Agencies have a number of regulatory areas where information technology can be effectively applied to streamline and make their enforcement programs more effective and efficient. Not only ePermitting but efficient electronic document handling and plan review services would significantly strengthen environmental compliance as they already are strengthening building and energy code enforcement across the nation.

With a potential submission deadline somewhere before the end of calendar year 2009 there may still be time for some states working with their local units of government to develop one or more grant proposals along the above lines.

## **Energy Conservation and Development of Alternative Energy Sources**

### **#2 – Department of Energy State Energy Grant Program**

This area is brand new and has tremendous promise over the next few years due to a provision within the American Recovering and Reinvestment Act as relates to Energy that mandates that the governors of all states receiving Federal grant funds must certify that within 8 years, 90% of all new construction and building renovations will be compliant with the 2009 model energy codes.

States and their local governments and DOE are beginning to look at and consider funding projects that will make it possible for states to achieve the above goal. One area that fits into that category is enhancing the ability of both state and local building departments to administer and enforce their energy codes as well as their building codes.

With considerable documentation of the benefits of IT to reducing the regulatory cost of construction while enhancing code compliance, state and local jurisdictions should look to applying it to energy code compliance as well.

Moreover, e-Permitting and ePlan review can document considerable reductions in carbon use stemming from reduced trips to the building department to reduced amounts of paper to comply with all building construction regulations.

## VI. DETAILS ON OTHER GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

Concerning the other seven Federal grant opportunities contained in this report, here are ways in which jurisdictions (states and or local communities) can seek funding to support their regulatory streamlining and application of IT to their building, land use, or environmental programs.

### **Homeland Security – Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery**

#### **#2 – Economic Development Administration’s Second Supplemental Appropriations Disaster Recovery Grants and #3 – Economic Development Administration’s Supplemental Disaster Relief Grants**

Applications for funding are still open for both of these two grants that relate to documentin and supporting more rapid recovery from 2008 natural disasters in the United States. Using the same approach noted under the other Homeland Security related grants (described in the Most Promising Grants section), communities in 2008 disaster regions could pool their efforts to write strong proposals for regulatory streamlining and application of IT to speed economic recovery and better prepare the community to withstand future disasters.

#### **#4 – FEMA Competitive Training Grants**

This opportunity is available for communities that have already applied IT to one or more of their codes administration and enforcement processes and would like to develop a region wide training program to assure effective uses of that technology to strengthen disaster recovery, and/or preparedness for future disasters.

### **Environmental Protection**

#### **#1 – 2010 National Environmental Information Grants**

This grant will require a state or group of communities within a state to look at how they assemble complex documents related to environmental permitting and their regulations to achieve compliance with environmental protection requirements. Diverse data bases and records requirements between jurisdictions could lend themselves to a group of jurisdictions coming together to apply for a grant to coordinate document management through a uniform system – one that could serve as a template for other states faced with similar data management complexities.

## Energy Conservation and Development of Alternative Energy Sources

### #1 – Recovery Act: Community Renewable Energy Resources Act

Jurisdictions faced with complex and conflicting regulations that govern the development, application and use of alternative energy sources can streamline those processes by working together to identify regulatory barriers to more rapid permitting of new technologies and their deployment within their community or region. Streamlined permitting in environmental, land use and building code regulatory areas and electronic permitting and plan and document reviews all could be submitted in a proposal to DOE and serve as a template for jurisdictions elsewhere in the nation.

## Economic Recovery and Community Development

### #1 – National Science Foundation Data and Visual Analytics Grants

This grant funding area requires considerable technical expertise in data management systems and data extraction from large complex databases. Areas like the future regional use of ePlan review to support making electronic “as-builts” to first responders as they roll up on a disaster site lend themselves to someone doing basic research in the complex databases that have to be searched to make such a system operational.

This could be an area for a joint proposal to NSF from several jurisdictions and a major academic institution with interest in and expertise in this subject area. Research in this same area could also advance the application of Building Information Modeling (BIM) to future electronic plan review and data retrieval systems.

### #2 – HUD Community Development Block Grants

As noted earlier, recent programs within HUD in the area of affordable housing and speeding economic recovery in the wake of a major disaster, lend themselves to several jurisdictions developing and submitting CDBG grant proposals to fund regulatory streamlining and the application of IT to their building and land use regulatory programs.

## VII. ACCESS TO A HYPOTHETICAL GENERIC GRANT APPLICATION

By linking to the following site: [www.avolvesoftware.com/grants.asp](http://www.avolvesoftware.com/grants.asp) a sample "Generic Grant Application" can be accessed which provides a starting point or guide to jurisdictions that either are unfamiliar with applying for Federal grants or which do not currently have adequate staff to easily write a grant proposal. To prepare a "Generic Grant Application," all of the relevant grant application forms were studied, as were several successfully awarded grants in the twelve different Federal Grant opportunities covered in this report. From that study it was noted that the most **common** grant application form used for those grants was, SF-424, the one used in many of the grant opportunities on the gov.grants website.

The "Generic Grant Application" is an SF-424 application specifically for the Economic Development Administration's Supplemental Appropriations for Disaster Recovery. As noted in the Executive Summary, the Generic Grant Application provided shows a fictitious and hypothetical grant application submitted by four existing Louisiana Parishes in response to 2008 Hurricane Gustav for streamlining and IT to assist in the implementation of the new statewide building code that was established to promote economic recovery and better disaster preparedness.

Beyond the basic SF-424 form, the Second Supplemental EDA application would require applicants to complete a CD511 Form, Assurances for Non-Construction Programs, an Economic Development Administration Application, Budget Information (in this case for Non-Construction programs), and a Disclosure of Lobbying Activities form SF-LLL, all of which have been included in the example application.

Any potential applicant seeking to apply for this or the majority of the other grant opportunities should be directed to the Grants.gov website in order to download the complete application material specific to their program.

## VIII. SOME SUGGESTED RESOURCES FOR ASSISTANCE IN PREPARING GRANTS

Each of the website links provided along with the 12 Federal grants included in this report provides access to more detailed background information on the specific grant opportunity and in most cases links to any guidance that agency provides to those applying for their grant. In addition the Grants.gov website has helpful information on applying for Federal grants listed on that site.

For local jurisdictions, state government agencies in your related field frequently can provide assistance in preparing and applying for Federal government grants as can staff at a number of the national associations that represent your level of government such as the National Association of Counties, U.S. Conference of Mayors and International City Managers Association. Grant application assistance also is available on a consulting basis from Robert Wible & Associates, [www.natlpartnerstreamline.org/rwa.php](http://www.natlpartnerstreamline.org/rwa.php)

## IX. CLOSING COMMENTS

The Alliance and its Streamlining Partners, including the National Association of Counties, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Governors Association, National Association of State Chief Information Officers, FIATECH and the International Code Council have made significant strides over the past five years in raising national awareness on the importance that effective and efficient administration and enforcement of state and local statutes for building codes, land use and environmental issues to public safety and the economic viability and disaster resiliency of our nation.

Building upon that work and an array of Streamlining and IT tools developed by the Alliance with assistance from firms and associations including Avolve, BOMA, AIA, AGC and NAHB provide background support materials that state and local governments can draw on to begin to access Federal grants that are now available to stimulate economic recovery, public safety and environmental protection.

This report helps connect state and local governments to potential Federal funding sources to support making those funds available to further enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of state and local government programs in these areas through regulatory streamlining and application of information technology.

Jurisdictions seeking further assistance should visit the following websites for additional support materials and guidance on successful grant applications.

[www.natlpartnerstreamline.org/rwa.php](http://www.natlpartnerstreamline.org/rwa.php)

[www.avolvesoftware.com](http://www.avolvesoftware.com)

[www.fiatech.org](http://www.fiatech.org)