To improve the effectiveness and performance of certain Federal financial assistance programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Ms. PEREZ introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on ______________________

A BILL

To improve the effectiveness and performance of certain Federal financial assistance programs, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Streamlining Federal Grants Act of 2023”.

SEC. 2. PURPOSE.

The purposes of this Act are to—
(1) improve the effectiveness and performance of Federal grant and cooperative agreement programs;

(2) simplify the application and reporting requirements of Federal grant and cooperative agreement programs;

(3) improve the delivery of services to the public, particularly services to communities and organizations that historically have not received Federal grants or cooperative agreements; and

(4) facilitate greater coordination among agencies that award Federal grants and non-Federal entities responsible for delivering services to the public.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) AGENCY.—The term “agency” has the meaning given the term in section 551 of title 5, United States Code.

(2) AGENCY CO-CHAIR.—The term “agency co-chair” means the agency designated by the Director or the Council under section 5(e)(1).

(3) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “appropriate congressional committees” means—
(A) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate; and

(B) the Committee on Oversight and Accountability of the House of Representatives.

(4) CONSULTATION WITH NON-FEDERAL ENTITIES.—The term “consultation with non-Federal entities” means regular and ongoing engagement with—

(A) recipients and potential recipients of grants or cooperative agreements and entities that represent those recipients and potential recipients; and

(B) particular attention to the recipients and potential recipients described in subparagraph (A) that have not historically received grants or cooperative agreements.

(5) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT.—The term “cooperative agreement” has the meaning given the term in section 6302 of title 31, United States Code.

(6) COUNCIL.—The term “Council” means the Grants Council established under section 5(a).

(7) DIRECTOR.—The term “Director” means the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.
(8) **Federal Financial Assistance.**—The term “Federal financial assistance” has the meaning given the term in section 7501 of title 31, United States Code.

(9) **Grant.**—The term “grant” has the meaning given the term “grant agreement” in section 6302 of title 31, United States Code.

(10) **Indian Tribe.**—The term “Indian Tribe” has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(11) **Institution of Higher Education.**—The term “institution of higher education” has the meaning given the term in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

(12) **Local Government.**—The term “local government” means any unit of government within a State, including—

(A) a county;
(B) a borough;
(C) a municipality;
(D) a city;
(E) a town;
(F) a township;
(G) a parish;
(H) a local public authority, including any public housing agency (as defined in section 3(b) of the United States Housing Act of 1937 (42 U.S.C. 1437(b));

(I) a special district;

(J) a school district;

(K) an intrastate district;

(L) a council of governments, whether or not incorporated as a nonprofit corporation under State law; and

(M) any other agency or instrumentality of a multi-State, regional, or intra-State or local government.

(13) NON-FEDERAL ENTITY.—The term “non-Federal entity” means a State, local government, Indian Tribe, institution of higher education, or nonprofit organization.

(14) NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION.—The term “nonprofit organization”—

(A) means any corporation, trust, association, cooperative, or other organization that—

(i) is operated primarily for scientific, educational, service, charitable, or similar purposes in the public interest;
(ii) is not organized primarily for profit;

(iii) uses net proceeds to maintain, improve, or expand the operations of the organization; and

(iv) is not an institution of higher education; and

(B) includes faith-based and community-based organizations.

(15) SENIOR AGENCY OFFICIAL FOR GRANTS.—The term “senior agency official for grants” means an agency official designated under section 4(a).

(16) STATE.—The term “State” means any State of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, any instrumentality thereof, and any multi-State, regional, or interstate entity that has governmental functions.

SEC. 4. SENIOR AGENCY OFFICIALS FOR GRANTS.

(a) SENIOR AGENCY OFFICIAL FOR GRANTS.—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the head of each agency shall—
(1) designate a senior official of the agency to
be responsible for—

(A) agency-wide grant and cooperative
agreement policy, management, strategic plan-
ning, and implementation; and

(B) the responsibilities of the agency under
this Act; and

(2) notify the Director of the designation under
paragraph (1).

(b) LIST.—The Director shall—

(1) maintain a list of senior agency officials for
grants; and

(2) not later than 90 days after the date of en-
actment of this Act, make the list maintained under
paragraph (1) available to the public on the website
of the Office of Management and Budget.

SEC. 5. GRANTS COUNCIL.

(a) In General.—Not later than 80 days after the
date of enactment of this Act, the Director shall establish
a council to be known as the Grants Council.

(b) Membership.—The Council shall be composed
of—

(1) the Controller of the Office of Federal Fi-
nancial Management of the Office of Management
and Budget, who shall act as the Chair of the Council;

(2) with respect to each agency that distributes grants or enters into cooperative agreements, the senior agency official for grants of the agency; and

(3) other relevant agency officials, as determined necessary by the Chair.

(c) Administrative Support.—The Administrator of General Services shall provide administrative support for the Council.

(d) Solicitation of Feedback.—The Director shall—

(1) consistently and regularly solicit input and collect feedback and user experience information with respect to the application, administration, and reporting of grants and cooperative agreements, including from non-Federal entities; and

(2) incorporate the information collected under paragraph (1) into the work of the Council.

(e) Implementation Assistance.—

(1) Agency Co-Chair.—

(A) In General.—The Director shall designate an agency with representation on the Council to serve as the agency co-chair to assist
the Director in carrying out the responsibilities under this section.

(B) TERM.—The term of service of the agency co-chair shall be 2 years.

(C) RENEWAL.—At the discretion of the Council, an agency may serve as the agency co-chair for not more than 2 consecutive terms.

(D) SUCCESSOR.—Upon the expiration of a term of service of an agency co-chair, the members of the Council shall designate a successor agency co-chair.

(2) INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUPS.—The Director may use interagency working groups to assist in carrying out the responsibilities under this section.

(f) INTERAGENCY DUTIES.—The Director, in consultation with the Council, shall direct, coordinate, and assist agencies in—

(1) designing and implementing common data standards under chapter 64 of title 31, United States Code;

(2) creating guidelines for simplified notice of funding opportunities that improve the user experience for grants and cooperative agreements;
(3) improving interagency and intergovernmental coordination of information collection and data sharing relating to grant and cooperative agreement programs, including for the purpose of performance management and program evaluation;

(4) improving the timeliness, completeness, and quality of information received by agencies from recipients of grants and cooperative agreements;

(5) improving the performance of grants and cooperative agreements;

(6) ensuring the consistent application and interpretation of Governmentwide Federal financial assistance policy, oversight, and management;

(7) supporting the development of the Federal financial assistance workforce;

(8) establishing policies and guidelines to prohibit conflicts of interest by officials involved in determining grant awards and grant recipients; and

(9) identifying and improving other procedures and policies relating to the application, administration, and reporting of grants and cooperative agreements, as identified by the Council.

(g) Report on Improvements.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and every 2 years thereafter until the date that is 15 years after
the date of enactment of this Act, the Director, in consultation with the Council, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report relating to the implementation of this Act.

(h) REPORT ON RECOMMENDED CHANGES IN LAW AND REGULATIONS.—Not later than 4 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director, in consultation with the Council, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report containing recommendations for changes in law and regulations to improve the effectiveness, performance, and coordination of grant and cooperative agreement programs.

SEC. 6. AGENCY GRANT IMPROVEMENT PLANS.

(a) AGENCY GUIDANCE.—Not later than 270 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director, in consultation with the Council, shall issue guidance for the development of agency plans to—

(1) streamline and simplify the application, administrative, and reporting procedures for each grant and cooperative agreement program administered by the agency;

(2) simplify and improve user experience with respect to notices of funding opportunity, including by implementing—

(A) the use of plain language;
(B) the listing of the availability of, and contact information for, training and assistance relating to applying for, administering, and reporting on grants and cooperative agreements; and

(C) the inclusion of a summary of the funding opportunity of not more than 500 words;

(3) demonstrate active participation by the agency in the Council;

(4) demonstrate appropriate coordination with the Grants Quality Service Management Office, or any successor organization, with respect to the adoption by the agency, or plans for adoption by the agency, of grant management solutions or services that meet usability and modernization standards established by the Director;

(5) ensure potential applicants for grant and cooperative agreement programs have opportunities to receive training and assistance;

(6) improve the abilities of recipients of grants and cooperative agreements to provide timely, complete, and high-quality information in response to Federal reporting requirements;
(7) ensure that individuals with limited English proficiency can meaningfully access information relating to grants and cooperative agreements consistent with, and without unduly burdening, the mission of the agency;

(8) improve the abilities of recipients of grants and cooperative agreements to provide meaningful access to applicants and beneficiaries of the grants and cooperative agreements who are individuals with limited English proficiency; and

(9) establish specific annual goals and objectives to further the purposes of this Act and measure annual performance in achieving those goals and objectives.

(b) Review of Plans and Reports.—Upon request by the Director, the head of each agency shall submit to the Director information and reporting relating to the implementation of this Act by the agency.

(c) Exemptions.—

(1) In general.—The Director may exempt an agency, a component of an agency, or a particular grant or cooperative agreement program of an agency from the requirements of this Act if the Director determines that the agency does not administer a
significant number of grant and cooperative agreement programs.

(2) LIST OF EXEMPTED AGENCIES.—The Director shall—

(A) maintain a list of agencies, components of agencies, and grant and cooperative agreement programs exempted under paragraph (1); and

(B) make the list maintained under subparagraph (A) available to the public on the website of the Office of Management and Budget.

(d) AGENCY PLANS.—Subject to subsection (e), not later than the earlier of 1 year after the date on which the Director issues guidance under subsection (a) and 635 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the head of each agency shall develop, implement, and submit to the Director and the appropriate congressional committees a plan in response to the guidance.

(e) EXTENSION.—If the head of an agency is unable to comply with the deadline established under subsection (d) to develop and implement a plan, the Director may extend the period during which the agency may develop and implement the plan by not more than 1 year.
(f) Comment and Consultation on Agency Plans.—

(1) Comment.—

(A) In General.—The head of each agency shall publish the plan developed in accordance with the guidance issued under subsection (a) in the Federal Register.

(B) Public Comment.—With respect to a plan published in the Federal Register by the head of an agency in accordance with subparagraph (A)—

(i) the head of the agency shall review public comments on the plan submitted through the Federal Register and by other means; and

(ii) to the maximum extent practicable, the head of the agency shall hold a public forum on the plan.

(2) Consultation.—The senior agency official for grants of each agency shall participate in consultation with non-Federal entities during the development and implementation of the plan developed in accordance with the guidance issued under subsection (a).

(g) Annual Report.—
(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the submission of the plan of an agency under subsection (d), and annually thereafter, the senior agency official for grants of the agency or the head of the agency, as applicable, shall submit to the Director and the appropriate congressional committees a report on—

(A) the implementation of the plan; and

(B) the performance of the agency in meeting the goals and objectives described in subsection (a)(9).

(2) INCLUSION IN OTHER REPORTS.—Effective on the date on which the head of an agency submits a plan under subsection (d), the head of the agency shall update and include the goals and objectives described in subsection (a)(9) in each performance plan of the agency required under section 1115 of title 31, United States Code.

SEC. 7. GRANTS.GOV.

(a) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that—
(1) contains findings from a study on the accessibility and user experience of Grants.gov, or any successor website; and

(2) provides recommendations based on the findings described in paragraph (1) to improve the access to the function of Grants.gov, or any successor website.

(b) IMPROVEMENTS.—Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Director, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, shall implement the recommendations described in subsection (a)(2).

SEC. 8. ANALYSIS OF ACCESS TO FEDERAL GRANTS.

Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees a report that—

(1) identifies challenges experienced by non-Federal entities, including by faith-based and community-based organizations, rural communities, and small communities, in applying for, accessing, administering, and reporting on grants and cooperative agreements;
(2) identifies the reasons that the entities described in paragraph (1) elect not to participate in grants and cooperative agreements;

(3) includes options to improve access to grants and cooperative agreements for the entities described in paragraph (1);

(4) analyzes the extent to which agencies that award grants collect information on the number and characteristics, including the geographic distribution, of applicants for competitive grants and cooperative agreements; and

(5) if the information described in paragraph (4) is available, analyzes the information.

SEC. 9. EVALUATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States, in consultation with non-Federal entities, shall submit to the appropriate congressional committees an evaluation of the effectiveness of this Act.

(b) CONTENTS.—The evaluation under subsection (a) shall—

(1) assess the implementation of this Act and the extent to which the implementation meets the purposes of this Act;
(2) make specific recommendations to further the implementation of this Act;

(3) evaluate the actual performance of each agency in achieving the goals and objectives stated in the plan of the agency developed in accordance with the guidance issued under section 6(a); and

(4) assess the level of coordination among the Director and non-Federal entities in implementing this Act.