



## Case Study



### At a Glance:

The Department of Labor is the US Government organization responsible for employee welfare and safety.

### Industry

- Government
- Grants
- Labor Statistics

### Challenges

- Long paper trails
- Lack of visibility and accountability

### Key Benefits:

- Streamline routing, input, and approvals spanning all phases of the grant management life-cycle
- Go green on the President's Management Agenda
- Increase business agility from processing more applications, thus allocating all funds

# U.S. Department of Labor: Streamlining and Automating the Grants Life-Cycle

## The Organization: U.S. Department of Labor

The Department of Labor (DOL) oversees employee relations, welfare, safety and benefits on the behalf of the United States government. Within DOL, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) administers federal government job training and worker dislocation programs, federal grants to states for public employment service programs and unemployment insurance benefits. ETA's Office of Performance and Technology (PROTECH) provides strategic planning and technology development and support to achieve agency objectives. One of PROTECH's main deliverables is the e-Grants project mandated by the President's Management Agenda (PMA). ETA is responsible for processing about 90% of all grants administered by DOL.

## The Challenge: Removing Paper and Extending Legacy Systems

In 2000 ETA started developing grant modules to automate many of the tasks required to initiate, review, execute and close grants. David Wilson, Director of Application Services, explains that ETA took a look at general grant life cycles, broke them down into piece parts and then began automating each piece. It even integrated the pieces with Grants.com to issue grant announcements and receive proposals. But the process itself was not tied together into one workflow.

ETA contracted Manila Consulting Group to spearhead the e-Grants project. Darryl McDaniel, Project Manager with Manila, adds that ETA had developed many homegrown systems for tracking the who, what, where and how much about grants. Although it had automated many aspects of the grant process, there were still many manual, paper-driven steps. There was no one holistic approach or one all encompassing fabric for grants management.

In further analysis, DOL found that the department used upwards of 35 different processes. In order to meet the PMA as well as Office of Management and Budget directives on grant making, DOL realized that it had to streamline grant processes. A project was created to tackle the issue. ETA was assigned because it had the most experience and greatest purview over grants within the department.

## The Solution: Adding Process Structure and Workflow with BizFlow®

Manila Consulting worked with ETA to select a BPM platform. Because neither DOL nor ETA had direct experience with BPM tools, the team was very careful with its vendor selection processes. They first studied Gartner reports. Then they asked five vendors to demonstrate their products. Vendors included Oracle, MetaStorm, Fuego, Staffware, and HandySoft. DOL ultimately decided on BizFlow® by HandySoft. The evaluation team determined that BizFlow was truly best of breed and met all of the grant automation requirements. HandySoft also had the most Government customers. In fact, the team spoke with and visited many of them, and conducted on-site visits with HandySoft management. From April 2004 to June 2006, ETA and the Manila team created a business plan, designed the technology architecture, selected a BPM vendor, developed the application and conducted QA.

## Value:

The value of BizFlow is threefold.

1. BizFlow helps DOL to meet the President's Management Agenda. BizFlow's workflow functionality and built-in alerts will both streamline and automate many steps.
2. With more streamlined operations, DOL can meet and surpass its goal of reducing grant turn-around time by 20%.
3. DOL will have greater business agility. Grants should be selected and awarded in the same year for budgeting purposes. A backlog can undermine the quality of due diligence or the ability to allocate all funds. With BizFlow in place, DOL will be able to process more applications, and as a result allocate all funds.

## About HandySoft Global:

Since 1991 HandySoft Global has provided BizFlow® Business Process Management software and solutions to hundreds of organizations worldwide. Proven to reduce costs while improving quality and productivity, BizFlow® is an award-winning BPM suite of tools used to model, analyze, automate, monitor and optimize business processes.

### HandySoft Global Corporation

1952 Gallows Road, Suite 200  
Vienna, VA 22182 USA |  
Telephone: 1.800.753.9343 or  
703.442.5600

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

## Value: Greater Process Visibility and Control

BizFlow will be used to streamline all types of grants, including discretionary, sole source, non-competitive, and earmarked. There are four steps in the grant life-cycle: pre-award, award, post-award, and close-out.

**Pre Award Phase**—During the pre-award phase, those seeking grants turn to Grants.gov to find DOL grant solicitations. Submitting an application via Grants.gov will kick-off a BizFlow process. BizFlow will notify via email first line reviewers – administrative assistants and specialists. With one click, they will access their BizFlow work list where they can open the application to proof and validate documentation. They will then pass it on to the Grant Officer. Inside BizFlow the Grant Office has access to all application data. Offline the Grant Officer works with a committee to review applications. Depending on agency preference, committee members will use a BizFlow form to score applications. The Grant Officer then uses BizFlow to continue the selection and approval process by submitting recommendations to executive management for further review and final selection. With their feedback, Grant Officers then notify applicants. In some cases, the process model will require Grant Offices to notify Congress first so that congressmen have a chance to offer their congratulations prior to the award.

**Award Phase**—During the award phase, Agencies meet with those selected to receive grants to negotiate terms and conditions. With a contract in place, the grant is awarded. In BizFlow, Grant Officers notify DOLLARS, the DOL accounting system, to set-up an account, which in turn inform the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to cut a check. HHS manages all grant-driven financial transactions for the US Government. Grant Officers then work with their peers to assign field personnel to manage grants moving forward.

**Post Award Phase**—During the post-award phase, field representatives visit with awardees to ensure grant compliance. Using BizFlow, field agents submit their analysis and review.

**Close-Out Phase**—When the grant term ends, BizFlow will be used to complete the forms requisite for closing-out the grant. McDaniel explains that the value of BizFlow is threefold. BizFlow helps DOL to meet the President's Management Agenda. Department of Labor has been green on the PMA for three years running. BizFlow's workflow functionality and built-in alerts will both streamline and automate many steps. As a result, BizFlow will help DOL meet and surpass its goal of reducing grant turn-around time by 20%. Finally, DOL will have greater business agility. Because grant making is a highly selective process, DOL has to approach it carefully and methodologically. At the end of the year, DOL sometimes find itself pushed up against a budget wall. Grants should be selected and awarded in the same year for budgeting purposes. A backlog can undermine the quality of due diligence or the ability to allocate all funds. With BizFlow in place, DOL will be able to process more applications, and as a result allocate all funds.

## Next Steps:

Since June 2006 ETA has tested the e-Grants solution for 508 compliance and started rolling it out to the nine agencies within DOL. ETA was selected to be first and will go live on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. e-Grants will be rolled out as a hosted solution. ETA will host it as well as implement it across all agencies. Each agency will have its own project plan because of differing agency mandates, processes and objectives. Implementations will take on average 90 days. With BizFlow, now DOL truly has a cradle-to-grave e-Grants system. More than 1,000 users spread across the national office, six regional offices and grant recipients will use the system to initiate, monitor and close out grants.