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Grants Profession Expands with COVID-19 Funding *Professional Community Fills Gaps in Training, Support*

APRIL 15, 2022 – STERLING, VA - As President Biden and Congress hammer out the next round of COVID-related funding, grants managers across the country aren't quite ready to look ahead. They are still in the final months of putting to bed over \$150 billion in Coronavirus Relief Fund activities from the CARES Act, and the process of auditing that money is still ongoing. These funds plus those provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 bring forth challenges and opportunities to state, local, and tribal organizations as well as not-for-profit organizations and institutions of higher education.

"Grants managers are busier and more challenged now than, perhaps, we have ever been. Most have never managed such large amounts of funding, and it has been a marathon amount of work to track these funds and make sure every dime is spent appropriately. As a profession, we take our work seriously and want to make sure that each dollar is used appropriately and provides the public benefit all Americans expect and deserve. After all, it's the American people's money," said Eric Russell, CGMS, President of the National Grants Management Association (NGMA).

And the last two years haven't been easy. The money flowed so quickly that most recipients didn't have adequate staffing, and there was a scramble to hire people to manage the funds.

"I was working in grants management during the Great Recession in 2008 and 2009. There were a lot of lessons learned through that experience, and it's been important for those of us who have been through a large grants process to guide the newer professionals. It can be very stressful and overwhelming. You feel an enormous amount of responsibility," said NGMA Board member Maria Howeth, CGMS.

Indeed, no one goes to college to become a grants manager. It's a career that you discover along the way, and those who love policy, rules, social and public service, accounting and project management seem to prosper. So, the last two years have witnessed an explosion in the number of new grants managers, and, with that, comes the need for education, sharing of best practices and mentorship by current professionals.

NGMA provides such an opportunity via the Annual Grants Training event (AGT). For the first time since 2019, grants managers will finally be together in-person at AGT (April 19-21; Arlington, Va.). NGMA knows that this meeting is a critical time to talk about the exciting growth in their profession as well as the strains of the last two years. While the organization has put on dozens of virtual trainings during that time, the face-to-face connection and time to reflect is what is needed at the end of this long journey.

"I'm most looking forward to the smiles and hugs! These are my professional friends, my grant-nerd peeps," said Howeth. "They understand what we have all been through, we speak the same language and we have shared experiences. It bonds us all together as we help make stronger communities."



The National Grants Management Association (NGMA) provides tools and resources for grants professionals to support and maintain high levels of grants management competency and to establish standards of excellence for grants managers.

For more information, visit <https://www.ngma.org/>.