

Summary

The federal reporting requirements for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act [Recovery Act (2009)] relied heavily on the ability of recipients, primarily state governments, to capture, manage, and deliver the required data. Some New York State (NYS) agencies were able to build on previous reporting experiences, while other agencies were just getting started and were relatively new to federal reporting requirements.

With the support of the NYS Recovery Cabinet, CTG held a series of forums between 2009 and 2010 to facilitate knowledge sharing. The forums were designed to support the exchange of experiences among practitioners with the goal of leveraging existing best and current practices in the use of technology for reporting.

The Obama administration required a strict accounting of all funds spent and the publication of those funds not only to the federal government but also to the public. While the collection of information and reporting mandated by the Recovery Act was not unprecedented, what was new was the:

1. creation of a federal-level, central data repository (Recovery.gov),
2. requirement by the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) standards and processes for both data capture and dissemination,
3. breadth of information collection from multiple levels of government and across multiple programmatic areas, and
4. speed at which information on financials and performance metrics were collected and made available to the public.

Publications & Results

Journal Articles and Conference Papers (1)

Information and Transparency: Learning from Recovery Act Reporting Experiences.

Tue, 18 May 2010

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (2009) promised strict accounting of all funds spent and the publication of that information to the public in relative real-time. The federal requirements for reporting Recovery Act funds relied heavily on the ability of recipients, primarily state governments, to capture, manage, and deliver the data required. This paper presents the experience of one state agency, in particular how they leveraged the reporting mandate to improve real-time informational capability for transparency and openness. The case, together with insights from a Recovery Act Knowledge Network, provides five recommendations to guide decision makers who seek to increase the capability of government to use information to further transparency agendas.

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Press Releases & News Stories

News Stories

Transformation of Real-time Reporting: The Recovery Act

PA Times

December 23, 2010

Better reporting technology an unexpected byproduct of stimulus

NextGov (National Journal Group, Inc.)

November 23, 2009

Partners

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Original Scope of Work

CTG held three knowledge sharing forums between November 2009 and April 2010. The first forum was in September 2009 and highlighted the NYS Department of Transportation's (NYSDOT) response to the Recovery Act reporting requirements. A second forum, hosted in November 2009, gave practitioners the opportunity to discuss lessons learned from the October 10th reporting deadline and the challenges of working with sub-recipients. The last forum, held in April 2010, brought to light the changes, challenges, and opportunities for transparency as revealed through the year long Recovery Act reporting experience.

September 2009 Forum # 1 – An Agency Response: DOT Case

Nancy Mulholland, CIO for the NYSDOT, and Tom Johnston, Manager of the Business Solutions Bureau and IT Lead for the Recovery Act project team for NYSDOT, shared how their agency managed Recovery Act reporting. They were joined by representatives from Oracle, who oversaw the design and implementation of business intelligence tools (a proof-of-concept) with NYSDOT.

The presentation provided an overview of NYS DOT's approach to Recovery Act reporting including:

- A demonstration of NYSDOT's solution, capabilities, and constraints;
- Challenges and successes of working with the Federal Highway Administration and the Office of Management and Budget;
- Additional reporting or informational requests required by other stakeholders, including the Governor's Office, congressional committees, and elected officials;
- Discussion of unmet needs and potential solutions.

November 2009 Forum # 2 – October 10th reporting and sub-recipient experiences

Two panels of representatives from New York state agencies presented their experiences, pain points, successes, lessons learned, and plans for moving forward in managing IT as a resource in support of Recovery

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and Technology: A Best Practices Knowledge Sharing Network

Act reporting requirements. Each panel presentation was followed by a discussion period.

The first panel addressed their lessons learned while meeting the October 10th reporting requirement.

- Robert Martin – Division of Military and Navel Affairs
- Phillip Bell – Department of Transportation
- Richard Umholtz and Scott Edwards – Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance

The second panel addressed the issues and challenges related to sub-recipient reporting.

- William Herman – Department of Environmental Conservation
- Mike Sawicz – Department of Health
- Stephen McNally and Deborah Cunningham – Department of Education

April 2010 Forum # 3 – Leveraging technology to increase transparency

Theresa Pardo gave a keynote presentation on the new expectations for transparency by the Obama administration. She discussed the challenges public managers face trying to make real-time, comprehensive, information about government activities more available. One driving question was, what does this actually mean for transparency from a data perspective?

A panel discussion with members from different state agencies, fulfilling different roles in the Recovery Act reporting process, shared their insights into how these new demands for transparency impact current practices. The panel specifically focused on the effect of Recovery Act reporting on agencies and how it is defined and how it has changed the way agencies think about data and information.

Panelists

- Charles (Chuck) Szuberla – Director of School Operations & Management Services, NYSED
- Mark Mitchell – Director of Internal Audit, NYS Energy Research and Development Authority
- Tom Johnston – Director of Business Solutions Bureau, NYS Department of Transportation
- Jon Brown – Director of Internal Audit, Division of Housing and Community Renewal

The morning concluded with a group discussion of the lessons learned over the last year through these forums.

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