Robert D. Sharp Chief, Rural & Intercity Division Pennsylvania Department of Transportation October 26, 2010

• The Problem:

- Pennsylvania Grantees were required to submit multiple grant applications, many containing the same information.
- Most of the applications were due around the same time.
- The applications were submitted in a hard copy or printed out after they were received, creating tons of paper.

• The solution:

- Create an electronic grants management system that included the application, grant and invoicing.
- This system would be as paperless as possible, would standardize programs, and centralize information.
 - PennDOT worked with a software developer to customize an off the shelf software program to meet the Department's needs. Several Department organizations participated—transforming grant program management from paper to electronic.

- The Bureau of Public Transit's "BIG" project
 - The Bureau took 14 grant programs, that had 14 applications and 14 grant agreements and rolled them into six electronic applications/grant agreements.
 - Generally each transportation system submits two applications annually, one for operating and another for capital
 - Previously some systems submitted as many as (9) applications annually.
 - The Bureau receives "NO" paper from grant applicants. Applications, invoices and supporting documents are submitted electronically.
 - The application is linked to the state SAP accounting system that allows funds requested and approved from the application to be encumbered in the grant, again paperless.

Benefits:

- Grantees fill out a registration once, they may update it at any time.
- Grantees submit one application for all Operating programs and another for all Capital programs.
- Intercity Bus and Rail have separate Operating applications but use the same Capital application.
- Multiple Bureau staff can review the same application simultaneously.
- An application that needs a revision or correction can be returned to the grantee with a click of the mouse.
- ALL data/information resides in dotGrants

Benefits:

- Dot-Grants saves time and money for both the grantees and the Department.
- Reports that in the past could take days to prepare now take minutes.
- Data is entered ONCE—data no longer differs between applications
- Grantees and the Department get to look at the Total System in one application.
- Information is accessible to everyone—we don't depend on the availability of one person who knows the location of paper files.
- We don't kill any trees!!!!

Lessons Learned:

- Do your homework:
 - What information/data do you need to collect.
 - What do you want forms to look like.
 - What information should the tool calculate.
 - Involve other partners up front: Grantees/Comptrollers/Legal.
- What you put in determines what reports you can generate.
- Don't try to make an application a reporting form—only collect information needed to determine/approve funding.
- It's an ongoing process.













