E-Government for Government

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Distribution: All Local Unit Chief Administrative Officers, Chief Finance Officers, School Business Administrators, County School Business Administrators, and Purchasing Agents

Welcome to GovConnect!

It is with great and long awaited pleasure that the Division is announcing the "roll out" of GovConnect. It is the real start of the way State and local governments will transact business with each other in the future. This enrollment, information, and grant package begins fulfilling the promises we made almost 7 years ago; to use technology to improve how the State and local governments communicate and work with each other.

While we have tested the system, you are the first group of local government officials to enroll in our special "roles" that we designed to provide a first level of security to conducting government-to-government transactions through the Internet. We have a lot to learn in this area, and we will work through it together.

The first thing for you to do is to make sure you receive the correct package. This Notice is personalized for you, and includes the "*authentication*" code you will need to enroll in the system. **DO NOT LOSE THIS NOTICE – YOU NEED THE CODE!** If you are not the person at the municipality and position shown below, please call the Division at our E-Gov line at 609.943.4724.

> NAME:
> POSITION:
> LOCAL UNIT:
> Authentication Code:

We are asking you to take the time to enroll between now and the end of the year. The sooner you enroll, the sooner you will be able to take advantage of the available information on the system. For those not familiar with the technology, GovConnect support staff will be attending the upcoming Government Finance Officers Association of New Jersey Fall Conference and the Municipal Clerk's Association Fall Conference. We will have computers and phone lines there to assist you in enrolling and to show you how to use the system, so feel free to bring your information there and we will help you get started. We will also be doing the same in November at the N.J. State League of Municipalities Conference. Our goal is to have everyone enrolled by the end of the year.

The back of this EGG has some important information about the GovConnect grant program, services that will be available on the system, and the requirement to participate in the

program, so please read it carefully. We are looking forward to working with you as GovConnect moves forward.

GovConnect Frequently Asked Questions

Do I have to participate?
Yes. Local officials (municipal clerks, municipal and county finance officers, and clerks to the board of chose freeholders) are required to participate in the program. The Local Finance Board will be adopting rules to formalize the requirement. Once these groups are fully registered and active, State agencies will be opening the system to other groups of officials.

Why?
Because State agencies will start changing their ways of delivering services and information and use GovConnect technology. It 's like 100 years ago when telephones started to become available.

Well, isn't this a State mandate?
Yes it is. And in accordance with the State Mandate/State Pay Law, for those local officials that do not have a computer or Internet access on which they can conduct the local unit's business, we will provide a grant that to fund the necessary equipment and service. The grant covers basic Internet service for three years – the time we expect it will take for the savings to accrue that will offset existing costs. That offset eliminates the mandate requirement.

What do I need to participate in the GovConnect Program?
You need a desktop or laptop computer, running Windows 98 (or a later version of Windows), with Internet Explorer 4.0 or Netscape Navigator 4.7 browsers (later versions are recommended); access to the Internet; and an authentication code to register into your "role."

I need a grant, can I spend more on a computer and services than the grant allows?
Yes. The grant is for a minimum amount to buy a basic PC, color inkjet printer, training, and Internet service for 20 hours a month. We encourage that local units add to the budget so a more powerful computer, software, and faster Internet access can be obtained.

What if I have a computer, can I still get a grant?
If it's not Internet capable yes; if it is, no (but if you don't have Internet service, we'll give you a grant for that). DLGS reserves the right to verify all grant applications to make sure the program's rules are followed.

I'm a part-time official in another municipality, but have Internet access on a computer at my other job or at home. Can the other municipality still get a grant?
The program requires that the "local official has access to a computer on which he can conduct business for the local unit." If that test is not met, the second municipality can get a grant.

What if my governing body still doesn't want to do it?
Let us know – we'll talk to them and work out the issues on a case-by-case basis.

What will be available on GovConnect?
At first, general information and Internet links to State agencies. Once we are up and running, things like Local Finance Notices will stop being delivered to you by mail, and will posted on GovConnect.   You will also be able to communicate with any state official that has e-mail by using your own e-mail account. E-mail is often preferred for informal questions and answers. See the general information in this package for details about GovConnect services.

What about other services?

Once other State agencies see that they can reach you over the system, they will start moving their communication and services to it as well. That may take some time, but once it starts, you will see more and more of it.

How often do I need to check the system?

You should check your e-mail and GovConnect news at least once every day or two. Starting in January, DLGS will start communicating with this group of local officials exclusively over the network. That includes Finance Notices, aid certifications, EGG's, etc. We will also be putting more and more of our information on the DLGS web site, which can also be reached through GovConnect.