

Exchange Network Forum

Thursday, April 10, 2025
1:00 – 2:00 PM ET

Welcome

Alex O’Neill, EPA Office of Information Management (OIM), Office of Mission Support (OMS)

- Alex O’Neill welcomed participants to the meeting and noted that the format is designed to be an open meeting to encourage interaction between participants.
- The meeting materials, including the summaries from the Forum meetings are available on the [Exchange Network website](#).
- Alex reviewed the agenda:
 - Welcome from the Office of Information Management
 - Update on Exchange Network Grants
 - Virtual Exchange Network Services (VES) and What’s Next
 - Open Forum

Message from the Office of Information Management

Jennie Campbell, EPA Office of Information Management (OIM), Office of Mission Support (OMS)

- Jennie Campbell welcomed participants to the Forum and affirmed OIM’s commitment to its state and Tribal partners through the Exchange Network.
- The Exchange Network Forums will be bimonthly (every other month) going forward to accommodate Agency transitions.

Update on Exchange Network Grants

Beth Jackson; EPA Office of Information Management (OIM), Office of Mission Support (OMS)

- FY24 Applications Update
 - As of 4/9/25, 9 HQ assistance agreements from the FY24 grant cycle have not yet been awarded. Impacted (future) grantees were all informed last week that award processing is currently on hold, as EPA needs to update both its guidance and its grant processing system to reflect the recent changes.

- In the meantime, EN grant staff will be working directly with these (future) grantees to ensure that applications are fully updated and final, including alignment with the new Agency guidance, so that we can push these forward for award as soon as the processing hold is lifted. EPA will continue to keep its pending grantees informed of any new information/requirements.
- FY25 Grant Competition Update
 - As announced on March 19th, the application due date for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Exchange Network (EN) Grant Program was extended until at least Wednesday, April 30th, 2025, to allow for revisions in accordance with updated Agency priorities.
 - An updated Solicitation Notice has been drafted but is not yet published; it currently is undergoing reviews by upper OMS leadership. As posted on the EN website, current updates relate to Section 3B, Program Goals and Objectives, which further impacts evaluation criterion 1A (see SN page 17) and associated parts (sections one and two) of the project narrative.
 - Depending on how long it takes for the new SN to become available, the application due date may be further extended (past the current 4/30 date). Please note that applicants who have already submitted their FY25 applications can resubmit to address this new guidance– EPA will review the most recent submitted application. Interested parties are encouraged to keep a close eye on the EN website at: [Exchange Network Grant Program | US EPA](#).

Virtual Exchange Network Services (VES) and What’s Next?

Susan Lei, Joe Carioti; EPA Office of Information Management (OIM), Office of Mission Support (OMS)

- The Virtual Exchange Network Services (VES) are centralized solution that replaces the need for Exchange Network (EN) partners to install and administer their own node. VES was released in 2015.
- The purpose of VES was to standardize and streamline sharing of regulatory data between EPA and partners. It complies with EN protocols and supports a subset of current EN dataflows.
- There are 15 active VES partners, with 32 Prod nodes and 79 Test nodes
- ICIS-Air and ICIS-NPDES have the highest number of production transactions. EPA partners that use VES services the most are South Dakota and Maine.
- VES has had two recent upgrades. The first batch occurred in October 2024, with Middleware Refactoring, removal of TLS 1.0 and 1.1 support, and separation of test and production environments. The second batch occurred in March 2025, with updates to VES Connector to better support partners with specialized database environments, such as Oracle RAC, and streamline the flow of information between VES and the partner-hosted remote databases.
- Challenges of using VES:
 - VES connector installation for remote-hosted partners

- Supporting large data sets
- Historical VES services were configured incorrectly and caused data source connectivity issues
- XML Schema versions published to the Exchange Network (EN) that VES has not been updated to support.
- Unsigned executable files
- Please reach out to CDX team for other alternatives/options if VES doesn't meet your business needs
- EPA will continue to: support VES administrative accounts; Investigate VES logs and provide more details on errors reported by users; Troubleshoot service configuration; Provide support files and update when necessary; Ensure our VES components are online and available; Provisioning new VES partners and dataflows; Verifying the reason for failure or pending transactions on the backend; Maximum 5 hours to troubleshooting for the remote-hosted partners; The maximum data transition we have seen is up to 175MB.
- EPA will NOT: Develop new dataflow in VES; Provide VES connector installation support for remote-hosted partners beyond our provided instructions
- **New email address: nodehelpdesk@epa.gov**