DATA Act Schema Model

*Draft Version 0.1*

# Background

The DATA Act directs OMB and Treasury to establish government-wide data standards for federal funds and entities receiving such funds. While standard data definitions will help to ensure that information will be consistent and comparable, a standard data exchange, as part of our implementation will make financial management data accessible and reusable and provide the necessary linkages between financial events. By making federal spending data accessible, searchable, and reliable, the public can understand how government spending impacts their communities. The standard data exchange will also reduce the need for massive system changes across federal agencies to collect information and allow agencies to focus on managing data.

Accordingly, Treasury will issue data exchange guidelines that leverage industry standards to tag financial and non-financial data with metadata, or structured information that describes, explains, locates, or otherwise makes it easier to retrieve data. Treasury will require agencies to submit data for posting on USAspending.gov (or successor site) via a standard data exchange called the “Digital Accountability Transparency Act Schema” (DATA Act Schema).

The standard data exchange, or DATA Act Schema, has two components: a standard taxonomy and a standard format, or “language” for exchanging data. The DATA Act Schema includes the required DATA Act data elements and related metadata, including relationship and validation rules. The DATA Act Schema will provide a comprehensive view of the data definition standards and their relationships to one another.

Treasury has created a draft subset of the DATA Act Schema based upon a subset of U.S. Standard General Ledger (USSGL), which is expressed in XML. The draft schema can be found [here](http://fedspendingtransparency.github.io/data-exchange-standard/). Additional components of the DATA Act Schema will be created in the future to capture other data elements (see Figure 1). For data transmission within the federal government and to external stakeholders, Treasury will leverage a combination of XBRL, JSON, Protocol Buffer, CSV, and other formats, as appropriate. This will allow matching of the optimal format given data volume, performance, and data presentation needs.

The DATA Act Schema will be revised periodically and is expected to evolve over time to capture unique requirements for more complex or specialized areas and to reflect changes due to law or regulation.

The DATA Act Schema, including a both the technical representation and “human readable” taxonomy documentation and format are provided [here](http://fedspendingtransparency.github.io/data-exchange-standard/).

**Important:** *The draft schema does not constitute as official USSGL guidance and should not be used as official guidance by federal agencies or the public. For official guidance, see* [*http://tfm.fiscal.treasury.gov/v1/supplements/ussgl.html*](http://tfm.fiscal.treasury.gov/v1/supplements/ussgl.html)*.*