



BILL NO: Senate Bill 459
TITLE: Grant Applications and Reporting - Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council - Alterations
COMMITTEE: Budget and Taxation
HEARING DATE: February 7, 2024
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

The Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence (MNADV) is the state domestic violence coalition that brings together victim service providers, allied professionals, and concerned individuals for the common purpose of reducing intimate partner and family violence and its harmful effects on our citizens. **MNADV urges the Senate Budget and Taxation Committee to issue a favorable report on SB 459.**

Senate Bill 459 would extend the term and modify the composition of the Maryland Efficient Grant Application (or “MEGA”) Council. This legislation will extend the life of the effort to reform state grants processes through the Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council until at least 2028, and to its membership. The Council was created by legislation in 2020 to address inefficiency and inconsistency in state grants administration, by legislation (HB 1539 and SB 620) that passed both houses without a dissenting vote in committee or on the floor.

Our member programs face many challenges with the grant processes in Maryland including the change to quarterly payments for most grants, which is a change from monthly payments. It is very burdensome for nonprofits who must front 3 months of funds and then wait 1-2 more months for reimbursement. They face inconsistent requirements for grant adjustments depending on grant monitors. They are also burdened with repeatedly filing the same paperwork that should already be on file – i.e. 501 c3 status.

Today as in 2020, basic budgetary and organizational information required for grant applications and financial reporting, as well as invoicing and monitoring policies, vary among, state agencies. The lack of standardization inhibits efficiencies that could be obtained at the State level by streamlining common steps and processes, and the development of effective state-level tracking or accountability. The Council was established at the onset of the pandemic to develop and recommend a new standardized structure for state grants documents and processing, and where reasonable to be consistent with federal grants standards. Its work was seriously obstructed by COVID and the resulting lack of staff support during the last administration.

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Senate Bill 459 will also add the Comptroller to the Council, and charge the Council to study and make recommendations on the creation of a “State Grants Ombudsperson” to provide technical assistance with: accessing and navigating state grant programs; resolving delays in the grant-making process; and collecting and disseminating information on opportunities for grants from federal, state, and local government.

For the above stated reasons, the **Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence urges a favorable report on SB 459.**