

Senate Budget & Taxation Committee
February 8, 2024

Senate Bill 459 - Grant Applications and Reporting -
Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council - Alterations

Support

The Association of Community Services (ACS) of Howard County, a 501c3 nonprofit itself, is a membership organization serving nonprofit agencies in our community. Our members provide services ranging from mentoring to food assistance, housing, legal services, transportation, and more. Nonprofit budgets are tight, so delayed payment of State grants has serious consequences. When expenses need to be paid, nonprofits must have the funds they've been promised in their grant awards or risk being unable to pay their staff, rent, or other bills – ultimately impacting their ability to provide their services. Cumbersome processes also consume precious staff time in organizations that are often short-staffed. The State can do better.

ACS of Howard County supports Senate Bill 459. We believe more time is needed for the Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council to achieve its goals. Time was lost during the pandemic, and staffing has been insufficient. We also support the addition of the Comptroller's office and Legislative Auditor to the Council. Experience has shown that both the Comptroller and Legislative Auditor have functions that intersect with the efficiency of the grants process. Their inclusion on the Council would ensure that their role and expertise are considered in the work of the Council.

The bill also directs the Council to study and make recommendations on the creation of an Ombudsperson in the Governor's Office. We believe this would help to expedite attention to and resolution of what seem to be everyday problems with the timely release and approval of grant announcements and agreements, payment terms and delays, and invoicing requirements. This would be especially helpful during the period before substantial reform is accomplished.

The State relies on nonprofits to deliver a wide range of essential services. Improving the grant application and management process would have a significant, positive impact for nonprofits receiving state funding.

We urge a favorable report on Senate Bill 459.

Submitted by,

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