

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

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that relies on state grants to provide critical services to victims of domestic violence. We strongly support **SB459 - Grant Applications and Reporting - Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council – Alterations** and urge the Budget and Taxation Committee to issue a favorable report.

SB459 would extend the life of the Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council and create a State Ombudsperson office to provide nonprofits technical assistance with accessing and navigating state programs, resolve delays in the grant-making process, and collect and disseminate information on opportunities for federal, state, and local grants. As an agency that has received state grants for over 25 years, we believe that continuing the Efficient Grant Application Council would be beneficial for nonprofit organizations.

Preparing grant applications, and their subsequent monitoring and reporting, poses challenges for nonprofit organizations. First, the process is time-consuming, requiring extensive research, data collection, and detailed proposal development. Nonprofit staff often find themselves stretched thin, dividing their attention between grant preparation and management and the day-to-day operational demands of their organizations. Additionally, the multitude of grant opportunities comes with diverse application requirements and guidelines, leading to a complex and often confusing landscape. Nonprofits may struggle to tailor their proposals to meet these varied criteria, contributing to the overall burden. The competitive nature of grant applications further exacerbates the challenge, as organizations vie for limited funding. Moreover, the cycle of continual fundraising to sustain operations compounds the burden, diverting resources away from the core mission of the organization.

The Efficient Grant Application Council could serve as a catalyst for increased efficiency, fairness, and collaboration in the grant application process. This council could streamline procedures, creating a unified and standardized application format that reduces the time and resources nonprofits currently spend on navigating disparate application requirements. By promoting consistency, the council would ensure a fairer evaluation of proposals, fostering a level playing field for organizations of all sizes and focus areas. Additionally, the council could provide valuable resources, training, and support to help nonprofits improve their grant applications, enhancing the overall quality of submissions. Ultimately, an Efficient Grant Application Council would empower nonprofits to navigate the grant landscape more effectively, encouraging innovation and amplifying their impact on the communities they serve.

For these reasons, the Women's Law Center of Maryland urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 459.

The Women's Law Center of Maryland is a non-profit legal services organization whose mission is to ensure the physical safety, economic security, and bodily autonomy of women in Maryland. Our mission is advanced through direct legal services, information and referral hotlines, and statewide advocacy.