



February 6, 2024

Position: SUPPORT

**HB 459 - Grant Applications and Reporting - Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council - Alterations**

Finance Committee:

I am writing on behalf of Maryland Latinos Unidos (MLU), a statewide network of organizations, businesses, and individuals dedicated to supporting Latino and immigrant communities in Maryland. We are writing to express our strong support for Senate Bill 459, which aims to alter the composition of the Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council and improve the efficiency of the grants process. We believe that this bill holds great potential to benefit both the Latino communities in Maryland and the state as a whole.

The Latino and immigrant communities in Maryland have long faced disparities and inequities in various aspects of life, including housing, education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. Senate Bill 459 aligns with MLU's mission to address these issues and find equitable solutions through coordinated action. We believe that this bill can help Latino-serving nonprofits gain better access to grants, streamline the grants application process, and ultimately ensure that essential services reach the communities that need them the most.

Here are the key reasons why we believe Senate Bill 459 will be beneficial:

**Improved Efficiency:** This bill seeks to streamline and reduce redundant processes, reducing paperwork and administrative burdens on both granting agencies and grant recipients. This increased efficiency will benefit all communities, including Latinos, by ensuring that grants are awarded more effectively and in a timely manner.

**Enhanced Access:** By creating a State Grants Ombudsperson, the bill aims to provide technical assistance to grant applicants, helping them navigate the complexities of state grant programs. This support will empower Latino-serving nonprofits and other organizations to access vital funding opportunities that may have been challenging to access previously.

**Equity and Inclusion:** The bill's focus on diverse stakeholder input ensures that the voices of underrepresented communities, including Latinos, are heard in the grant-making process. This promotes greater equity and inclusion in the distribution of grants and resources.

Economic Growth: As Latino-serving nonprofits and organizations serving immigrant communities gain better access to grants and resources, they can further their missions, create jobs, and contribute to the economic growth of Maryland.

In summary, Senate Bill 459 aligns with the mission and goals of Maryland Latinos Unidos, which is to address disparities and inequities faced by Latino and immigrant communities and find equitable solutions. We urge you to support this bill, as it has the potential to positively impact the lives of many Maryland residents, promote social, economic, and health justice, and ultimately strengthen our state as a whole.

We appreciate your attention to this important matter and thank you for your commitment to serving all communities in Maryland. If you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,  
Carlos Orbe, Jr.  
Communications and Public Affairs Specialist  
Maryland Latinos Unidos