
BILL NO: House Bill 1539
TITLE: Grant Applications and Reporting – Uniform Forms and Requirements
COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations
HEARING DATE: March 10, 2020
POSITION: **SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

House Bill 1539 would establish a process to develop and implement a standardized application and budgetary format for state grant applications. The Women’s Law Center (WLC) applauds the effort to create a uniform approach to the grant application process in our state. We understand there have been significant re-writes of this bill, with input from MANO – Maryland Association of Non-Profit Organizations, and we support those amendments.

Services that are provided by non-profit organizations through state-funded grants are often burdened by unnecessary and redundant administrative policies or requirements. In addition, many non-profits are receiving funds from a variety of grants and may be doing significant replication of work to apply for and report on the various grants. This can consume resources that could be providing other important services. And often, general operating funds are not included in the grants so all this work is unfunded. HB 1539, as amended would create efficiencies to grantors as well as grantees.

We also understand that currently there is no tracking and accounting system to account for how many grants are being offered or how many grantees there are. Best practices should dictate that this knowledge be collected. Working with the Office of Budget Management (as amended into the statute), this bill would offer the development of uniform policies, forms and the like, to the benefit of grantors and grantees. We note that the Amendments to add state agencies does not include the Governor’s Office of Crime Prevention, Youth and Victim Services (formally GOCCP), and we would like it to be clear that it is included. It provides millions of dollars in grants to victim services organizations such as the WLC.

HB 1539 as amended would not be a “one size fits all” approach to adopting the federal Uniform guidance from the Office of Budget and Management, but Maryland would use it as a model to develop appropriate systems and processes for the unique needs of our state.

Therefore, the Women’s Law Center urges a favorable report on HB 1539 with the proposed amendments.

The Women’s Law Center of Maryland is a private, non-profit legal services organization that serves as a leading voice for justice and fairness for women. It advocates for the rights of women through legal representation for individuals and statewide advocacy to achieve systemic change.