



Working to end sexual violence in Maryland

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Testimony Supporting House Bill 1539 with Amendments
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The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault (MCASA) is a non-profit membership organization that includes the State's seventeen rape crisis centers, law enforcement, mental health and health care providers, attorneys, educators, survivors of sexual violence and other concerned individuals. MCASA includes the Sexual Assault Legal Institute (SALI), a statewide legal services provider for survivors of sexual assault. MCASA represents the unified voice and combined energy of all of its members working to eliminate sexual violence. We urge the Health & Government Operations Committee to report favorably on House Bill 1539 with Amendments

House Bill 1539 – Grant Applications and Reporting - Uniform Forms and Requirements

This bill establishes a process for Maryland to develop uniform grant application and reporting requirements. The current system is badly out of kilter. It is inconsistent between agencies and even within grant making entities year to year. It is no exaggeration to say that the federal government is more efficient and has less bureaucracy than the State of Maryland. The unnecessary administrative burden created by the state wastes money for both the State and for non-profit grant recipients such as MCASA and the rape crisis centers throughout Maryland. We urge the Committee to start the process towards meaningful reform of this process. The State of Illinois undertook a similar initiative and found savings and cost avoidance of \$258 million, see page 10: <https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Documents/Resource%20Library/2018-GATA-Annual-Report.pdf>. Maryland should look to this as a model of how consistent and streamlined grant reporting will improve accountability and save money.

The examples of inefficiencies caused by unskilled grant administration are extremely boring and it can feel overly fussy to describe them. However, they add up. They require time for agencies to review and approve and time for non-profit grantees to prepare, review, and approve. Many involve technology that is not the most up-to-date and frequently do not work as planned.

Here are a few examples:

Grants have funding categories, including salaries, benefits, travel, contractors, and other (which includes operational costs such as rent). It is a normal part of grant administration for there to be shifts between categories (sometimes called "buckets"). To provide some examples of why this occurs:

- A grant funds a hotline worker's salary. The hotline worker is hired and declines health insurance because her spouse provides coverage, so the \$1750 funds the grantee anticipated using for insurance are not needed for that cost.
- A grant is awarded that supports an advocate to go to the hospital when a rape survivor needs a sexual assault evidence kit exam. The rape crisis center anticipated that there would be 4 survivors needing accompaniment, but there were 9 rape survivors, so the mileage costs for the advocate going to the hospital are higher than expected, (instead of \$54 for four trips, \$121.50 for nine trips, as a typical example).
- A grant includes \$900 funds to purchase a computer for a rape crisis center counselor to use. A local business donates new computers to the agency, so grant funds are not used for the computer.

Each of these examples are typical of what happens in a non-profit. Most often, several variances happen every quarter. None of these variances change the purpose of the grant award or the work performed, they are accounting matters.

If the grant were a federal award and in full compliance with federal regulations, the executive director of the agency would have the discretion to move up to 10% of the award between the funding categories (salaries, benefits, travel, contractors, and other). In a \$60K grant, for example, the executive director could move up to \$6K between categories. In the examples above, this would mean the funds could be moved without any advance permission seeking. Reporting, documentation subject to audit, and compliance with the full amount of the award are still required (in other words, the grant would be \$50K and that amount could not change).

The entity formerly called the "Governor's Office of Crime Control & Prevention" and now referred to as the "Governor's Office of Crime Prevention, Youth, and Victim Services" (GOCOPYVS) requires an approved request to make any of these changes and also expects that the approval happen before the expenditures. This is impractical for human services, such as hospital accompaniment for rape victims. It is also a genuine waste of resources. Each request for even a minor modification requires staff time from non-profit staff and from the GOCOPYVS staff. As the example above shows, the changes are often modest and – again – subject to reporting and audits.

House Bill 1539 will help bring the actions of state grant-making entities in line with federal regulations and allow non-profit organizations like rape crisis centers focus on our missions: helping people and improving the lives of Marylanders. There are sponsor amendments which MCASA supports. We also respectfully suggest that additional representatives of non-profit entities be included on the Council established by HB1539 AND that they be appointed by the General Assembly. There is an inherent conflict of interest in the executive branch being the sole appointing authority of these representatives and the source of funding for the non-profit representatives.

**The Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault urges the
Health & Government Operations Committee to
report favorably on House Bill 1539 with Amendments**