



**House Bill 418 - Grant Applications and Reporting –
Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council - Alterations
Health and Government Operations Committee – 2/6/24, 1 p.m.
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Out of School Time Network (MOST) is a statewide organization dedicated to closing opportunity gaps by expanding both the quantity and quality of afterschool and summer learning opportunities for school-aged young people. MOST is one of the fifty statewide networks supported by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation and serves as Maryland’s affiliate to the National Afterschool Association.

The Maryland State Department of Education manages grant programs for Afterschool and other youth program providers. Over the years, there have been many examples of challenges for the nonprofits applying for and receiving these grants. These include extreme delays in payments, inconsistent guidance and contract management, confusion over allowable expenses, and lack of transparency in the grant-making process. Sometimes, these have caused major disruptions in the operations of the programs and organizations receiving these grants. With broad-based input from the field, MOST has put forward a set of recommendations that can be reviewed at <https://bit.ly/OST-GRANTS>. These recommendations include examples from other states that could be replicated in Maryland. Because we have not seen significant progress in improving either the grant application or grants management processes, MOST enthusiastically supports HB 418.

We are particularly favorable to creating an Ombudsperson specifically for state grants. We have seen requests for clarifications, appeals, and amelioration extend over long periods of time, often with denials that provide no further information or support. We encourage the legislature to extend the Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council until 2028 and support the alterations to the council's composition and reporting requirements.

Many organizations that receive funding from the state are small to medium-sized nonprofits providing critical resources to children and families. Grants are the necessary fuel to the work. However, the state doesn’t always treat its grantees as partners. There are grant-making best practices that, if adopted, will ultimately support more effectiveness on the ground in communities. MOST thanks Delegate Stein for sponsoring this bill, and we urge a favorable report.

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