



## **Senate Bill 459**

### *Grant Applications and Reporting – Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council – Alterations*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Budget and Taxation Committee

Date: February 7, 2024

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 459. This bill contemplates a State Grants Ombudsperson to collect and disseminate federal, state, and local grant opportunities, which would benefit county governments and, in turn, shared constituents.

Many federal grant funds ultimately go to state and local governments, which may award funds as sub-awards to local entities, such as nonprofit organizations. The grants support health care, public education, housing, community development, childcare, job training, transportation, and clean water, among other programs. However, many local governments – particularly in rural areas of the state – lack the resources and expertise to navigate the complexities of the federal grantmaking process.

The Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council is charged with improving efficiency, eliminating redundant processes, reducing paperwork and administrative burdens on both granting agencies and grant recipients, and facilitating the development and implementation of a statewide centralized grants management and accountability system.

SB 459 requires the Council to study the feasibility of a State Grants Ombudsperson to provide technical assistance with (1) accessing and navigating state grant programs, (2) resolving delays in the grant-making process, and (3) collecting and disseminating information on opportunities for grants from federal, state, and local governments.

Counties believe this bill will streamline the grantmaking process, level the playing field for all local governments, and provide crucial information for county leaders to pass on to their constituents and local businesses.

Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 459.