



Testimony in Support of the Office of Grants Management's Proposed Community Grants Process
Montgomery County Council Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee
May 5, 2023

Respectfully submitted by
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Greetings, Committee Chair Stewart and Committee Members Friedson and Katz.

On behalf of Easterseals DC MD VA, I want to express our unequivocal support for the reforms to the Community Grants process proposed by the Montgomery County Office of Grants Management (OGM).

The OGM has made a significant effort to incorporate a wide range of feedback into the proposed reforms from nonprofits throughout Montgomery County collected through surveys, webinars, and meetings. This feedback showed strong support from the nonprofit community, including from Nonprofit Montgomery and its 200 member organizations, for these reforms.

The proposed reforms are essentially a "new and improved" version of the competitive process that was in place for years before the pandemic and, in fact, have been discussed and considered since 2018. Community grants were never intended to be guaranteed year after year, but the rules were changed during the pandemic to allow the grants to simply roll over. Now that the pandemic has subsided, it is time for the process to be updated.

These recommendations by OGM will make the process more transparent and accessible, streamline the application process, establish clear review criteria, provide for technical assistance to help County nonprofit organizations leverage state and federal funding, and restore the grants as annual, competitive opportunities for funding.

Many hours of thought and deliberation by the nonprofit community and OGM went into the development of the Community Grants process, and we hope that the Government Operations Committee and the full Council will support the recommendations from the OGM through the FY24 budget deliberation and approval process.