



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

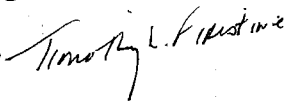
Isiah Leggett  
County Executive

Timothy L. Firestine  
Chief Administrative Officer

MEMORANDUM

July 25, 2017

To: Chris Cihlar, Director, Office of Legislative Oversight

From: Timothy L. Firestine, Chief Administrative Officer 

Subject: Draft OLO Report 2017-12: Federal Grant Administration in Montgomery County

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Office of Legislative Oversight's (OLO) Draft Report 2017-12: Federal Grant Administration in Montgomery County. In the report's discussion of central grant offices in other jurisdictions, it would be helpful to include information on the resources that these jurisdictions dedicate to their central grants offices (i.e. number of FTE's) relative to the number and dollar value of grants applied and received for in a given year. This would give a sense of the level of resources that would be required for such an office to be effective and also the return on investment. A few years ago, our preliminary assessment of a centralized grant office revealed that our large departments value having their own expert employees, familiar with their areas of focus (i.e. health and human services, environment, public safety, transportation, etc.) to be involved in seeking potential federal grants.

Regarding a more streamlined electronic review process, there may certainly be process efficiencies worth exploring, but these would need to take requirements of specific grants into consideration. For example, part of the process for most grants for which HHS and DHCA apply requires submitting a paper application with an ink signature from the County Executive or a designee. Therefore, an all-electronic submission process may not be an option. For other grants, the volume of required information may make scanning the entire package overly burdensome.

Regarding a shared grant tracking system, currently, records of all department grant applications reviewed by OMB are maintained in the eBudget system. While each department has access to track their own grant applications, only OMB staff can access the grant applications of all departments. From a technical perspective, it may be possible to allow departments to access information on the grants of other departments. However, we are not certain about the actual value of this system access change and potential technical challenges it may create for the users.

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Chris Cihlar, Director, Office of Legislative Oversight

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Finally, the Department of Finance is responsible for grant financial reporting and for coordinating the annual audit of all County grant activity. To ensure that all departments are properly informed on the federal grant compliance requirements, updates and changes to Oracle's Projects and Grants modules, and other identified grant compliance and reporting issues, the Department of Finance is planning quarterly meetings involving all key department grant managers. These meetings will provide departments with an opportunity to discuss challenges they are experiencing with grant administration, to network with their peers from other departments, and to seek more opportunities for grant funding.

Thank you again for your work on this report. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Fariba Kassiri, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, at (240) 777-2512 or [Fariba.Kassiri@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:Fariba.Kassiri@montgomerycountymd.gov).

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