



## County Grants Forum - County Executive and County Council Grants Process ICYMI (In Case You Missed It)

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### FY18 COUNTY EXECUTIVE GRANTS BY THE NUMBERS

- ▶ 371 applications submitted with \$21.5 million in requests
- ▶ 223 grants made in \$7.9 million disbursements
- ▶ 17 capital grants made for \$1.3 million disbursements

### FY18 COUNTY COUNCIL GRANTS BY THE NUMBERS

- ▶ 398 grant applications were reviewed by 72 volunteers—at least 3 people reviewed each application
- ▶ 138 grants totaling \$3.2 million were approved by the Council for full or partial funding
- ▶ Median Council request was \$44,600
- ▶ Median Council grant was \$22,000

*Many of the grants were submitted to both the Council and the County Executive. Some received partial funding from both. Executive-recommended grants were reviewed by the Grants Advisory Group and approved by the Council.*

### FY18 DHHS GRANT CONTRACTING BY THE NUMBERS

Community Services Grants are actually a separate program run by DHHS for one-time capital purchases limited to \$10,000.

- ▶ Community Services Grants – Council approved grants to 11 organizations totaling \$60,715.85
- ▶ In addition, 236 County Executive and County Council Community Grants were forwarded to DHHS to be administered as contracts. 67% of these were under \$30,000.

*DHHS has streamlined the contract process to a letter contract for grants under \$30,000. This has decreased the time from award to contract. Last year, the letter contract process was only for grants under \$10,000 and utilized only by DHHS. This year, it was raised to grants under \$30,000 and is being utilized county wide. Currently only DHHS is using the letter contract.*

### UPCOMING FOR NEXT YEAR ...

- Term limits for Council members and the upcoming change in the County Executive will probably impact the Council and County Executive Grants going forward. The grants programs exist because of the County Executive and the County Council. Currently the Office of Legislative Oversight is studying the grant processes. They will be conducting focus groups in the near future.
- Together these grant pools are now awarding \$12 million in total grants; the program started at \$3 million. It was never intended to grow this large. Nonprofits should be aware that changes may occur by FY20. The future of these grant programs is unclear.
- Some County Council grants are now reviewed by umbrella groups – for example, this year the Montgomery County Food Council reviewed food-related grants and WorkSource Montgomery, Inc. reviewed workforce grants.

## Comments and Suggestions From Nonprofits:

- The increase in application is a leading indicator of need. Missing a policy direction. What's the best way to solve the problems the county faces?
- Priorities and impact areas – identify alignment areas for funding. What are the council's priority areas? Many ideas of how to prioritize and limit scope are under consideration. Limit applications? Three years and then done?
- The application sends separate emails for each application when an organization submits for more than one program. It would be nice if could send just one email per organization.
- Add additional fields to report outcomes. Currently the application only asks for three outcomes. Leads to a dumbing down of the results/evaluation.
- Outcomes are tricky for groups working on long term change.
- It is difficult to explain complex and unique organizations in the 15 minutes each group is allowed with the volunteer committee.
- Recommendation: consider different trainings for repeat vs new applicants?
- The December pre-application session was really helpful. Sessions are in early December.
- Process improvement with their input is fantastic – Jed credits Nonprofit Montgomery.
- Can the county look for additional funds for nonprofit programs and initiatives? For example, King County in WA. Aligned funds with indicators of equity. County partner with nonprofits to go after additional funding to locally regrant \$\$.

## What Grant Applicants Should Know:

- A good application clearly answers the following questions: have you identified a serious community need; do you have a reasonable plan to address that need at a reasonable cost, how do you know the programs make a difference; what are your metrics for knowing that your approach makes a difference.
- This year the CC accepted applications from teams of organizations working together. Joan noted that only seven team applications were submitted. Half got funded, the others were not as strong.
- Many applicants don't understand how to present budgets in the applications. Budgets should closely reflect the request – too often they are unrelated. [Nonprofit Montgomery's FIRM Financial Leadership Institute](#) is a partnership with the County to help nonprofits with financial sustainability. FIRM helps nonprofits understand their financial models, the cost of providing services and how to build a budget.
- Applicants struggle with explaining output and outcomes. Joan noted that the outcomes questions are have gone through several revisions. [Nonprofit Montgomery's MORE](#) (Metrics and Outcomes for Responsible Evaluation) was designed to help nonprofits develop outcome measurement systems.
- How do you find out who is responsible for drafting the contract once the grant is approved? Answer: **Grants are assigned to contract managers by service areas.** Staff can look at the budget and see which department the grant was assigned to. Or call Jed or Samir Hamatto at DHHS.

## On the Volunteer Review Process for County Council Grants:

- The 72 volunteers receive an orientation and training. Half of the volunteers come back for more than one year; many stay in the same field.
- Volunteer reviewers may look at nonprofit websites for background information (though they are not required to.) Keep in mind that your website can hurt or help.
- County Council grants are not ranked. Comments on applications appear in the public report.

*This is an unofficial document with notes taken from a Nonprofit Montgomery event.  
Questions or comments? Contact [connect@nonprofitmoco.org](mailto:connect@nonprofitmoco.org)*