



# Governor's Grants Office News

**Martin O'Malley** Governor  
**Anthony Brown** Lt. Governor

WINTER 2013-2014

All organizations deserve a change in leadership every decade or so. That change will come for the Governor's Grants Office when I step down at the end of February.

This will mark the first personnel change of any kind at GGO in more than 7 years. Merrill Oliver will be moving up to lead the office, with Susan Casey continuing to do all of the real work that keeps the website and the rest of the place going.



It's rare in state government when an opportunity arises to build a new organization from scratch. When this means working simultaneously with people in state, local, federal government, and those in the non-profit community, while being invited to stick my nose into every public-policy nook and cranny that Maryland state government has to offer...it doesn't get any better than that.

As many of you know, I was given this chance by the previous administration. When Governor O'Malley was elected, not only did he keep the office (and inherited staff), but his senior staff encouraged us to branch out in new directions. One result is a better link between state agency grant seeking activities and state government performance measures. This continuity from one administration to the next is noted and commented on by the many other governors offices that have sought our advice as they build similar grants offices in their states. I'm particularly grateful to Governor O'Malley for being able to tell them how this happened.

We have strived to build a statewide grants community where everyone, be they a seasoned auditor of federal grants or the leader of a start-up non-profit, can benefit from the collective knowledge of their peers. Towards this end, we have sought to share the maximum amount of information with all of our constituents, be it detailed technical assistance trainings or connections to others doing similar grants work in your community.

A testament to this strategy is that we have a database of more than 6,000 people who have actively participated in some aspect of our work. When the U.S. Office of Management and Budget offers their nationwide webinar on the new grants management circular, aka "The Super Circular," (no date yet announced) I can guarantee that the number of participants from Maryland will surpass all other states, not just on a percentage basis but in actual numbers.

During this longish transition period please let me know if there are things we can do better (unless it's something that I've done wrong; you can discuss those with Merrill and Susan once I'm gone).

If we've had any success these last ten years it really is thanks to all of you who have taken an interest in, and supported our work. Thank you.

Eric Brenner  
Director  
Maryland Governor's Grants Office

[erichbrenner@starpower.net](mailto:erichbrenner@starpower.net) - after February 2014.

## GGO's Subrecipient Grants Management Workshop set for April 10, 2014

Sign up now to reserve your seat!

After hosting a successful series of grants management workshops last Fall, it became clear that we needed to add a workshop specifically for entities that pass-through federal funds to sub-recipients.



A-133 workshop

Read all about it and [REGISTER NOW.](#)

You can view the presentations from the Fall series (Cost Principles, Administrative Circulars, CAROI training, and A-133 Circulars) in "What's New"

at  
[www.grants.maryland.gov](http://www.grants.maryland.gov).

## Lt. Governor Brown Celebrates Completion of \$33 Million BRAC Roadway Project in Harford County



### *US 40 / MD 715 Interchange Project Will Reduce Congestion and Support Growth at Aberdeen Proving Ground*

Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown, joined by Major General Robert S. Ferrell, Colonel Gregory R. McClinton, and other state and local officials, participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the completion of the reconstructed US 40 / MD 715 interchange and roadway widening project leading to the entrance of Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) in Harford County. The nearly three-year, \$33 million project supports more than 300 jobs and marked the completion of the County's first BRAC-related highway project.

"Investments like this one in Harford County are critical to our efforts to improve our transportation infrastructure, create jobs, and strengthen Maryland's military readiness," said Lt. Governor Brown. "While the BRAC process has ended, our work continues to create 21st Century roads, bridges, and trains that will support a 21st Century economy throughout our state. By working together, we'll continue building a better Maryland for all of our families."

The project enhances highway safety and reduces congestion along US 40, and improves access to APG, the City of Aberdeen and numerous businesses/distribution centers in the area. Traffic along this section of US 40 is expected to increase from 36,600 vehicles per day to 75,300 in 2030.

The US 40 / MD 715 project is part of a \$129 million State effort to improve roadways leading to Aberdeen Proving Ground. Thanks to the passage of the federal Transportation Infrastructure Investment Act of 2013, the O'Malley-Brown Administration recently announced the addition of \$43 million in construction funds to advance three intersection improvement projects at key locations along access routes to APG.

With the passage of the Transportation Investment Act, the O'Malley-Brown Administration also announced the addition of \$7 million in construction funds to improve pedestrian safety by providing sidewalks and bicycle lanes along a one-half mile section of MD 755 in Edgewood near the MARC train station and APG gate.

The new legislation allows Maryland to activate long-term strategies to invest \$4.4 billion in the next six years in Maryland's transportation systems.

## MARYLAND Chosen to Participate in Treasury Offset Program Pilot

The Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Treasury Offset Program (TOP) Work Group is conducting a pilot. The purpose of this pilot is to identify new ways to assist states with resolving delinquent debts prior to their referral to the TOP for offset.



The U.S. Department of the Treasury, Bureau of the Fiscal Service (Fiscal Service) administers TOP, which is a centralized program that offsets federal and state payments to payees who owe delinquent debts to federal and state agencies. Payments are offset only after several steps are taken to ensure due process for the debtor.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Debt Management Center (DMC) and three states - Maryland, Arizona, and Massachusetts have been selected to participate in the pilot, which began in November 2013.

The purpose of this pilot is to assist states with awareness of their delinquent debts owed to the federal government and to provide viable steps for state agencies to resolve this debt prior to its submission into TOP, where another state agency payment (a grant or loan) may be affected.

### What Should States Agencies Do?

To support the pilot's efforts, state agencies need to work with the creditor agency,

once a delinquent debt has been identified by the authorized state representative, to resolve the delinquent debt in a timely manner, thereby preventing the debt's submission into TOP. This, in turn, will prevent stoppages in the flow of federal grants funds, something that we have experienced in a couple of Maryland state agencies in the past.

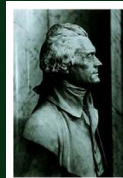
For more information about state debtors in TOP, please visit the [U.S. Treasury's Fiscal Services site](#).

## Long Awaited DATA ACT One Step Closer to Becoming Law

The Digital Accountability and Transparency Act, also known as the DATA Act, is poised to provide unprecedented insight into federal spending. After recently passing the U.S. House, the DATA Act awaits a vote on the U.S. Senate Floor.

The DATA Act would amend the Federal Funding and Accountability Act of 2006 to make major, and much-needed, improvements to [USASpending.gov](#), the website that tracks federal government grants and contracts. The DATA Act would require common reporting standards for all federal agencies, with unique identifiers. It would also stipulate that all data be machine readable, and include checkbook level expenditure data.

For the many constituents we have worked with who are frustrated with the difficulty of accessing basic grant and contract award information from the USASpending website, the DATA Act provides some hope that if the U.S. Treasury inherits the responsibility for leading this transparency effort, the result will be improved usability of the site to access information about tax dollars being spent.



"We might hope to see the finances of the Union as clear and intelligible as a merchant's books, so that every member of Congress and every man of any mind in the Union should be able to comprehend them, to investigate abuses, and consequently to control them."

—Thomas Jefferson, 1802

You can view our recent [recorded webinar on Federal Financial Management Transparency](#) with guest speaker Christina Ho of the U.S. Treasury.



## Become a Grant Reviewer

**Volunteer reviewers are needed for Federal and State Grants Review Boards**

Perhaps the best way to win a grant is to see up close and personal how others are successful. There is no better way to see how the process unfolds than to volunteer to help score grant proposals. We are often asked where people can go to find grant review opportunities. The answer is below, which includes both Federal (some offer compensation) and State government opportunities:

### FEDERAL LEVEL:

#### Department of Labor (DOL)

Each year, the Department of Labor (DOL), Employment & Training Administration (ETA) convenes panel reviews to evaluate and Score eligible grant applications. Grant review panelists are selected for their expertise and their ability to objectively evaluate the quality of grant applications. [Read the requirements to become a reviewer and register online.](#)

#### National Institute of Health (NIH)

The NIH looks for peer reviewers who previously received NIH grant support as well as accomplished scientists to review applications for funding and R&D contract proposals. [Visit this page for peer review guidelines.](#)

#### Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The EPA conducts peer review on applications submitted in response to extramural research competitions. To become a reviewer, experts may nominate themselves to be part of the Peer Reviewer Information System (PRIS). For more information, refer to [EPA's Peer Review online brochure.](#)

#### Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA)

The BJA looks for peer reviewers with expertise in a broad range of criminal justice backgrounds. Reviewers typically score 10-20 applications within two weeks and are paid a stipend. [Visit BJA's website](#) to see how to become a reviewer.

**Office of Justice Program (OJP), Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), Department of Justice**  
The OJP seeks qualified professionals to evaluate grant applications based on the specialist's

expertise, demographics and prior experience as a reviewer. Reviews are conducted primarily in late winter and spring. Reviewers typically have 2-4 weeks to review 10-30 applications and are asked to participate in a peer review that lasts 1-2 days. For more information, visit [OJP's peer review site](#).

**Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)** U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)

The OJJDP seeks researchers and practitioners with expertise related to the Juvenile Justice field. For more information, go to [OJJDP's website](#) and look under "funding inquiries."

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**Institute of Museum and Library Science (IMLS)**

The IMLS requires potential reviewers to familiarize themselves with IMLS grant programs and read existing reviewer handbooks before applying to becoming a panelist. IMLS looks for reviewers to align grants with areas of expertise. For more information and to apply online, visit [IMLS's grant reviewer site](#).

**Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS)**

The CNCS seeks a diverse group of people with expertise (a minimum of 5 years) in a variety of relevant areas and ability to objectively assess the quality of grant applications. Reviewers come from fields such as education, research, analysis, literacy, human services, nonprofit, grant writing, public health and environment. To become a reviewer, you must complete an online application. For more information, visit the [peer review page of the CNCS website](#).

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**

[Register to be a Grant Reviewer](#) for the Department of Health and Human Services' Office of Community Services (OCS). As a registered member, you will receive communications regarding opportunities to participate in discretionary grant reviews.

**Administration for Children and Families (ACF)**, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Grant reviewers are needed for a range of programs run by the Administration on Children, Youth and Families (ACYF), the Administration for Native Americans (ANA), Administration on Developmental Disabilities (ADD), the Office of Community Services (OCS), the Office of Family Assistance Child Care Bureau (CCB) and the Office of Head Start (OHS). Each program sets its own standards and procedures on how to become a grant reviewer. [Here's a one-stop site that will get you to the right information for each program](#).

**Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)**, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

HRSA needs new and experienced grant reviewers with expertise in health professions training, HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, organ transplantation, and primary care for underserved people. HRSA makes all logistical arrangements and pays for travel expenses and other costs and reviewers receive an honorarium. For more information and to apply, [visit their website](#).

**Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP)** with the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**

The ONDCP and the SAMHSA look for peer grant reviewers with experience and knowledge in mental health services, community-based system of care and services for adults with mental illnesses, children with serious emotional disturbances, substance abuse prevention and substance abuse treatment services, programs and activities. Reviewers receive taxable compensation. For more information on how to apply, [visit SAMHSA's website](#).

**STATE LEVEL:**

The State of Maryland enlists the help of volunteer peer reviewers for certain grants. Contact one of these agencies to discuss their process and procedure, and their eligibility requirements.

**Governor's Office on Crime Control and Prevention**

Kim Herndon, [KHerndon@goccp.state.md.us](mailto:KHerndon@goccp.state.md.us)

**Governor's Office on Service and Volunteerism**

Shameka Littles, [Shameka.Littles@maryland.gov](mailto:Shameka.Littles@maryland.gov)

**Maryland Department of Human Resources**

Jacqueline Richardson, [jacqueline.richardson@maryland.gov](mailto:jacqueline.richardson@maryland.gov)

**Maryland State Department of Education**

Michelle Szczepaniak, [mszczepaniak@msde.state.md.us](mailto:mszczepaniak@msde.state.md.us)

You might check with you county government, as well, to see if they offer any opportunities to volunteer on a grant review board.

Register Your Non Profit for



## a 2014 Charity Campaign

Non profits, if you are not registering each year for the Maryland Charity Campaign you are missing out on some really "easy" money! If your organization's nonprofit status is up-to-date with the State of Maryland and meets minimum requirements, you can apply to be part of the charity campaign. Current and retired state employees give at total of more than \$3 million a year to qualified Maryland nonprofits in the campaign.

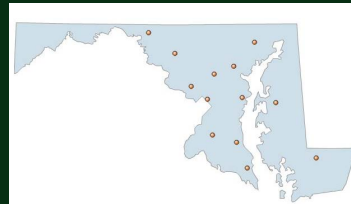
Not all nonprofits consider themselves to be "charities," but they can still apply. For example, an arts organization could qualify to be part of the Maryland Charity campaign. You can see the kinds of [nonprofits that participated in the 2013 campaign](#) that is winding down now.

Last year's campaign involved nearly 18,000 Maryland employees (and retirees) who selflessly gave over \$3.4 million, realizing that nonprofits were some of the hardest hit organizations during this economic downturn. One in three Marylanders in need will have benefited from the services provided by many of the Campaign's participating charities. In 2012, 802 nonprofits participated in the Campaign.

If your nonprofit organization (or one you support) does not participate each year, why not get a piece of the action in 2014? Simply go to [www.mdcharity.org](http://www.mdcharity.org) to print out the application when it is available (in early January), complete it and mail it by the February 14th deadline. This is a yearly application so make sure to set your reminders! If you have any questions, email Loraine Parks at the Secretary of State's Office [lparks@sos.state.md.us](mailto:lparks@sos.state.md.us).

The federal government also conducts a charity campaign. Federal employees gave \$258.3 million in last year's campaign. [Visit their site](#) for more information on how to register your nonprofit and to download the application. The deadline to apply is Wednesday, January 15, 2014.

### Find a Grant at one of the Foundation Center's Local Funding Information Network Locations



The Foundation Center is the most authoritative source of information on private philanthropy in the United States. The Center helps grantseekers, grantmakers, researchers, policymakers, the media, and the general public better understand the field of philanthropy. Funding Information Network locations (formerly called "Cooperating Collections") are free sources of information typically located in libraries, community foundations, and other nonprofit resource centers that provide a core collection of Foundation Center publications and a variety of supplementary materials and services in areas useful to grant seekers.

A key initiative of the Foundation Center is to reach populations that have too few resources, generally are underserved, and are in need of information and training to become successful grantseekers. One of the ways the Foundation Center intends to accomplish this goal is by designating new Funding Network locations in regions that have the ability to serve the nonprofit communities most in need of Foundation Center resources. The Foundation Center is seeking proposals from qualified institutions (i.e. public, academic or special libraries) that can help them carry out this important initiative.

There currently are thirteen Foundation Center Funding Information Network locations housed throughout Maryland.

[Visit this page to find places throughout Maryland](#) you can visit to research private funding opportunities through an enormous database. Type in your city or zip code to find a Funding Information location closest to you, or browse the entire list of Maryland locations by choosing "Maryland" from the pull-down menu on the right. The database includes information on foundations all over the country, so when you sit down to use the database, don't be too limiting in your search for funding.

If your area doesn't have a Funding Information Center, perhaps you can help obtain one by speaking with your local libraries and/or community foundations who can [apply through the Foundation Center in Washington, D.C.](#) The Foundation Center always is looking for host organizations to help connect people who want to make positive changes in the world to the resources they need to succeed.

Upcoming Free Grants events at Foundation Center Funding Information Centers:

**Annapolis Library** - "Guide to Online Grantseeker Resources," January 8, 2014, 2:00 p.m. [Click here for more information and to register.](#) Also, on January 8th, at 4:00 p.m., Annapolis Library will host a workshop, "Introduction to Finding Funders." [Click here for more information and to](#)



[register](#)

Baltimore - "Meet and Greets" with Grants Collection Librarian Paul Chasen - February 24, 2014, 6-7:30 p.m. at the Herring Run branch of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, and February 26, 2014, 6-7:30 p.m. at Pratt's Reisterstown Road branch. [Click here for more information.](#)

## Governor's Grants Office in the News

The Governor's Grants Office, founded by outgoing Director Eric Brenner ten years ago, recently received the [Federal Funds Information for States \(FFIS\)](#) 2013 "Great Idea" Award "for sharing best practices and providing technical assistance that have made the intergovernmental system work better. Eric Brenner and his staff (Merril Oliver, Susan Casey) at the Governor's Grants Office have developed a centralized model that has helped Maryland and many other states improve their ability to track and maximize federal grants. Their training sessions and webinars are available to anyone interested in federal grants, and their annual report is a model of excellence for states reporting on the flow of federal funds."



Deputy Director Merrill Oliver recently won a Partnership Leadership Award from the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) Partnership for Intergovernmental Management and Accountability" in recognition of her tireless work to improve grants management across all levels of government and her pivotal role in forging positive relations among national associations while serving as Co-Chair of the Work Group on the Candidate Assessment ToolKit for Grants Managers." Merrill also has been nominated for a second upcoming AGA award, the William R. Snodgrass Distinguished Leadership Award to state government officials who exemplify and promote excellence in government financial management.

Congratulate Merrill when she returns from Puerto Rico (January 31) where she currently is providing technical assistance to the PR government as they set up their own grants office. She chose a good time to be there and PR is reimbursing Maryland government for her time.

## ABOUT US

Thank you for your interest in the Maryland Governor's Grants Office, a coordinating office of the Governor. [Visit our site](#) to listen to a variety of recorded webinars (free of charge), and download countless grants workshop presentations. You can register to receive email notifications of grants, (if you haven't already), in addition to free newsletters, invitations to webinars, workshops and conferences. Please consider forwarding this to a friend or colleague.

## Happy Holidays

*No matter how far away you roam.  
And Best Wishes for a Peaceful,  
Successful New Year!*

*Eric, Merrill and Susan*

