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**For Immediate Release**

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The Maryland Governor’s Grants Office and the Maryland Association of Counties today released a statewide survey describing how each Maryland county, including Baltimore City, provides grant funds to local non-profit organizations.  This was an update of a survey first conducted five years ago at the request of counties wanting to learn more about how their peers made decisions about fund distribution.  All jurisdictions provide some funding for non-profits.  The methods for making decisions range from the normal budget process to a free-standing application and review process that may be reviewed by community members not working for county government.

The director of the Governor’s Grants Office, Eric Brenner said, "The generosity of the respondents in sharing this information will help all counties make better decisions about how they support their non-profits.  The O'Malley/Brown administration supports this high level of transparency, and is particularly encouraged by the interest from county governments to improve efficiencies that better match local resources to community needs."

Michael Sanderson said, "We are pleased to partner with the Governor's Grants Office on this survey.  It will serve as a valuable resource for our members and others who are interested in providing grants to non-profit organizations."

Seventeen jurisdictions report having a grant program in place that specifically budgets local funds for community non-profits, separate from any fee-for-service funding.  The remaining jurisdictions report that they allocate funds to non-profits through line items in the annual budget.

A few individual items are worth noting from some of the county reports:

Anne Arundel County splits its grants between capital and non-capital categories, with a grant administrator making a site visit to every grantee in the course of each year. They also have a Clergy Advisory Board that provides input on the community needs that they believe most deserve funding.

Baltimore City has a competitive grant program specific to the Capital Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, with a larger amount of non-profit funds provided through the direct budget process.

Baltimore County splits its grants up between a general grant program and an organizational contribution program, with some grants going to institutions in Baltimore City.

Caroline County sometimes provides funding for start-up loans, repayable in three years or less, as a way of helping organizations support their own longer term fund raising activities.

Charles County has a Grants Advisory panel that requires all potential applicants to participate in a training session, similar to what is done in Harford and Montgomery Counties.

Frederick County just began (in FY 13) using their community foundation’s ‘needs assessment tool’ as a criteria for making funding decisions. The only other counties that said their community foundations were included in an advisory capacity were Howard and Prince George’s Counties.

Harford County bases most of their funding decisions on their Five-Year Consolidated Plan which focuses on the needs of moderate and low-income citizens. They also sometimes require that part of their grants be used for capacity building activities for smaller or newer non-profits.

Prince George’s and Montgomery counties both have separate county council grant programs that are different than the grants provided by the County Executive. County Council members in Prince George’s also have small amounts of grant funds that they can allocate on an individual basis, though some members regularly turn this money over to the community foundation.

Washington County makes grant decisions as part of their regular budget process, but they first set the size of the funding pool and also allocate fixed percentages to certain service priority areas before making individual decisions on grants to non-profits.

In terms of process, nine counties report having an advisory or application review committee as a preliminary stage before requests are sent to the County Executive or County Council. These committees are made up of some combination of representatives from county government, local non-profits, and county residents. Some review committee processes are completely internal (using county government staff). In general, final decision-making authority almost always rests with the County Council or County Executive/Commissioner.

The survey and answers can be found in the *What’s New* section at [www.grants.maryland.gov](http://www.grants.maryland.gov).

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