

## **Maryland Efficient Grants Application Council Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** 1/29/2026 4:00-4:27

### **Location Google Meet Video Conferencing:**

<https://meet.google.com/emh-xhhy-mfu>

### **Members Present:**

*Department of Budget and Management* - Deputy Secretary, Marc Nicole

*Department of Human Services* - Gloria Brown Burnnet

*Department of General Services*- Yasin Mohammed

*Department of Housing & Community Development* - Bryan Holtzapple  
and Breanna Mckee

*Department of Natural Resources* - Lauren Buckmaster, Kamil  
Williams, and Lynn Burks

*Department of Agriculture* - Bonnie Brady

*Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy* - Mary Abraham

*Maryland State Department of Education* - Nicole Obergon

*Maryland Energy Administration*- Jenn Gallicchio

*Department of Environment* - Cia Cook

*Maryland Energy Administration* - Emily Soontornsaratool

*Maryland Higher Education Commission* - Geoff Newman

*Office of the State Treasurer* - Megan Schutz

*Maryland State Department of Education* - Donna Gunning

*Maryland Department of Health* - Amalie Bradenburg, Nick Napolitano, and Avi Glenner

*Department of Budget and Management*, Dana Phillips, Joan Peacock, and Zaynah  
Rose,

**Representatives and Appointee Members Present:**

*Governor's Office of Appointments, Kendra Johnson*

*Governor's Office of Appointments- Diane Founche*

*Comptroller's Office - Stefanos Ghebrehawariat and Ben Seigel*

*Senate Appointee - Irene Tai*

**Additional Attendees:**

*Senator Cheryl Kagan,*

*Guide House Sreeram Suri*

*Department of Commerce Non-Profit Navigator Jessica Dorian*

**Absent:**

**Call to Order/Opening Remarks:** Marc Nicole (DBM), the Chair of the MEGA Council, initiated the meeting by outlining procedural guidelines (using the hand-raise function and muting microphones) and letting everyone know the call would be recorded.

**Old Business:** Approval of the meeting minutes from the October 29th meeting. Dana Phillips moved to approve the minutes, and the motion was seconded and approved by the council.

**New Business:** The meeting focused on a presentation by the new Nonprofit Navigator, Jessica Doiron, who discussed the current work she has been doing to assist nonprofits on navigating State grants.

**1. Presentation by Jessica Doiron:**

- Jessica Doiron presented on her role as the Nonprofit Navigator for the state of Maryland, explaining that her work focuses on assisting nonprofits with navigating administrative barriers, providing technical assistance for state applicants, and helping them locate grant opportunities. She utilizes an intake form to gather specific information based on the type of support needed, which

includes demographics, details on programs seeking funding, and information about existing grants where administrative barriers are present.

- Grant Search Assistance and Resources: Jessica detailed the services provided for grant searching, which includes offering hands-on technical assistance for the state application process, and helping locate grants from local, federal, and private sources. She highlighted key resources such as the Maryland Community Business Compass database for searching grants and tax incentives, and the Governor's grant site, which lists agency contacts and resources. Additionally, the Candid Foundation directory online is used to help nonprofits find private funders.
- Outreach and Training Initiatives: Jessica has been conducting outreach through a monthly newsletter, sent to about 2,000 nonprofits, which shares grants, trainings, and upcoming events. She has collaborated with fellow State agencies and noted that both the Maryland Energy Administration and the Maryland State Arts Council have included Navigator Services in their newsletters. Training efforts include a session held on January 20th with the Maryland State Arts Council, which had 145 registered attendees, and a future training scheduled for February 4th with the city of Rockville.
- Challenges Faced by Nonprofits: Jessica noted barriers encountered in the role, such as a current scarcity of open State grants, which has led them to focus more on private and local funding. She also identified challenges faced by small nonprofits, including struggles with compliance due to being volunteer-led, difficulty with reporting requirements, and a lack of grant writing skills or confidence. Furthermore, nonprofits struggle to secure funding to cover grants management requirements like auditing or fiscal review.
- Gloria Brown Burnett had a question on how Jessica's services can be advertised on DHS's website. Jessica will send DHS a blurb they can add to their website with her information.

## **2. Legislative Updates: Senator Kagan**

- Senator Cheryl C. Kagan provided an update on several nonprofit-related bills. She stated that her bill to make the Nonprofit Navigator position permanent, eliminating its sunset clause, will soon be heard in the Finance Committee.

Senator Kagan is also sponsoring the Green and Renewable Energy and Efficiency for Nonprofit Organizations bill, which allows nonprofits to shift to clean energy by paying only 10% of the cost through an interest-free revolving loan fund. Other bills include Senate Bill 354, which proposes a modest increase in audit thresholds to match 14 other states, and Senate Bill 4, focused on keeping nonprofits nonpartisan by opposing the repeal of the Johnson amendment.

### **3. Work Group Updates and Structural Changes: Dana Phillips**

- Dana Phillips provided updates on the work groups, reporting that the Budget work group completed their guidance on indirect cost guidance and work group definitions, sharing them with the Applications work group for review.

### **4. Motion to Combine the Customer Service and Ombudsperson: Work Group**

- Dana Phillips proposed combining the Customer Service and Ombudsperson work groups because their goals now align with the existence of the Nonprofit Navigator role. Two motions were approved: one to combine the Customer Service and Ombudsperson work groups, motioned by Bonnie Brady and seconded by the council, and a final motion to make Jessica Doiron the chair of the newly combined work group, which was seconded by the council.

**Closing Discussion: Adjournment: 4:27**