



# **Maryland Efficient Grant Application Council**

October 29, 2025



# Summary of Survey Questions

**SECTION 1. AGENCY INFORMATION (#1-4)**

**SECTION 2. GRANT AUTHORITY & SYSTEMS AND SOFTWARE CAPABILITY (#5-11)**

**SECTION 3. BUDGET STRUCTURE AND REQUIREMENTS (#12-18)**

**SECTION 4. GUIDANCE & SUPPORT (#19-23)**

**SECTION 5. IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS (#24)**

**SECTION 6. RISK ASSESSMENTS (#25-26)**

**SECTION 7. MONITORING AND REPORTING (#27-28)**

**SECTION 8. CUSTOMER SERVICE & EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE (#29-31)**



# Agency Information

(QUESTIONS 1-4)



# Survey Results - Agencies Responding

- 1.ii Department of Juvenile Services (DJS)ii
- 2.ii Department of Natural Resources (DNR)ii
- 3.ii Department of Planning (MDP)ii
- 4.ii Governor's Office of Crime Prevention & Policy (GOCPP)
- 5.ii Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA)ii
- 6.ii Maryland Department of Commerce (DOC)ii
- 7.ii MD Department of Emergency Management (MDEM)ii
- 8.ii Maryland Department of Health (MDH)ii
- 9. MDOT- Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA)
- 10. MDOT - Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA)
- 11. MDOT - Maryland Transit Administration (MTA)
- 12.ii MDOT - Secretary's Office (TSO)
- 13. MDOT - State Highway Administration (SHA)
- 14. Maryland Energy Administration (MEA)
- 15. Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)
- 16. Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE)
- 17. Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP) \*
- 18.ii Maryland Military Department (MMD) \*ii

MDOT = Maryland Department of Transportation

\* Provided a response but agency indicated they do not issue grants



# **Survey Results - State Agencies that do not Award Grants**

## **THE FOLLOWING AGENCIES DO NOT AWARD GRANTS**

1. Department of Budget & Management (DBM)
2. Department of General Services (DGS)
  - primarily awards capital grants
3. Department of Information Technology (DoIT)
4. Department of Service & Civic Innovation (DSCI)
5. Maryland Department of State Police (MDSP) \*
6. Maryland Military Department (MMD) \*

\* Provided a response but agency indicated they do not issue grants



# Application Workgroup Survey Findings

(QUESTIONS 5-11)

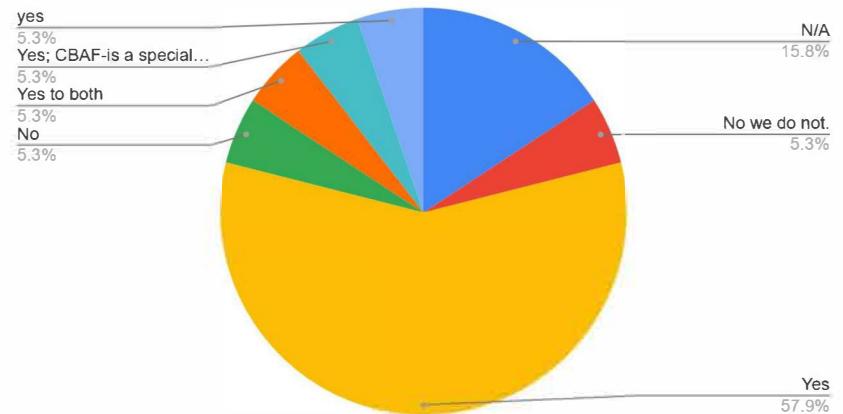


## **Q5) Does your agency have the authority to issue grants that are state-funded (i.e., State general or special funds)?**

**Yes -13**

**No or N/A - 5**

Count of 5) Does your agency have the authority to issue grants that are state-funded (i.e., State general or special fun...





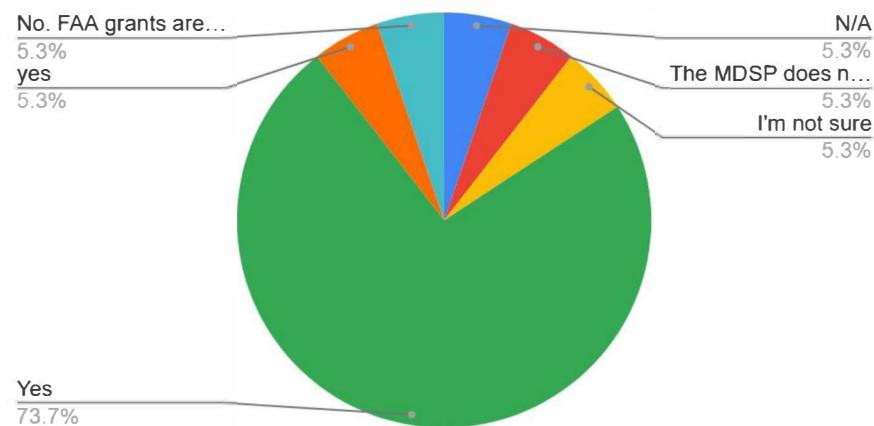
## **Q6) Does your agency have the authority to subaward a federal grant?**

**Yes -14**

**No or N/A -3**

**Unsure -1**

Count of 6) Does your agency have the authority to subaward a federal grant?





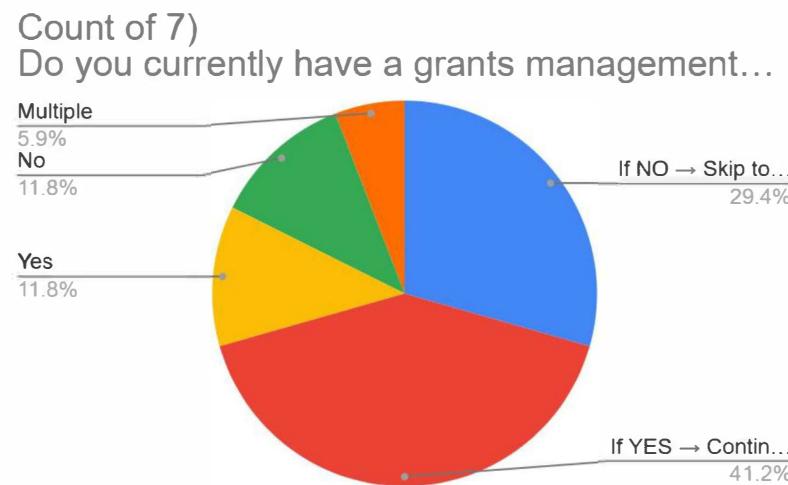
## **Q7) Do you currently have a grants management software program?**

Relationship to Q8 & Q10

**Yes** - 10

**No** - 6

**N/A** - 2\*



\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants



**Q8) (a) Is this a commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) system?**

**Yes - 6**

**No - 4**

**N/A - 8\***

**Q8) (b) What software manufacturer and brand/model are you using?**

**COTS system**

ProjectWise (Bentley Systems)  
Blackbaud Grantmaking  
Enterprise  
OneStop  
K2Share  
Submittable (applications only)  
Grants Gateway (applications only)  
AirportIQ System Manager (Tadera)  
SmartSimple

**non-COTS system**

CMAPS (custom solution)  
GMS Customized Solution  
Google Forms  
Salesforce (customized)  
In-house built Sharepoint  
Grants System  
Grants and Projects for Safety (GPS) is in-house built

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\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; 6 agencies answered "no" to Q7 (Do you have a grants management software program?)



**Q10) Do you use a grants management software program, what tools or systems does your agency use to manage grants (e.g., shared drives, spreadsheets, email-based workflows)? List all.**

**Yes -6**

**No - 4**

**N/A - 8\***

- Emails, Access, Excel, shared drive spreadsheets, Survey Monkey+
- IGX, BX, Submittable, SharePoint/Infopath, AirportIQ System Manager
- OneStop, Blackbaud, Salesforce, Jotform, SmartSimple
- K2Share, Submittable, SmartSimple, Grants Gateway
- Other built-out and customized developed system
- Routing: DocuSign
- Data Visualization: Power BI, Qualtrics, Excel charts

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; 6 agencies answered “no” to Q7 (Do you have a grants management system?)*



## **Q9) Does it allow the integration of template forms to be completed by applicants (e.g, a template budget form)?**

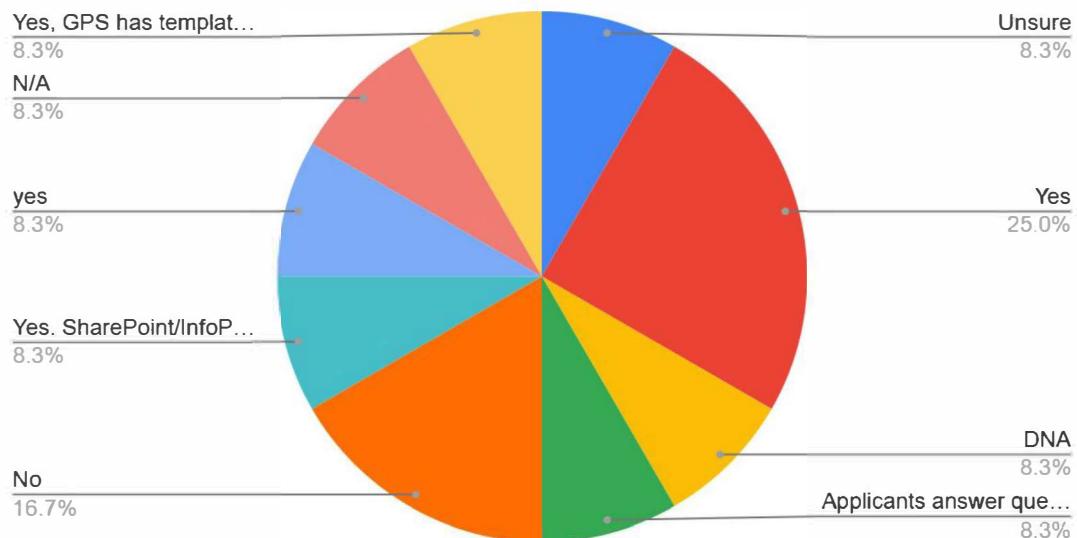
**Yes - 5**

**No - 4**

**N/A - 8\***

**Unsure - 1**

Count of 9) Does it allow the integration of template forms to be completed by applicants (e.g., a template budget form)?



\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; 6 agencies answered "no" to Q7 (Do you have a grants management system?)

**Q11) Do you currently use a budget template in your grants management software?  
If so please share. If you do not use a grants management software program, what tools or systems does your agency use to manage grants (e.g., shared drives, spreadsheets, email-based workflows)? List all**

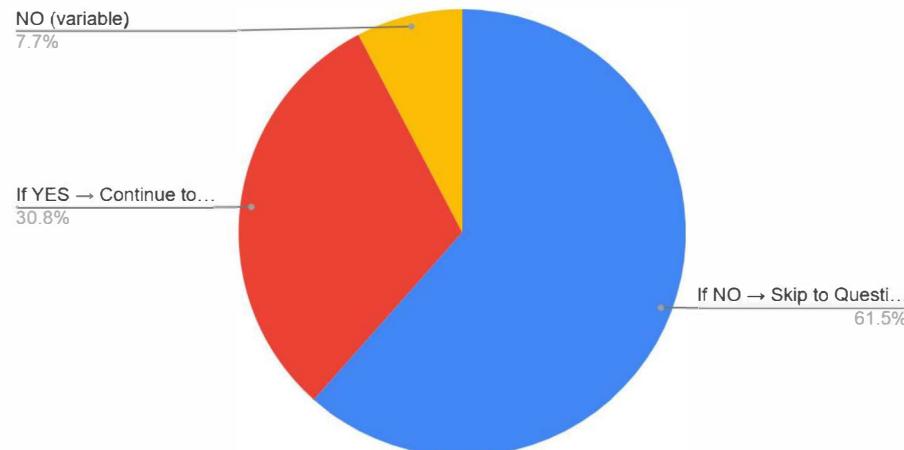
**Relationship to Q12:**

**Yes -6**

**No - 4**

**N/A - 8\***

Count of 12) Does your agency currently use a standard budget template?



\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants



# Budget Workgroup Survey Findings

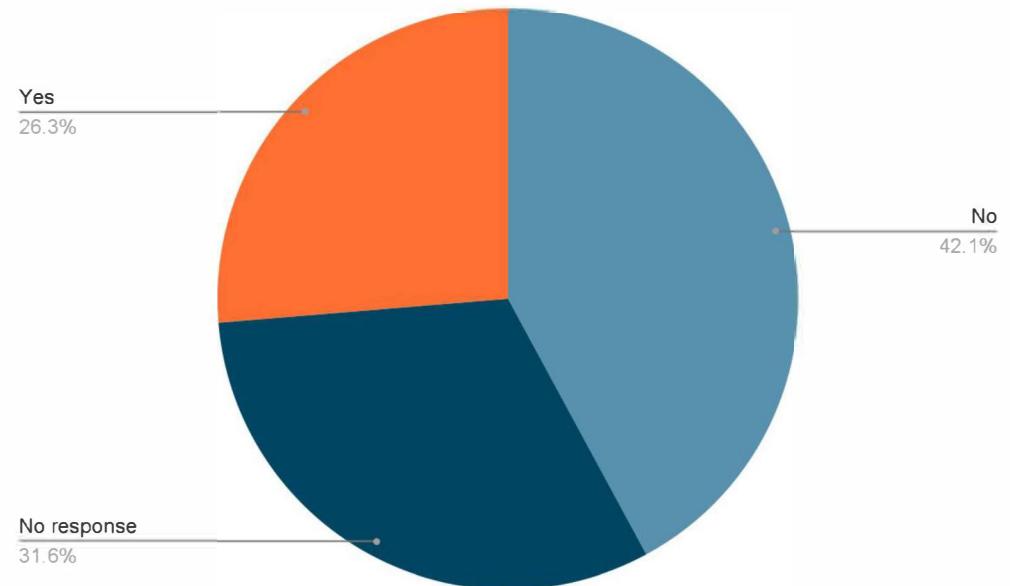
(QUESTIONS 12-18)



## Q12) Does your agency currently use a standard budget template?

Overall insight: Most state agencies do not use a standard budget template.

Out of 16\* agencies that responded and award grants, 6 agencies have created a standard budget template.



\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants



## **Q13) Please provide a copy of each budget template that your agency uses.**

### **Commonalities:**

- Format: Most templates were in Excel format. (One was in pdf format.)
- Multiple Tabs: Each template uses multiple worksheets to organize budget components (e.g., personnel, travel, match, amendments, reports).
- Embedded Formulas: Most templates include formulas to automate calculations and reduce manual errors.
- Categorized Budgeting: Common categories include Personnel, Contractual, Travel, Equipment, and Other.
- Justification Requirements: Most templates require some form of justification or narrative for budget items.

### **Differences:**

- Tabs & Complexity: templates range from minimal, single-sheet formats to highly structured documents with multiple tabs for tracking and reporting.
- Narrative Requirements: Requirements vary widely, from no narrative fields to detailed justifications for every line item, including purpose and cost breakdowns.
- Position Responsibilities: Some templates request brief job descriptions for each funded position; others include this only in amendment forms or not at all.
- Matching Funds: Varies from basic match columns to detailed tracking of in-kind contributions with source and justification.
- Progress Reporting: One includes structured interim and final report forms; others rely on external systems or offer no reporting features.
- Specifics: Templates are highly tailored to agency needs, exemplified by specific tabs for items like travel/per diem or unique categories for field trip fees.



## **Q14) SF424A has standard required line items. If these line items were required in all budget templates for state-issued grants, how would this impact your agency?**

**Overall Insight:** Agencies support consistency where feasible but emphasize the need for flexibility to accommodate specific agency needs.

### **Common Themes:**

- Familiarity / Minimal Impact: Many agencies (esp. MDOT divisions) already use or align with SF424A; minor adjustments needed.
- Flexibility: About two-thirds (~65%) of respondents shared concerns for flexibility to include:
  - Removing unallowable expense line items
  - Customizing line items to better reflect agency- or program-specific expenses
  - Allowing formulas or set calculations (e.g. cost per unit) within the form
  - Accommodating grant programs that do not fit neatly into federal cost categories (e.g., flat-rate incentives for construction, rebates, or per-unit payments)
- Administrative Burden: 25% - 35% of respondents shared concerns that a one-size-fits-all form could confuse applicants or obscure program-specific distinctions.
- Potential Exceptions: Some subaward programs require specific budget forms to be used.



## **Q15) Does your agency issue State grants that do not allow for Indirect Costs, administrative costs, or both?**

### **Overall Insight:**

Most agencies allow indirect and administrative costs with conditions, but restrictions vary by program purpose, funding source, and statutory requirements. While 2 CFR 200 is referenced, specific programs or statutory language may conflict with compliance.

### **Key Themes:**

- Indirect cost policies are inconsistent across the state. This is the result of funder restrictions, including statutory caps, exclusions, and funders' no-indirect expense policy.
- Most agencies generally allow some type of indirect or administrative costs.
- Some agency programs prohibit indirect or administrative costs entirely
- While others are limited to the amount of indirect or administrative costs allowable, such as construction, capital and incentive based grants.



**Q16) If your state-issued grant allows indirect costs, how will requiring all applicable grant applications to use a federally approved NICRA (Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement) affect your agency?**

**Overall Insight:**

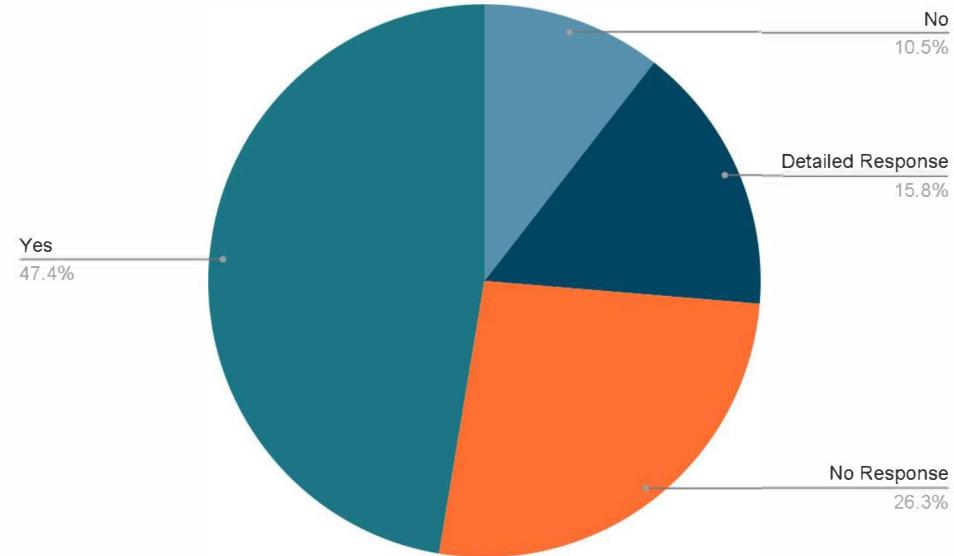
Requiring NICRAs would standardize indirect cost practices but could increase administrative complexity and burden smaller applicants without federal cost rate agreements.

- Most agencies expressed concern about requiring all applicants to use a federally approved NICRA (Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement), because of:
  - added work on the agency and potentially the applicant,
  - results in the reduction in funds for direct service, and
  - the diverse indirect cost restrictions of the funder.
- Agencies were in agreement that this would standardize practices throughout the state.



## **Q17) Do you use submitted budget documents for financial reporting by subgrant recipients?**

Overall Insight: The majority of agencies use submitted budget documents for financial reporting, and provided additional feedback regarding necessary line items on a standard budget.



*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants*



## **Q18) If so, what elements would need to be included in a common budget form to support this process?**

### **Overall Insight:**

Agencies support a standardized form that is flexible, but structured around common cost categories, aligned with federal rules, and adaptable to varied grant programs.

### **Overall Themes:**

- **Standard Categories:** Salaries & wages, fringe, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual, indirect, and totals
- **Documentation:** Require proof of purchase/payment and supporting financial records
- **Federal Alignment:** Match existing federal or agency templates (e.g., SF-424A, NOFA)
- **Summary Metrics:** Total award, amount spent, and balance remaining
- **Flexibility:** Must accommodate diverse grant types (capital, block, emergency, etc.)



# Guidance, Support and Implementation Survey Findings

(QUESTIONS 18-24)



### **Q19) How comfortable are your agency's program managers/staff with Excel and/or Smartsheet?**

Overall insight: While most state agencies are comfortable with Excel, many have not used Smartsheet, leading to a higher number of "Not familiar with" responses. Smartsheet's similarity to Excel should facilitate quick adoption.

Of the 16\* respondents that award grants:

- 15 indicated they were “comfortable” with Excel
- 6 indicated they were “comfortable” with Smartsheet

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there were a total of 18 respondents*



**Q20) Does your agency have dedicated resources to manage grant programs administered by your agency?**

Of the 16\* respondents that award grants, 13 agencies answered “yes” or indicated that either program staff handled grant management activities or that there were dedicated grant managers within programs that administer and award grants.

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there were a total of 18 respondents*



**Q21) What training is provided currently to help your program managers/staff to properly administer and manage your agency's State grants awarded? Is additional training needed?**

Survey responses reveal varied training programs, from internal courses to federal certifications, with a clear demand for more structured, State-specific grant management training across agencies.

Out of 16 grant-awarding respondents, 11 agencies indicated participation in formal training, offered internal training, or provided support through tools, standard operating procedures, and guidance documents for staff managing grant programs.

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there were a total of 18 respondents*



**Q22) What types of technical assistance and training does your agency provide to applicants to help them apply and complete related forms (e.g., application, budgets, risk assessment)?**

The responses indicate a variety of approaches to technical assistance and training, including

- workshops,
- webinars,
- guidelines,
- one-on-one assistance,
- Providing “office hours” and
- online resources.

Agencies indicated grantee often lack understanding and require training in basics like deadlines and application technology.

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\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there were a total of 18 respondents



**Q23) What challenges do you observe applicants experiencing when completing required forms, applying for grants, and meeting requirements related to financial and progress reporting?**

### **Key Takeaway 1: Challenges with Grant Processes and Requirements**

Applicants face difficulties understanding and adhering to grant requirements, particularly:

- **Understanding Grant Requirements:** Comprehending expectations, especially for financial and progress reporting.
- **Complexity of the Process:** Navigating complex application and reporting procedures.
- **Financial Reporting:** Issues with managing and reporting financial data, citing "financial reporting" and "invoice tracking using excel tools only is not desired."

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\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there were a total of 18 respondents



**Q23) What challenges do you observe applicants experiencing when completing required forms, applying for grants, and meeting requirements related to financial and progress reporting? ...continued**

### **Key Takeaway 2: Local Government and Small Organization Difficulties**

Local governments and smaller nonprofits face unique resource and technical challenges.

- **Local Government Challenges:** Providing matching resources and navigating procurement.
- **Technical Literacy and Navigation:** Small nonprofits (often volunteer-run) struggle with online systems and understanding the grant requirements.
- **Lack of Basic Grant Understanding:** Some applicants lack fundamental grant knowledge and miss initial reporting deadlines, primarily because they are not trained grant managers.

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\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there were a total of 18 respondents



**Q23) What challenges do you observe applicants experiencing when completing required forms, applying for grants, and meeting requirements related to financial and progress reporting? ...continued**

### **Key Takeaway 3: Operational and Administrative Hurdles**

Applicants encounter operational and administrative hurdles, from expense classification to documentation and system usability.

- **Expense Classification:** Difficulty in classifying expenses and determining what falls under grant spending.
- **Documentation and Follow-up:** Challenges in securing correct W-9s, follow-up from grantees, and timely submission of grant reports.
- **System Usability:** Online systems like OneStop and Adobe Sign are often deemed too complicated and unintuitive for many users.

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\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there were a total of 18 respondents



## **Q23) What challenges do you observe applicants experiencing when completing required forms, applying for grants, and meeting requirements related to financial and progress reporting? ...continued**

### **Key Takeaway 3: Operational and Administrative Hurdles**

Beyond the core grant requirements, applicants face operational and administrative hurdles, including issues with expense classification, documentation, and system usability.

- **Expense Classification:** Applicants find it challenging to know "how to classify expenses and what should be included in grant spending."
- **Documentation and Follow-up:** Issues like "trouble getting correct W-9's and follow up from the grantees" and difficulties with "getting grant reports back" indicate administrative bottlenecks.
- **System Usability:** The complexity of online systems is a recurring theme, with comments such as "OneStop is too complicated for a lot of them" and "Adobe Sign which is not as intuitive as DocuSign."

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there were a total of 18 respondents*



**Q24) What are your primary concerns around implementing a standardized common application, budget template, and required monitoring and reporting across funding opportunities?**

**Key concerns:**

- Loss of customization for diverse grant programs, including legally required elements.
- Challenges in supporting statutory requirements related to grants management and metrics.
- Increased complexity and burden on applicants due to irrelevant fields.
- Difficulties in accommodating different funding sources and their unique requirements.
- Need for dynamic and flexible application forms.
- Cost and volume of modifications for current operating processes.
- Standardized forms becoming unwieldy, overdesigned, and lacking customization.
- Challenges in gathering specific program-related information for assessment and equitable award determination.
- Difficulty of standardizing across multiple agencies and varying award requirements.
- Potential for standardized items not to meet federal requirements for data collection and reporting.

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there were a total of 18 respondents*



# Monitoring and Reporting Survey Findings

(QUESTIONS 25-28)



## **Q25) Do you require risk assessment for the grants you issue?**

Overall insight: Most state agencies do not use a risk assessment.

Of the 16\* respondents that award grants:

- 9 answered “Yes”
- 4 answered “No”
- 3 answered “N/A” or provided no reply

Of the 10 respondents that answered “Yes”, 4 provided links to sample documentation as part of the next question (26).

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there were a total of 18 respondents*



**Q26) Can you share your agency's risk assessment form and instructions, including any scoring used for determining monitoring and reporting requirements?**

Among 10 (of the 16\*) survey respondents:

- 4 respondents provided links to sample documentation as part of their reply
- 1 respondent, the Maryland Aviation Administration (MAA) provided a link of a sample “Local Public Agency (LPA) Self-Assessment”, shared with MDOT’s State Highway Administration, related to federal funding and noted the MAA applies consistent assessment across their funding programs.
- 1 respondent, the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) noted that requirements and evaluations vary broadly across the type of funding programs, i.e., State vs Federal, Capital vs Operating, and Grant vs Loan vs Tax Credit vs Direct Assistance programs.

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there were a total of 18 respondents*



## MEGA Council Survey (Responses) – Question 26 (cont.)

**RISK ASSESSMENT** – Common questions, in accessible sample documents provided, included:

- Federal Identification (FEIN/SSN, SAMS, Legal Name, Tax Status/Entity or Organization Type) for program eligibility, award, payment, correspondence, and reporting.
- Additional identifying and verifying documents may be required based on funding program, or requests from the Office of the Attorney General, Maryland Department of State, or other governing body (e.g., Certificate of Status, IRS Determination, Independent Financial Audit, Annual Budget, Board Details).
- Explanation or listing of prior experience and/or award history to demonstrate ability to manage, spend, monitor/report, and complete State and/or Federal projects.
- Completion/participation in training on funding requirements and compliance with State or Federal program statutes, regulations, guidelines, manuals, etc., sometimes mandatory for applicants, awardees, subrecipients, consultants, or contractors.
- Quantitative or Qualitative project impact as: (a) outcome measures; (b) total dollar-value; and/or (c) ratio and “multiplier” return on government-to-public investment (“leverage”).
- For programs with sub-grantees, consultants, and/or contractors – identification, verification, documentation, training, and/or additional questions may be asked to assess understanding and compliance with State or Federal laws, regulations or guidelines. Site Control, MHT, MOUs, contracts, conditions, “good standing” or other requirements may apply, as with direct awardees.



### MEGA Council Survey (Responses) – Question 26 (cont.)

**RISK ASSESSMENT** -- Program Staff include in their guidelines, training materials and forms such information and questions that help to assess the applicant's experience and/or the project's alignment with the programs eligibility, requirements or objectives, including:

- hiring, contracting, bid and procurement practices
- project management, milestones, deliverables, and tracking
- environmental and historical conservation and protections
- nondiscrimination and accessibility requirements
- eligible/allowable evidence of expenditures and invoicing
- financial accounting and reporting
- records retention and auditing
- measurable outcomes specific to the funding program
- State, Departmental, or programmatic policy goals



### MEGA Council Survey (Responses) – Question 26 (cont.)

**Evaluation or Scoring** criteria vary based on the funding program or funding source. “Weight” may be given to some criteria over others, depending requirements, policy goals or objectives, etc.

**Monitoring and Reporting** requirements and frequency (weekly, monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, annual and final) may vary drastically between funding program.

Within a specific funding program, reporting and monitoring are generally standardized, as detailed in the program’s Guidelines, Policy or Agreement documents. Additional requirements or “special conditions” may apply to specific awarded projects, as determined by various factors.

In general, program reporting is designed to facilitate or demonstrate:

- The ability to provide timely reporting to State (Legislative, Departmental and Statewide) or Federal interests, as required by law, program, or as written in the awarded contract.
- The ability for the program to assess the project/awardee’s compliance with the funding program, the contract and conditions of the award
- The ability to Monitor/Track the award’s progress toward successful completion, in terms of the project’s specific milestones and expenditures, deliverables or measured outcomes.

*See also Question 27*



**Q27) Does your agency have a policy regarding required monitoring for the grants you issue? Or is this specific to each grant?**

15\* respondents answered "Yes" or provided a detailed response.

- 13 of these respondents stated that grant monitoring policies varied depending on the funding program and/or source (State vs. Federal).
- 3 respondents adhered only to Federal guidelines relevant to their specific funding program, without any broader agency policy.
- 4 respondents had internal policies and procedures beyond Federal requirements.
- 2 respondents specified that financial and programmatic monitoring occurred with reporting schedules and as an end-of-year assessment.
- 1 respondent described their monitoring as "informal," conducted through various forms of correspondence.
- Several "Yes" respondents conflated "monitoring" policy with "reporting" policy (See also Q28).

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\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants



## **Q28) Does your agency have a policy regarding required reporting for the grants you issue? Or is this specific to each grant?**

Reporting policies for grants vary widely. Most agencies handle reporting requirements on a grant-specific basis, rather than through a single overarching policy. About 55% indicated that reporting is determined individually per grant program, driven by funder requirements, statutory mandates, or program design.

About 30% of respondents reported formalized, agency-level reporting policies.

- These policies are generally outlined in toolkits, general conditions, or standard grant manuals.
- Reports are typically quarterly and final closeout reports, with formats aligning with federal Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200) or state-level/funder templates.

15% of respondents reported that they do not issue subgrants and therefore do not maintain grant reporting policies.

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants*



# **Customer Service Workgroup Survey Findings**

**(QUESTIONS 29-31)**



## **Q29) Do you collect feedback about the grant life cycle from grantees about their experience? If yes, how and how often?**

- Of the 16\* survey respondents, the majority (13) collect feedback informally on an ongoing basis or through a formal process:
  - Seven agencies have a question on their final or annual report or administer an annual survey to collect grantee feedback.
- Three agencies responded with “N/A” or do not collect grantee feedback.

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants; there was a total of 18 respondents*



### **Q30) How do you store subaward data, such as applicant info, impact/results? How do you analyze trends with the results?**

- **Data Storage:** Agency-shared drive, Excel (for mapping purpose & data visualization), Grants Management System (GMS), OneStop, federal systems to collect impact for MD specific programs, ExportMD
- **Financial Data Storage:** Financial Management Information System (FMIS)
- **Trend Analysis:** Geographical mapping to analyze reach, review impact results and fund distribution of funded projects.
- **General Feedback:** web-based meetings, interviews, quarterly/final reports

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants*



**Q31) Do you collect feedback from grant managers about employee experience? If yes, how and how often and how are feedback results used to improve processes?**

**No - 8**

**Yes - 8**

**N/A- 2\***

**Frequency:** mid-year, monthly, quarterly, annual discussions

- To improve internal processes including communication and efficiency
- To modify processes based on feedback for next round of NOFA
- To make incremental changes in policies and procedures
- To make performance improvement of grant systems

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*\* 2 agencies indicated they do not award any grants*