COUNTY OF ALLEGHENY

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COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Name Of Policy:	**Original Date Issued:** 8/14/25
AP 103: Establishment of Grants Office and Grant Making Procedures	
Date(s) Revised:	**Issued By Direction Of:**
This policy supersedes and replaces all previously issued policies related to the administration of granting activity.	_____ John Fournier County Manager, Allegheny County

Scope:

This policy applies to the following individuals:

	Applies (X)		Applies (X)
Non-Union Full-Time Employees	x	Contract Employees	x
Non-Union Part-Time Employees	x	Temporary Employees	x
Union Full-Time Employees	x	Contractors	x
Union Part-Time Employees	x	Any Person Who Works as an Agent for the County in Any Other Capacity	x

*Administrative Policies in Allegheny County are recommended for row offices, County Council, and the Courts, however are only applicable upon adoption by these independent bodies.

1. Introduction

1.1 Objective

Establish the Allegheny County Office of Grants to centralize the County's grant functions, allowing greater capacity to successfully apply for and manage a wide range of competitive grant opportunities from private and public agencies. This includes local, state, federal, corporate and foundation dollars. This office is designed to provide hands on assistance throughout the grant life cycle from application through closeout. A central, bird's eye view of grant funding across the County will help coordinate and streamline internal efforts, as well as create a mechanism to implement a larger grants vision and strategy that aligns with the County Executive's priorities.

1.2 Memorandum

Prior to this policy, there were no consistent policies and procedures across departments related to county grant pursuits. Departments were solely responsible for identifying, applying for, and managing their own competitive and non-competitive grant funds. The intention of this policy is to eliminate this situation, and manage for the following problems:

A. No central repository for grant applications or related contracts. When someone leaves, the knowledge about that grant can disappear. Often, there is no continuity plan beyond the current grant administrators and projects can fall by the wayside. No one can easily find comprehensive information about the county's grant applications in one place.
B. No consistent in-depth review of grants before they are submitted. The County Manager approves executive actions, but the information included in that action are not detailed enough to make strategic grant decisions. No application quality control exists beyond current department procedures, which are inconsistent.
C. No formal grants process in place. This leaves many things up to interpretation by departments, discourages staff from applying for funding opportunities, and creates more opportunities to mishandle grant funds, which is a major liability for the County and its relationships with funding agencies.
D. No assistance identifying new grant opportunities. Departments often pursue the same annual funding because 'they always do' and may be missing other key opportunities or lack the tools and support to find new funding.
E. No centralized support on the pre award grants process. Grants are very time consuming to apply for and manage. Departments may be missing opportunities because they lack capacity.

Centralizing grant functions benefits everyone. Those benefits include:

A. Provide hands-on assistance throughout the grant life cycle from identification to application and through award closeout
B. Create a unified county-wide grants vision and strategy
C. Create a single point of contact for County grant-related information
D. Ensure efficiency, accuracy, and completeness of work to secure and implement grants
E. Ensure the integrity of the County's good standing among grantmaking entities
F. Explore more interdepartmental and external partnership opportunities
G. Help coordinate lobbying efforts
H. More competitive county applications

I. Finding new grant opportunities and funding agencies
J. Increased transparency
K. Increased capacity to apply for grants
L. Application quality control
M. Promote collaboration and coordination of the grants process between County departments
N. Reduce redundancy and possible competing applications
O. Increase department capacity to remain compliant on grant awards and reduce the number of federal audit findings
P. More programing, services, and infrastructure money

2. Policy

2.1 Establishment

The Allegheny County Office of Grants is hereby established.

All grant applications under the auspices of the County Manager and their reporting departments shall require the approval of the Office of Grants prior to submission, or otherwise coordinated with the Office of Grants at the Office's direction.

3. Procedures

3.1 IDENTIFYING A GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Your department may have an existing project with a funding gap or a new project idea without a supporting capital or operating line item. The Office of Grants can assist with identifying and vetting potential grant opportunities.

- Departments contact the Office of Grants with a specific need (i.e. new unfunded program, equipment purchase, planning project, construction project etc.).
- The Office of Grants will use an online grants database and funding expertise to locate the most appropriate grant opportunities.
- If a grant opportunity is identified, we will schedule a grant evaluation meeting.
- If there is not an opportunity available, the Office of Grants will keep a running project list to inform future opportunities and follow up accordingly.

Please note: Both the Office of Grants and the Department are responsible for identifying potential grant opportunities.

3.2 EVALUATING A GRANT OPPORTUNITY

Once a grant is identified, the Office of Grants will help the Department determine potential advantages and disadvantages to applying. Not every grant is a perfect fit, so it is imperative to be thoughtful and strategic about grant opportunities. Every grant evaluation will include the following:

- Complete an in-depth review of application, including content and application components
- Evaluate potential financial implications including but not limited to:

- o Total anticipated project cost
- o Match requirements and sources
- o Partner organizations/sub-contractors
- o Staffing requirements (including salary and benefits increases for multi-year grants)
- o Documentation of a clear continuation plan
- Evaluate programmatic implications including but not limited to:
  - o Alignment with the County Executives strategic priorities
  - o Alignment with the Department's goals
  - o Department's capacity to administer the programmatic, financial, and administrative grant requirements
- Make a joint decision about application pursuit

Please note: This in-depth evaluation process may not apply to every opportunity. Please reach out to the Office of Grants for clarification.

3.3 SUBMITTING AN EXECUTIVE ACTION

Each new grant opportunity must be entered into Action Tracker as a "Grant" PRIOR to moving forward with an executive action. The Office of Grants is available for questions and support.

- Departments must use the "Grants" Executive Action option for all grant-related submissions
- The Grants Manager will approve all Grant-related Executive Actions before they are approved by the County Manager.
- Departments will make the Office of Grants aware of a grant opportunity and its intent to pursue in advance of submitting the Executive Action as feasible.

3.4 PLANNING AND DEVELOPING A GRANT APPLICATION

The Office of Grants is here to provide ongoing support throughout the proposal development. Each grant application is unique and requires varying levels of time commitment. As such, the Office of Grants is always available as a resource, but departmental staff will be active contributors to the application, especially as it relates to project-specific and technical expertise. After a decision to apply is made, the Office of Grants can assist with the following:

- Develop an application submission timeline
- Assign grant tasks
- Contribute to content creation
- Identify a larger project team to aide in application development
- Schedule ongoing check-in and working meetings through submission date
- Ensure completion and compilation of all grant components by the deadline

As part of the planning and development process, departments can expect the following assistance from the Office of Grants: A) Attend grant project team meetings and provide expertise and feedback B) Assist with writing content and securing letters of support or commitment C) Offer guidance on best practices for developing budgets, logic models, and other common grant application requirements.

3.5 APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Each grant funding agency requires access to specific portals for grant application submissions. The process for each may vary and will be handled on a case-by-case basis. Once the application materials are completed and ready for submission, the Department will complete the following as needed:

- Request access to the required funding portal/create necessary login
- Ensuring you are connected to the correct account with the correct signatories listed is a crucial step in applying for grant funds as more granting agencies are requiring electronic signatures. Always double check with the Office of Grants prior to creating an application in a grants system for submission as each account and portal requirements may differ.
- Upload all application materials to funding portal
- Check funder signature requirements and add the appropriate contact, if applicable. The Office of Grants can help you identify the proper signatory for each grant.
- Send copies of all application materials (including narratives, attachments, maps, letters of support, etc.) to grants@alleghenycounty.us

The Office of Grants will retain a digital copy of the application and supporting materials in the Grants Repository, but the Department should also retain relevant grant records for a minimum of 7 years for auditing purposes.

3.6 AWARD/REJECTION NOTIFICATION

As noted above, each funder requires different portal access for grant submissions. This can sometimes mean important grant-related communication gets lost between the Department project lead and the Office of Grants. Once a department receives notification about a grant award or rejection, they should immediately forward a copy of that email or letter to grants@alleghenycounty.us

3.7 LOCAL FOUNDATION REQUESTS

Allegheny County is home to many local foundations and it is critical to handle these resources strategically. Departments may have existing relationships with local foundations, and we encourage those engagements; however, no formal funding requests will be made without first contacting the Office of Grants. Every effort will be made to line up annual local foundation priorities and requests in conjunction with the County Executive and County Manager.

The Grants Manager will be the central point of contact for all local foundation requests. Department leadership should reach out to the Grants Manager with any potential upcoming local foundation requests prior to formalizing that request with the local foundation and before submitting an Executive Action.

3.8 NONCOMPETITIVE GRANTS

Some grant funding streams do not require a competitive application process and are instead allocated based on predetermined eligibility requirements. Departments will notify the Office of

Grants regarding annual awards with the agency name, grant name, amount of funding, and project purpose prior to submission. They will also provide any relevant submission information and award documentation to include in the Grants Repository.

3.9 CONTINUATION APPLICATIONS

These applications may be an extension of or renewal of an existing funding stream. Departments will notify the Office of Grants of any continuation applications and provide updated program parameters and budget documents prior to submission.

If a direction relative to grants cannot be specifically located in this policy, please contact the Office of Grants for assistance.

4. Record Retention
None

5. Attachments
None

6. Questions/Contact Information
Questions concerning this policy should be directed to:
      Allegheny County Manager's Office
      119 Courthouse
      436 Grant Street
      Pittsburgh, PA. 15219
      Phone: (412) 350-5300

7. Miscellaneous
None