



TACIR INSIGHT

TENNESSEE ADVISORY COMMISSION ON INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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STATE GRANTS TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS: IMPROVING THE POST-AWARD PHASE SO FUNDING MAY BE MORE EFFECTIVELY UTILIZED

Background

State-administered grants—including those that are federally funded—provide hundreds of millions of dollars to local governments in Tennessee each year. But they can also be a source of frustration for grantor and grantee alike when verifying that projects comply with grant requirements. In response to a request from its chairman, Senator Yager, the Commission reviewed the post-award phase of state grants to local governments to identify any changes warranted to streamline grant processes so that grant funds may be more effectively utilized. The post-award phase is the stage in a grant’s lifecycle when the activities for which funding has been awarded are carried out. Both the grantor and the grantee have responsibilities during the post-award phase that involve complying with grant requirements, which help ensure the use of taxpayer funds is accountable and transparent.

Findings and Recommendations

The Commission recommends that

- the state require agencies to use a single, statewide grant management system to promote a more uniform, user-friendly experience across agencies for grantees, with exceptions provided for agencies that can demonstrate the system won’t support functions necessary for their grant programs;
- state agencies accept Title VI training provided by other agencies when verifying compliance with federal and state law—unless they can demonstrate other agencies’ trainings are inadequate for their programs—to eliminate the need for grantees to take multiple trainings when they have grants with multiple agencies;
- state agencies regularly convene grant advisory boards made up of representatives for local governments and the entities that assist them with carrying out grant projects—similar to the boards already established by the Department of Economic and Community Development and other agencies—to solicit feedback for improving grant requirements and processes and to prioritize issues of importance to grantees, for example when considering new programmatic agreements with federal partners; and that
- the state consider establishing an interagency working group for sharing lessons learned from agencies’ efforts to improve grant requirements and processes to promote the adoption of best practices across grant programs.

See TACIR’s full report at the following link for additional information: <https://www.tn.gov/tacir/tacir-publications/publications-by-date.html>.