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November 17, 2020 - Murphy Administration Announces $10 Million for Next Round of Shared Services Grant Funding

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Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) Grant Applications for Fiscal Year 2021 Now Open

TRENTON, NJ – The Murphy Administration and New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) today announced $10 million in available funding for the Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) for Fiscal Year 2021. Applications are currently being accepted. LEAP provides financial assistance to local government entities such as counties, municipalities, school districts, authorities, and fire districts across the State of New Jersey to identify, study, and implement shared services initiatives. The program is aimed at encouraging towns to streamline their government services to increase efficiency and help save taxpayer dollars.

"As municipalities and local entities are feeling the pain of rising costs due to COVID-19, the LEAP grants provide them with an opportunity to shave operating costs by working with their neighbors across town lines," **said Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as DCA Commissioner**. "Despite the technical challenges towns have faced as a result of the pandemic, we have seen continued success with shared services this year and hope that people will once again apply for this program to find critical cost savings for their residents."

LEAP is comprised of three primary components: Challenge, Implementation, and County Coordinator Fellowship Grants.

The **Challenge Grants** promote innovation and collaboration on more expansive projects and levels of participation that produce shared services with increased significance to local communities.

The **Implementation Grants** support costs associated with implementation of shared services and school feasibility studies.

The **County Coordinator Fellowship Grants** support the identification and advancement of shared services opportunities through the hiring of a full-time fellow within the county.

"The LEAP Grant affords an unprecedented opportunity to incentivize shared services implementation across New Jersey's local government entities by advancing the mission of the shared services program," **said Melanie R. Walter, Director of DLGS.**

With 565 local government entities, over 600 local school districts and 21 counties, there is tremendous potential for shared services development that can assist local governments in achieving high-quality services at reduced costs for taxpayers.

Shared Service Czars Jordan Glatt and Nicolas W. Platt, who were appointed by Governor Phil Murphy in 2018, travel across the state meeting with county and local government officials providing support, guidance, and education on the benefits of shared services. Since their appointment, DLGS has received over 1,500 shared services agreements.

“As many local governments experience unprecedented demands on budgets and operations as a result of the COVID-19 health emergency, the need to focus on recovery is paramount. With cost reduction, improved service delivery, and optimization of equipment and supplies, shared services can provide highly effective solutions which can help build resilience in our communities,” **said Jordan Glatt, a former mayor of Summit, Union County.** He added, “We need to build bridges to help support recovery efforts through the use of shared services.”

“Shared services are proven to be a win-win situation for local governmental entities regarding taxpayer savings and have opened doors to eliminating the stand-alone mindset that inhibits collaboration. The service sharing efforts in many counties and municipalities throughout New Jersey have already improved the quality and breadth of resources available to residents and have allowed many local governments to work together to overcome perceived hurdles to efficiency and taxpayer savings,” **said Nicolas Platt, a former mayor of Harding Township, Morris County.**

DLGS is responsible for administering the LEAP program. Eligible entities are invited to apply for grant funds under each of the LEAP grants: Challenge Grants, Implementation Grants, and County Coordinator Fellowship Grants. A full description of each grant is outlined below.

Challenge Grants

Challenge Grants will allocate funds to the most compelling projects in potentially each of New Jersey’s 21 counties. This grant program is designed to promote innovation among peer communities and counties across New Jersey, and challenge municipalities and counties to collaborate on more extensive partnerships that produce shared services of notable significance. LEAP Challenge Grants provide reimbursement for qualifying expenses incurred in the development of approved programs and services authorized under the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act (N.J.S.A. 40:65-1 et seq.).

Local units are invited to compete for a share of up to $150,000 in available funds within each county. New Jersey counties, municipalities, school districts, commissions, authorities, and fire districts may apply. Any two or more of these entities may submit a joint application seeking funding for a proposal.

Application Deadline: February 26, 2021

For further details please see the Challenge Grant Guidelines and Application:
Challenge Grant Guidelines
Challenge Grant Application

Implementation Grants

Implementation Grants will allocate funds to help cover costs associated with shared services implementation such as one-time reimbursable costs for project completion or transition support which may include, but are not limited to, new technology costs incurred as part of equipping a shared services program, rebranding costs, equipment and vehicle outlays, professional services, rent for facilities, payroll system conversion costs, and training. Funding is based on the total transition or implementation cost of a project.

This grant program also provides monies for reimbursement of costs associated with school consolidation and countywide school district studies that support the creation of meaningful and implementable regionalization plans. K-12 regionalization and countywide school district studies will be given first priority.

Application Deadline: This is a rolling application process. Although there is no deadline for submission, potential applicants are reminded that limited funding is available under the applicable FY2021 appropriation, and awards under the FY2021 funding cycle must be made on or before June 30, 2021.

For further details please see the Implementation Grant Guidelines and Application:
Implementation Grant Guidelines
Implementation Grant Application

County Coordinator Fellowship Grants

County Coordinator Fellowship Grants will allocate funds to each county for the purpose of hiring a fellow to work full-time with the county and each local unit within the county or any entity with which they may be able to share services to identify and advance shared service opportunities. This grant is also available to supplement existing coordinator functions, but funds may only be used for a new position, not an offset of expenses incurred for an existing position.

Each New Jersey county is encouraged to apply for a $50,000 grant for the purpose of funding a one-year, full-time position.

Application Deadline: February 26, 2021

For further details please see the County Coordinator Grant Guidelines and Application:
County Coordinator Fellowship Grant Guidelines
County Coordinator Fellowship Grant Application

For further information about LEAP Grant guidelines and required documentation, visit the DLGS website:
https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/programs/leapgrants.html.

To request information about LEAP Grants, please email: leapgrants@dca.nj.gov.

For information on shared services more broadly, please email sharedservices@nj.gov.

The Division of Local Government Services serves as an advocate for local government interests and provides technical and financial assistance in budgeting, financial reporting, joint services, purchasing, and management issues. They are responsible for the financial integrity of all local government units and review and approve all municipal, county, and fire district budgets. They also review many local government financial actions and govern and guide the conduct of local government officials.

The DCA offers a wide range of programs and services, including affordable housing production, fire safety, building safety, community planning and development, local government management and finance, and disaster recovery.

For more information about DCA, visit **https://nj.gov/dca/** or follow the Department on social media:

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