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Philip D. Murphy
Governor



PRESS RELEASE

Sheila Y. Oliver
Lt. Governor & Commissioner

Murphy Administration Announces \$10 Million for Next Round of Shared Services Grant Funding

Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) Grant Applications Now Open for Fiscal Year 2023

TRENTON, NJ – The Murphy Administration and New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) today announced that applications are now being accepted for the distribution of \$10 million in available funding through the Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) that was allocated in the fiscal year 2023 state budget. 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.

“Because many New Jersey local governments are still feeling the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects of an uncertain economy on budgets and operations, sharing services has become an increasingly used tool as one way of overcoming financial challenges,” said **Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as DCA Commissioner**. “DCA is proud to assist communities with these shared services efforts through our LEAP initiative, which has proven to be helpful to local governments that want to make shared services ideas a reality.”

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 new employee or designating an existing employee to work with the county and any entity within the county, including local units of government, to

identify and advance shared service opportunities. For those counties already employing or engaging coordinators, this grant is still available to supplement the coordinator function.

“To embark on shared services is no easy feat for local governments. It takes a great deal of commitment and even courage because it can be hard to share control of essential services,” **said Jacquelyn A. Suárez, Director of DLGS.** “It’s why the Murphy Administration has put in place so many tools such as LEAP grants that local governments can use to make the work less difficult.”

To date, over \$8 million in LEAP grants have been awarded in support of shared services throughout the state. LEAP grants have helped to produce tremendous savings for local governments while improving the lives of many. For instance, recent county correctional facility consolidations enabled staff and inmates to be relocated to more modern, and up-to-date facilities. DCA recently helped facilitate and execute the following shared services agreements:

- Atlantic County Utilities Authority (ACUA) entered into a waste collection shared service agreement with Cumberland County Improvement Authority (CCIA) yielding a first year cost savings of \$260,581 and a second year cost savings of \$259,641.
- Cumberland County Improvement Authority (CCIA) entered into a capital projects management shared service agreement yielding a first year cost savings of \$624,984.
- Sussex and Morris Counties entered into a correctional facility shared services agreement yielding a yearly cost savings of \$1.4 million.
- Union and Essex Counties entered into a correctional facility shared services agreement yielding cost savings of over \$103 million for a 5-year period.

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 2,300 shared services agreements.

“With 564 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,” **said Jordan Glatt, a former mayor of Summit, Union County and Nicolas W. Platt, a former mayor of Harding Township, Morris County.** “It is gratifying for us to see tools like the LEAP grant are working to positive effect in communities across the state. It is our hope that other towns take advantage of the opportunity this funding provides.”

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: March 15, 2023

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.

Applicants are reminded that limited funding is available under the applicable FY2023 appropriation, and awards under the FY2023 funding cycle must be made on or before June 30, 2023. Applicants are encouraged to submit a completed application package by March 15, 2023, to ensure consideration for the FY 2023 funding cycle.

County Coordinator Fellowship Grants

County Coordinator Fellowship Grants will allocate funds to each county for the purpose of hiring a new employee or designating an existing employee to act as a county coordinator fellow, working with the county and any entity within the county, including local units of government, to identify and advance shared service opportunities.

Each New Jersey county is encouraged to apply for up to a \$75,000 grant for the purpose of funding a one-year, full-time position or part time position at 20 hours per week.

Application Deadline: March 15, 2023

For further information about LEAP Grant guidelines and required documentation, visit the DLGS website at <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.

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

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



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