



Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP)
County Coordinator Fellowship Grant Guidelines
Fiscal Year 2024

State of New Jersey
Philip D. Murphy, Governor

Department of Community Affairs
Jacquelyn A. Suárez, Acting Commissioner

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs
101 S. Broad Street
Trenton, NJ 08625
P.O. Box 803
DLGS.LEAPGRANT@DCA.NJ.GOV

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA) is dedicated to helping local governments improve the quality of life in every one of the State's 564 municipalities. Through a variety of programs, DCA's Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) works with counties and municipalities to streamline government operations and reduce costs and property taxes.

In 2018, Governor Phil Murphy launched the Shared Services Program with the appointment of two "Czars," former mayors Nicolas Platt and Jordan Glatt, to promote shared services throughout the State.

In 2019, DLGS established the Local Assistance Bureau (LAB) to provide direct support to local government entities in a variety of ways. This includes a key collaboration with the Czars and local governments to identify and implement shared services opportunities across the state.

The Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) is a natural extension of this mission.

Sharing services offers numerous benefits for participating communities. It reduces costs, delivers municipal services in a more efficient manner, and generates increased value for each dollar spent while ensuring local government entities remain responsible stewards of the public trust.

The LEAP affords an unprecedented opportunity to partner with the DLGS to incentivize shared services implementation across New Jersey's local government entities, advancing the mission of the Shared Services Program. The LEAP facilitates exploring and establishing shared services. The LEAP provides counties, municipalities, school districts, authorities, and fire districts assistance for the study or implementation of promising shared services projects undertaken pursuant to the Uniform Shared Service and Consolidation Act. The program is available to all New Jersey local government entities.

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

DLGS is responsible for administering the LEAP. Eligible entities are invited to apply for grant funds under each of the LEAP Grants. All information needed to apply is contained in these guidelines and the application package.

LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grants allocate up to \$75,000 to each county for the purpose of hiring a new full- or part-time employee or designating an existing employee (in good standing), to act as a county Shared Services Coordinator Fellow. The fellow will work with the county and each local government entity within the county or any entity with whom they may be able to share services 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.

The guidelines and funding levels will be reviewed annually and are subject to change with each funding cycle. Additionally, DCA reserves the right, in its sole discretion, to adjust the amount awarded under the LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grant by the amount of unexpended

funds available in other LEAP Grants or transfer unexpended County Coordinator Fellowship Grant funds to other LEAP Grants.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

New Jersey counties are eligible to receive LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grant funding.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

Funding for the LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grant originates from \$7.5 million appropriated through the state budget, A.L. 2023 c. 74, for Shared Services and School District Consolidation Study and Implementation Grants from the Property Tax Relief Fund.

Each county is invited to apply for up to \$75,000 in grant monies to offset the direct salary costs related to the appointment of a shared services coordinator fellow who may be an existing employee, or newly hired, and who is dedicated to shared service initiatives. The fellow shall be a full-time employee whose employment may be dedicated to full-time or part-time shared service initiatives. A county with a full-time employee dedicated solely to shared service initiatives shall receive up to \$75,000 in grant funding. A county with a part-time employee dedicated to shared service initiatives for at least 20 hours per week, on average, shall receive up to \$37,500 in grant funding. Renewal of the LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grant in future budget years is subject to available appropriations.

FUNDING PERIOD

The funding period for the Shared Services Coordinator Fellow is July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT CRITERIA

Eligible Applicants must meet the following criteria:

1. Demonstrate the applicant's capacity to provide project management and oversight for all fellowship activities and fiscal operations.
2. Designate a senior county officer as supervisor to direct the fellow's activities.
3. Commit to the fellow's attendance at DLGS training and to providing quarterly progress reports that summarize ongoing coordinator activities.
4. Commit to the fellow's completion of a final report documenting program activities and accomplishments during the fellowship grant period.
5. Commit to providing employee fringe benefits.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grant funding is available exclusively to offset the direct salary costs related to the appointment of a shared services coordinator fellow.

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- Professional consulting contracts
- Temporary/contract employee

APPLICATION PROCESS

Complete applications must be submitted by the county requesting fellowship funds.

The following forms must be submitted to complete a LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grant application:

- a. Grant application.
- b. County Board of Commissioners Resolution (see resolution sample in application).
- c. Resume of a new or existing employee appointed to the shared services coordinator fellowship position. If the county anticipates appointing a new employee but that person is not hired prior to the application submittal, the employee's resume is to be submitted upon hiring.
- d. Brief description of existing shared services coordination activities, if any.

Applicants are to submit their application and supporting documentation as one (1) PDF document file format via electronic mail to: dlgs.leapgrant@dca.nj.gov.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE

This is a rolling application process; however, application submission deadline is **5:00 p.m. EST on April 15, 2024 for the application to be eligible for grant funding**. Limited funding is available under the applicable FY 2024 appropriation and awards under FY 2024 funding cycle must be encumbered before June 30, 2024. A completed application package must be submitted electronically to DLGS at dlgs.leapgrant@dca.nj.gov. The date of email submission shall constitute the date filed.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

GRANT REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS

DLGS will evaluate all applications for completion and viability. Each qualifying applicant will be notified within forty-five (45) days of receipt of a completed application.

GRANT FUNDING PROCESS

All awards are subject to the availability of funds.

Upon completion of grant review and grantee notification, DLGS will enter into an agreement with applicants approved for funding.

LEAP County Coordinator Fellowship Grants are paid upon the execution of a Grant Agreement. Grantees will receive payment via electronic transfer of funds to the account and financial institution identified by the grantee within thirty (30) days of execution of the Grant Agreement.

Grantees shall maintain and retain accounting, other grant-related records, and information for the duration of the fellowship period, and as otherwise required by applicable state and local laws and regulations. Such records shall be subject to examination, audit, and inspection by DLGS and/or any other federal, state, or local agency that has jurisdictional authority.

DLGS reserves the right to rescind all or part of an award, reclaim grant funds or withhold future grant funding and/or disqualify a grantee from participating in future grant awards if any condition of the grant program is unmet, including if grant funds received by the grantee are not properly accounted for, or if the grantee fails to meet reporting or certification requirements.

QUARTERLY REPORTING

Grantees shall provide the DLGS with Quarterly Progress Reports, reporting on the activities and progress of the County Coordinator Fellow. Quarterly Progress Reports are due on the following dates:

Grant Agreement Period ending December 31st - Report due January 15th

Grant Agreement Period ending March 31st - Report due April 15th

Grant Agreement Period ending June 30th - Report due July 15th

Grant Agreement Period ending September 30th - Report due October 15th

GRANT CLOSEOUT PROCESS

At the conclusion of the annual fellowship period, July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024, which constitutes a fellowship's one-year term, the recipient County must submit a certification that the shared services coordinator fellow position has been filled for the entire fellowship period or 365 days. If the position is not filled for the entire annual fellowship period, the grant funding will be pro-rated, and the county will be required to reimburse DLGS for the unfulfilled work period.

Calculation: Grant amount / 365 days x number of days shared services coordinator position not filled.

- Full-time Example: \$75,000 /365 days = \$205.48 x 50 days not worked = \$10,274 reimbursement.

The recipient County must also submit a final report documenting that all administrative responsibilities and required activities under the Grant Agreement have been satisfactorily completed. This shall include the Fellow's Final Report.

GRANT RENEWAL

Program continuance is dependent on the availability of funds provided for the LEAP Grant. Grantees may re-apply for funding the following fiscal year by submitting a grant application along with supporting documentation and will be awarded grant funding based on available funding and County Coordinator Fellowship Grant Program compliance from the previous fiscal year award(s).

ASSISTANCE

Applicants may contact program staff at (609) 913-4398 to discuss program and project needs up to submission of the application. Questions can also be submitted via e-mail to dlgs.leapgrant@dca.nj.gov.