MEMORANDUM

To: All County Departments and Elected Offices
From: Moran, Miriam, Director of Grants Administration
Subject: Purpose for the County-Wide Grant Administration Policy

Overview
The County-Wide Grant Administration Policy establishes a unified framework to ensure all departments and elected offices follow consistent, compliant, and transparent practices when seeking, securing, and managing external grant funding. This policy applies universally across the County and covers all funding types, award mechanisms, and stages of the grant lifecycle. It aligns with the County's organizational need for accountability, fiscal stewardship, and adherence to federal, state, and local requirements.

Purpose of the Policy
The policy was developed to:

- Create consistency in how grants are applied for, approved, implemented, amended, and closed out.
- Ensure centralized oversight so that compliance risks, fiscal impacts, and match-funding obligations are properly evaluated before commitments are made.
- Establish clear lines of authority and responsibility across departments, preventing unauthorized submissions, expenditures, or commitments to external agencies.
- Promote early coordination through the required intake process, which supports proper planning, documentation accuracy, and timely review before Commissioners Court deadlines.
- Strengthen county-wide transparency

Reason for Implementing a County-Wide Policy
A uniform policy is necessary because grant activity affects county operations, finances, legal obligations, and long-term program outcomes. Inconsistencies across departments can create compliance vulnerabilities, risk ineligible expenditures, compromise match-funding commitments, and expose the County to audit findings or loss of funding. Centralized review—particularly regarding budget, match, and amendment requests—protects the County by ensuring all grant-related decisions are defensible, properly documented, and fiscally sound.

Future Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)
A comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) will follow. This SOP will provide detailed workflows and step-by-step instructions for specific grant administration tasks that will expand and outline requirements and coordination for each phase of the grant lifecycle. The SOP will serve as a practical, operational guide for departments and will support consistent implementation of the overarching policy.

Recommendations

Grants Administration requests the Court to consider adoption of the Grants Administration County-Wide Policy.

Grants Administration County-Wide Policy

This policy creates a uniform process for the development, review, approval, and submission of all grant applications. It applies to all County departments, including elected offices and divisions seeking external funding of any kind. Centralized oversight ensures compliance, fiscal accountability, and proper tracking of local match funds before a commitment is made.

1. Mandatory Intake Process:

Every grant application must go through the Grants Administration Department application intake process ahead of Commissioners Court deadlines and prior to the external application submission date.

- Commissioners Court Approval Required: All grant applications must receive formal approval by the Commissioners Court prior to external submission. The Grants Administration Department will prepare court agenda items related to current and future grants.

- Prior Authorization: No grant application may be submitted to an external funding agency or placed on the Court agenda independently without prior review and written authorization from the Director of Grants Administration.

2. Grant Match Funds

Stewardship of Grant Match Funds: Grants Administration is responsible for oversight and coordination of the Grant Match Fund Budget. Departments shall not commit, encumber, or otherwise obligate any local match (Mandatory or Discretionary) without Grants Administration Department review and confirmation of available and eligible match sources during the application phase or throughout the life of the grant.

3. Required Review of Grant Related Amendments/Adjustments

All amendments or modifications to existing grants must be routed through the Grants Administration Department, including but not limited to:

- Budget amendments or reallocation of funds.
- Scope changes or revised deliverables.
- Time extensions or revised performance periods.

After department submission, Grants Administration will evaluate funding implications, compliance considerations, fiscal impacts, and required approvals.

Grants Over $100K: Any amendment or modification to a grant with a total grant budget exceeding $100,000 shall also be submitted to Commissioners Court for approval.

Smaller Grants: Smaller grants must have written justification explaining why the proposed modifications are being made. Approval from Grants Administration is required and additional department head approvals may be required depending on the nature of the changes.

4. Departmental Responsibilities

The department receiving or servicing the grant plays a critical role in ensuring financial accountability and operational compliance. To safeguard grant funding and maintain alignment with regulatory standards, the servicing department is directly responsible for the following core duties throughout the grant lifecycle.

Financial Management & Ledger Maintenance

Departments must maintain a comprehensive, up-to-date financial ledger of all grant-related expenditures. This ledger must track both the direct grant funds and required match and/or discretionary funds, specifically capturing:

- Purchases: all equipment, supplies, and materials acquired under the grant.
- Services: All professional, contractual, or consultant services utilized.
- Match Contributions: Detailed tracking of county local financial match commitments and all force account work (internal labor/equipment) and in-kind contributions.

Application & Intake Compliance

- Intake Initiation: All new grants and renewal grant requests must be formally initiated through the Grant Administration Department mandatory intake process.
- Application Integrity: Departments must provide complete, thoroughly vetted, and accurate application materials, including detailed project budgets. Grants Administration can assist with the application process upon request, providing cursory review, assistance with gathering application content/data and recommending language.

Federal, State and Local Requirements Applicable to the Grant

- Strictest Rule Adherence: Departments must adhere strictly to the most stringent rule, regulation, or statute among applicable federal, state, and local requirements. This all-encompassing mandate apples to all facets of project/grant execution, including but not limited to procurement processes, purchasing thresholds, labor standards, building codes, and environmental compliance.

Lifecycle Coordination & Grant Documentation

- Servicing Departments must actively collaborate with the Grants Administration Department from grant inception to closeout.

- Including participation is regular meetings, milestone review, providing timely progress updates, sharing all grant related documentation for audit retention and tracking metrics for internal and external reporting.