



COUNTY OF DUTCHESS

William F.X. O'Neil
County Executive

December 28, 2023

Secretary Roberto J. Rodriguez
NYS Department of State
One Commerce Plaza
Albany, NY 12231-0001

Dear Secretary Rodriguez:

Dutchess County Government has long been a leader in shared service and consolidation efforts, having reduced the size of county government over several years and cutting the county property tax levy each year for the last ten years. Key in those efforts has been the Municipal Innovation Grant Program - specifically designed to incentivize municipalities to share services, evaluate consolidation opportunities, establish a regional delivery of services, and implement other efficiencies.

In 2017, the State mandated County governments participation in its' County-Wide Shared Services Initiative (CWSSI). The CWSSI procedures were labor intensive and included planning panel meetings, document preparation, reviews, and presentations. The County carefully followed all procedures, and we were told by state officials, on multiple occasions throughout the process, that by formalizing both our current and planned shared services programs through a contract process, we would receive state funding reimbursement for the savings match. The County spent considerable time and effort to meet the State's requirements and carefully submitted through the mandated filing method. Since submission, the State has denied 88% of claims for savings match and all current programs were denied, despite assurances of funding. Most recently, the State has also denied and reduced our 2020 claim submission, and we are working on yet another round of detailed response.

Although the County believes this program was implemented with good intentions by Legislators, based on the amount of work and time required by the County, and in considering the number of submissions denied by the State, it is not in the best interest of Dutchess County to continue with this process. Therefore, the County will not be submitting a plan in 2023. The County will, however, continue our ongoing efforts to share services with municipalities and reduce overall tax burden as we have in the past.

Sincerely,

William F. X. O'Neil
Dutchess County Executive