

NOTICE OF FUNDING ANNOUNCEMENT

Foster Care Court Improvement Project Department of Family Administration Child Welfare Program Grants

Issue Date: August 8, 2011
Applications Due: August 26, 2011

General Information

The Maryland Judiciary's Foster Care Court Improvement Project (FCCIP), a federal initiative developed to improve the state's responsiveness to cases involving children in foster care, is responsible for oversight and administering federal Court Improvement Program (CIP) funds. CIP grants are federal funds awarded to each state's highest court by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families (ACF) to assist state courts in improving safety, permanency, and well-being outcomes for abused and neglected children in the child welfare system. Recipients of these funds would be subject to the provisions of Part B of the Title IV of the Social Security Act (specifically, § 438 of the Act); Public Law 103-333, Sections 507 & 508; and the administrative requirements under 45 CFR Part 92.

The Foster Care Court Improvement Project of the Department of Family Administration is announcing the availability of funds to support programs and/or projects designed to assist the courts in its processing of CINA and related TPR and Adoption cases, as well as to facilitate the elimination of barriers to timely permanency.

Funds can be used for one-time events, for example educational seminars or trainings, or for on-going programs, for example, hiring or contracting with a service provider to provide PPL-related services or other services that directly or indirectly enhance the court's ability to respond to and manage CINA and TPR cases.

Applications are subject to the availability of funds.

FCCIP staff are available to assist in preparing applications. For assistance, please call (410)260-1427.

Funding Priorities

For best consideration, applicants should demonstrate a need within the community to be served and that the project will provide services to meet that need that will be complimentary to those provided by the court. Funds may be used for the following activities:

- Assisting and collaborating with the courts in implementing new initiatives, local and national best practices, and recommendations that improve the processing of child welfare cases as identified by the court.

- Training programs for court staff in data entry or compiling statistics in child welfare cases.
- Educational or training programs for the bench, masters, and/or clerks in the area of compliance with federal statutes and regulations in child welfare cases, including content of court orders
- Monitoring Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) and related TPR/Guardianship and Adoption cases for statutory time frame compliance.
- Joint agency-court training
- Linked agency-court data systems
- Formalizing and/or improving relationships with the child welfare agency
- Assisting in the adoption and implementation of court performance measures to allow court systems to analyze their performance regarding child safety, permanency, procedural fairness and timeliness, as well as, other aspects of child well-being
- One-time or multiple education programs for court staff, including Judges, Masters, and attorneys involved in child welfare cases, including contracting with outside trainers and/or lecturers.
- Development or maintenance of ADR services for families and children involved in the child welfare system.
- Jurisdiction-specific CFSR program improvement plan (PIP) development and implementation, and legislative changes
- Improvement of legal representation for children and families
- Other programs that enhance the court's ability to serve families and children

Eligible Grantees

Eligible grantees include the courts, court-related agencies, state and local governments within the state of Maryland, and non-profit organizations within the state that enhance the Maryland Judiciary's effectiveness in processing child abuse and neglect cases.

Grant Review

The Judiciary is committed to a fair and open process in awarding grants. Grant applications will be reviewed by the Foster Care Court Improvement Project Implementation Committee and FCCIP staff. Final award determinations will be made based on recommendations of the review committee.

Award Information

Applications are subject to the availability of funds. Award letters will be sent in early September 2011. Grantees will be asked to submit an adjusted budget if the amount awarded did not equal the amount requested, or otherwise upon request.

Funding Cycle

All granted funds must be expended during the period from October 1, 2011 through September 30, 2012. No extensions will be granted.

Grant Payments

If awarded, and unless otherwise provided for in the grant agreement, grant funds will be paid on a **reimbursement basis** only, upon submission of timely financial expenditure reporting and a request for payment.

Modifications

Grantees may modify the grant budget between existing line items during the course of the fiscal year. The modifications must be submitted for review by the Foster Care Court Improvement Project. Grantees must submit modification requests in writing. Expenditures that do not comply with the adjusted or approved budget will not be authorized until FCCIP's designee signs and returns a copy of the approved budget modification to the grantee.

Direct Costs

Direct costs are those that are readily assignable to a particular project. Grantees may request funding for direct costs associated with their project.

Indirect Costs

Grantees may not request funds to support indirect (administrative) costs.

Matching Fund Requirement

Grantees are not required to provide matching funds for their grant award.

Reporting Requirements

Program & Financial

All Child Welfare Program grantees are required to submit quarterly financial and program reports reflecting their expenditures for the quarter and progress toward their program goals.

Specific program and statistical reporting requirements, including required program forms, will be provided to grantees by email prior to the start of the funding period.

Quarterly Reports and Requests for Payment are due (postmarked) not later than 15 days after the close of the quarter based on the following schedule:

<u>Reporting Period</u>	<u>Report Due Date</u>
1 st Quarter (Oct 1 thru Dec 31)	January 15
2 nd Quarter (Jan1 thru Mar 31)	April 15
3 rd Quarter (April 1 thru June 30)	July 15
4 th Quarter (July 1 thru Sept 30)	October 15

All required reporting forms, will be provided to the grantee by email prior to the start of the funding period.

Information collected from the quarterly reports will be used to monitor funded programs and assist in determining if the program is meeting its stated goals and

objectives. Additionally, the AOC reserves the right to use this data in statistical reports, annual reports, and other publications for general distribution.

Personnel and Payroll Records

All grantees must follow their organization's payroll, personnel, and time and attendance policies for each position provided for by these grants. These policies must be in writing. Upon request, grantees must provide a copy of those policies.

New Positions or Programs

All new positions and/or programs supported by this child welfare grant must commence within 90 days of the beginning of the funding period or other projected start date as indicated in the grantee's budget. If the project is not operational within that time frame, the grantee must report the steps taken to initiate the project, the reason for the delay, and the expected start date.

Failure to implement new positions or projects within this 90 day period or to obtain an extension may result in a cancellation or delay of fund distribution.

Procurement

All grantees must abide by their organization's procurement and financial policies in expending grant funds. These policies must be in writing. Upon request, grantees must provide a copy of these policies. Grantees that do not have an established written procurement policy must establish one as a condition of the grant award. The Department of Family Administration staff will provide technical assistance as needed.

Goods and/or services purchased with grant funds shall remain in the ownership and liability of the grantee and the grantee shall assume responsibility for all routine equipment maintenance and/or replacement costs.

Grantees that use grant funds for contractual services must notify potential contractors that funds for the project originated from Court Improvement Program funds provided to the Maryland Judiciary from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and that the terms of and conditions that accompany the grant award are part of the contract.

Grantees may not use grant funds to contract with any individual or entity that has been "debarred" by the Judiciary's Department of Procurement and Contract Administration or by any federal department or agency.

Accounting Requirements

Grant recipients may be subject to periodic management reviews or audits by the Judiciary and the federal agency administering the CIP grant funds. Upon accepting a grant award, grantees agree to provide any authorized federal representative and/or any representative of the Judiciary's Internal Audit Department access to and the right to examine all records, papers, books, and documents related to the grant.

Grantees must maintain full and accurate records of all financial transactions and accounts related to the grant-funded project for a minimum of three years after the grant period ends, and until audited, including requests for payment and receipts for expenses incurred, and timesheets for any salaries paid for with grant funds. These are subject to review by the Committee, DFA, the Judiciary Grants Coordinator, the Judiciary Internal Audit Department, and/or federal auditors at any time.

Grantees who expend \$500,000 or more per year under Federal grants, cooperative agreements, and/or procurement contracts will be subject to the audit requirements contained in OMB Circular A-133.

Site Visits

Grantees may be subject to site visits by Committee members or DFA (FCCIP) staff. The site visits will be designed to ensure compliance with the requirements set forth in this NOFA and evaluate the project in terms of its stated goals and objectives. Site visits may also include a fiscal review of grantee/project expenditures.

Acknowledgement of Support

All Grantees agree that any publication (written, visual or sound) issued by the Grantee describing projects funded in whole or in part with the Maryland Judiciary Grant Program funds shall contain the following statement: "This project is supported by a Court Improvement Program Grant from the Maryland Judiciary, Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Family Administration, Foster Care Court Improvement Project."

The FCCIP requests notification from grantees of any events (e.g. trainings, outreach events, volunteer appreciation events, etc.) that occur as a result of FCCIP grant funds received.

Application Information

All applicants are required to submit the completed Grant Application including a proposed budget and letter(s) of support from the court in the jurisdiction where services are to be provided.

The Grant Application is posted at: www.courts.state.md.us/family/grantadmin.html.

Submission: This application must be submitted by regular mail. Two original copies are required by mail. If funds are granted, one original will be returned to the grantee with the commitment letter.

Deadline: Applications must be received at the FCCIP/DFA by:
4:30pm on Friday, August 26, 2011.

Mailed copies should be directed to:

Tracy Watkins-Tribbitt, Director
Foster Care Court Improvement Project

Department of Family Administration
Administrative Office of the Courts
580 Taylor Avenue, 2nd Floor, A Pod
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Mark the outside of the envelope, "Child Welfare Program Grant Application."

Technical Assistance

For further information regarding this notice of funding or the application process, please contact FCCIP, Department of Family Administration, at (410) 260-1427.