

Guidelines for
Pilot Projects Grant (PPG) Recipients

Department of Family Administration
Administrative Office of the Courts
Maryland Judiciary

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Administrative Office of the Courts
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Pilot Project Grants (PPG)

Pilot Project Grants support start-up programs designed to increase access to justice and enhance the experience of families and children involved with Maryland's legal system. Through Pilot Project Grants, the Department of Family Administration (DFA) at the Maryland Judiciary can test and evaluate the effectiveness of a new approach to serving Maryland's families.

A. Application Process

1. Application, Review and Award

1.1 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

NOFAs for Pilot Projects are issued as the DFA identifies the need. The NOFA and grant application are published in the Maryland Registry and posted to the DFA's website. This document outlines the requirements for funding, define the funding term and provide instructions for submitting an application.

1.2 Eligibility

To be eligible to receive a Pilot Project Grant, an applicant must be:

1. a court,
2. a court-related agency,
3. Maryland State or local government,
4. Maryland State institution (such as a university)
5. a community organization, or
6. a not-for-profit organization.

1.3 Funding Decisions

a. Priorities

For best consideration, applicants should demonstrate a need within the community that is to be served and that the program's services will be complimentary to those provided by the court.

b. Grant Review

Grant applications will be reviewed by a committee of DFA staff members. Optional participation may also be solicited from Judiciary partners, including but not limited to: the Maryland Legal Services Corporation, Problem Solving Courts, and the Mediation and Conflict Resolution Office.

c. Award Determination

- i. The DFA's ability to award funds is contingent upon the provision of funds by the Maryland Judiciary budget as allocated by the Maryland General Assembly.
- ii. Final award determinations will be made based on the recommendations of the review committee.

1.4. Award Notification

Grantees will be notified of their grant award through an Award Letter signed by the Chief Judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals. Letters will be issued prior to the start of the funding period.

B. Grantee Requirements

1. Finalizing the Award

To accept and finalize the grant award, applicants are required to complete the following documentation and submit it to the DFA before the start of the funding period:

a. A Signed Grant Agreement

Each applicant will be required to sign a Grant Agreement signed by the DFA's Executive Director and provided with their Award Letter. That Agreement will indicate that the grantee agrees to abide by the terms of funding outlined in the DFA's Grant Guidelines and to strive to meet the Performance Measures described in the Agreement.

b. A Signed Adjusted Budget

Upon the request of the DFA, applicants will be required to submit an Adjusted Budget reflecting a spending plan based on the actual grant award. This revised budget must be signed by the program's authorizing official. A signed copy of the Adjusted Budget will be returned to the grantee upon approval of the DFA's Executive Director.

c. A Completed & Signed Financial Information Form

The grantee is required to designate a fiscal authority; the fiscal contact who will receive payments for the grant. Grantees will be

provided a form to complete and submit prior to the start of the funding period designating the project's fiscal authority. This form will need to be signed by the fiscal authority and will include the address to which payments will be sent and other financial information needed for the processing of payments.

New Grantees must provide the following additional documentation:

- a. Proof of non-profit status, if applicable
- b. Completed W-9 form

2. Reporting

2.1 Program & Statistical Reporting

- a. Programs are required to report on progress toward specific project goals and provide statistical information on a quarterly basis.
- b. Specific program and statistical reporting requirements, including required reporting forms, will be provided to grantees by email prior to the start of the funding period. Reporting forms will be cumulative Excel Workbooks.

2.2 Financial Reporting

- a. Programs are required to provide signed expenditure reports and requests for payment on a monthly basis. These documents must be submitted monthly, even if the grantee did not expend any funds during the month.
- b. Specific reporting requirements, including required reporting forms, will be provided to the grantee by email early in the funding period. Reporting forms will be cumulative Excel Workbooks personalized for each grantee.

2.3 Submission Requirements

All reports (financial and program/statistical) must be submitted electronically to the DFA, emailed to Jennifer.White@mdcourts.gov by the due dates outlined below. Hard copies with original signatures must also be submitted, postmarked by the due dates below.

Program Reports

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

Financial Reports

Financial reports must be submitted monthly by the 15th of the month.

Partial or incomplete reports will not be accepted. Reports submitted on forms other than those provided by the DFA for FY12, will not be accepted.

2.4 Use of Information

Information collected from the quarterly and annual reports will be used to monitor funded programs and assist the DFA 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.

3. Funds

3.1 Fiscal Authority

The grantee is required to designate a fiscal authority, the fiscal contact who will receive payments, for the grant. Grantees will be provided a form to complete and submit prior to the start of the funding period designating the project's fiscal authority as described above in section B.1.c.

3.2 Funding Cycle

The funding cycle for Pilot Project Grants will be designated in the NOFA. All funds must be expended within the designated time period.

3.3 Distribution of Funds

- a. All funds will be paid on a *reimbursement basis* only unless otherwise determined (see b.). Grantees must submit a timely financial expenditure report, program report and request for payment form each quarter reflecting funds actually expended during the quarter for which the program is seeking reimbursement.

The DFA may request documentation of expenditures if deemed necessary.

b. If a grantee is unable to provide the services and programs without start-up funding, the grant agreement may allow for a percentage of funds, not to exceed 25% of the grant award, to be made available at the beginning of the project. Grantees requesting start-up funds must provide a written justification of the need, an outline of the expenditures that will be made with the start-up funding and a request for payment. In such a case, subsequent funds would be disbursed through a drawdown schedule, upon receipt of a request for payment, and required progress, statistical and financial reports for the period of funding. If a drawdown schedule is used, the grant agreement shall specify that the grant-awarding department will withhold a percentage of the funds (a minimum of 10%) until it determines that all grant deliverables are complete, all reports are filed, and the grantee has expended or obligated the funds by the end of the fiscal year. The final request for a drawdown must result in a payment that does not exceed the actual expenditures made by the grantee and the amount of the grant.

c. The DFA will withhold payments in the event that the grantee has failed to comply with the grant requirements.

d. The DFA may change funding amounts at any point in the funding period if the funds available to the DFA are reduced.

3.4 Unspent Grant Funds

Grantees must project unspent or unobligated funds no later than June 15th. All grantees will be provided a “Final Estimate” form in their financial reporting workbooks to use to submit this projection. Grantees must expend all grant funds by the end of the fiscal year in which they were awarded.

3.5 Matching Fund Requirement

Pilot Project grantees are not required to provide matching funds for their grant award.

3.6 Direct vs. Indirect Costs

a. Pilot Project grantees may request funding for direct costs associated with their project.

Direct Costs are defined as those readily assignable to a particular project.

*Travel is an allowable direct cost where such travel will provide a direct benefit to the project and the traveler is an employee of the grantee.

b. Non-Court Pilot Project grantees may request funds to support indirect costs with appropriate justification and when those indirect costs total no more than 10% of the total direct costs of the project.

Indirect costs are those costs of an organization that are not readily assignable to a particular project, but may be necessary to the operation of the organization and the performance of the funded project.

Please Note: Court grantees may *not* request funds to support indirect costs.

3.7 Mid-Year Modifications

By Grantee:

a. Grantees may make minor budget adjustments between existing line items during the course of the fiscal year. Any budget modifications must be submitted for review by the DFA using the Budget Modification spreadsheet contained in each grantee's financial workbook.

b. Projects seeking a modification that would result in a deviation of 10% of the overall budget or \$25,000, whichever is lower, must be approved in advance of spending the funds. Grantees must submit modification requests in writing using the Budget Modification spreadsheet contained in their financial workbook. Expenditures that do not comply with the adjusted or approved budget will not be authorized until the DFA staff signs and returns a copy of the approved budget modification form to the grantee.

c. Any grantee requesting a modification of the purpose of the grant must submit a written request providing an explanation for the change. The grantee may not expend grant funds for activities related to the change of purpose until the grantee receives written

approval from the Executive Director of the DFA authorizing the change.

d. Budget Modification Requests will not be accepted after May 1st. Any request to modify after that date will require an exception from the Executive Director of the DFA.

By the DFA:

When an adjustment to a grantee's award is made by the DFA after the funding period has started, the grantee will be required to submit a signed adjusted budget reflecting the allocation of the funds. An adjusted budget must be submitted even if the change is not more than 10% of the overall budget.

3.7 Mid-Year Grant Requests

The DFA may make mid-year grants upon request, dependent upon availability of funds. Requests may be submitted in response to a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) or upon consultation with DFA staff. Grantees may request funding for positions or programs which were not anticipated in their original budget request. Mid-Year Grant Request applications are found on the DFA grants web page:
<http://mdcourts.gov/family/grantadmin.html>

4. Accounting and Business Requirements

4.1 Personnel and Payroll Records

- a. 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 to the DFA.

- b. For grantees who are establishing new programs. Written payroll, personnel, and time and attendance policies for each position provided for by these grants must be established within 45 days of the start of the funding period. Upon request, grantees must provide a copy of those policies to the DFA.

4.2 Procurement

- a. All grantees must abide by their organization's procurement and financial policies in expending grant funds. These policies must be

in writing. Grantees must provide a copy of these policies to the DFA upon request.

b. Grantees that do not have an established written procurement policy must develop one as a condition of their award. The Department of Family Administration will provide technical assistance to grantees as requested.

c. 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.

d. Grantees that use grant funds for contractual services must notify potential contractors that funds for the project originated from a Maryland Judiciary grant and that the terms and conditions which accompany that grant award are part of the contract.

e. 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 who appear on the Federal Excluded Parties List.

4.3 Financial Accounting Requirements

a. Programs are required to establish and maintain financial accounting systems and records to accurately account for funds.

b. Programs must reconcile their accounts on a regular basis, prior to submitting expenditure reports and requests for payment to the DFA.

c. Programs are required to have an independent audit conducted annually. Grant funds are subject to any additional terms and conditions issued by the Administrative Office of the Courts upon award of grants, and may be terminated if any terms or conditions are violated, or if adequate progress toward project goals is not demonstrated.

d. 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. This includes request for payment and receipts for expenses incurred, and timesheets for any salaries paid for with grant funds. These are subject to review by the DFA, the Judiciary Grants Coordinator, and/or the Judiciary Internal Audit Department, at any time.

5. Grantee Monitoring and Review

5.1 Program Monitoring & Site Visits

DFA staff will review submitted reports to evaluate the grantee's progress towards meeting their stated goals and objectives and assigned performance measures. Staff will follow-up with grantees regularly to gather additional information and assess performance. Follow-up will be made by phone and in person through site visits. The site visits will be designed to ensure compliance with the grant guidelines and review progress toward the project's stated goals and objectives and performance measure. Site visits may also include a fiscal review of grantee/project expenditures.

5.2 New Positions or Programs

- a. All new positions and/or programs supported by a DFA PPG grant award 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.
- b. Grantees can request an extension of this 90 day period by submitting a written explanation for the need for the cause for delay and need for extension. All requests must be received prior to the expiration of the 90 day period.
- c. Failure to implement new positions or projects within this 90 day period or to obtain an extension from the DFA may result in a cancellation or delay of fund distribution.

5.3. Advisement of Judiciary Audits

In addition to monitoring by DFA staff, grant recipients may be subject to periodic audits by the Judiciary's Internal Audit Department. Upon accepting a grant award, grantees agree to provide any authorized

representative of the Judiciary's Internal Audit Department access to and the right to examine all records, papers, books, and documents related to the Judiciary grant.

6. Acknowledgement of Support & Notice Requirement

- a. All PPG Grantees agree that any publication (written, visual or sound) issued by the Grantee describing projects funded in whole or in part with Maryland Judiciary Grant Program funds shall contain the following statement: "This project is supported by a Pilot Project Grant from the Maryland Judiciary, Administrative Office of the Courts, Department of Family Administration."
- b. The DFA also requests notification from grantees of any events (e.g. trainings, outreach events, volunteer appreciation events, etc.) that occur as a result of DFA grant funds received.

7. Contact Information

- a. Grantees are responsible for ensuring that the DFA is provided with accurate contact information for their program. This includes an email address, as the DFA sends many important grant announcements by email.

- b. Unless otherwise indicated, all communications with the DFA should be directed to:

Connie Kratovil-Lavelle, Executive Director
Department of Family Administration
Administrative Office of the Courts
580 Taylor Avenue, 2nd Floor
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone: 410-260-1580
Fax: 410-974-5577

or by email to: Kelly.Franks@mdcourts.gov