

Guidelines for  
Special Projects Grant (SPG) 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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## Special Project Grants (SPG)

Special Project Grants support programs designed to increase access to justice and enhance the experience of families and children involved with Maryland's legal system. These grants include, but are not limited to programs in the following categories:

- Domestic Violence
- Juvenile Justice
- Foster Care
- Alternative Dispute Resolution

### **A. Application Process**

#### **1. Application, Review and Award**

##### **1.1 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)**

The NOFA and grant application will be published in the Maryland Registry and posted to the DFA's website by early February of each year. This document will outline the requirements for funding, define the funding term and provide instructions for submitting an application.

##### **1.2 Eligibility**

- a. To be eligible to receive a Special Project Grant, an applicant must be:
  1. Maryland State or local government, or
  2. Non-profit organization, or
  3. Institution of higher education within the state of Maryland.
  
- b. Special Conditions for CASA Grantees applying for Special Projects Grants
  1. CASA grantees are eligible to apply for Special Project Grants as long as the funding requested would support a project outside of the regular advocacy activities. (Examples: Funding could be granted for: Collaborative training between CASA programs; Collaborative training with DSS, DJS, Children's Attorneys or other stakeholders; independent living skills training for older youth, etc.; but SPG funding would not be granted to cover the space/food/staffing costs of regular pre-service trainings.)
  2. Special Project funds awarded to CASA programs cannot be used as matching funds for the CASA grants.

c. “Pass-Through” Prohibited

The DFA only awards funds directly to the eligible grantees listed in subsection (a) of this section. Grantees are not permitted to pass through or sub-award funds to another organization (even if the second organization would be eligible to apply for funds under subsection a.).

### 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. Priority is given to the continuation of projects currently funded through the DFA Special Projects Grants who are meeting their performance measures.

b. Grant Review

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

For applicants funded by the AOC in the prior year, the following factors will be considered in addition to the grant application:

- program performance during previous and current funded years,
- progress towards meeting performance measures,
- compliance with financial and program reporting requirements, and
- compliance with reporting deadlines.

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

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 quarterly basis. These documents must be submitted by the due dates outlined below, even if the grantee did not expend any funds during the quarter.
  
- 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](mailto: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.

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

Partial or incomplete reports will not be accepted. Reports submitted on forms other than those provided by the DFA for FY13, 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 DFA awards SPG grants on the state's fiscal year cycle. Grants awarded for Fiscal Year 2013 will support family and juvenile program needs from July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013. All funds must be expended within this time period.

#### **3.3 Distribution of Funds**

- a. All funds will be paid on a *reimbursement basis* only. 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. The DFA will withhold payments in the event that the grantee has failed to comply with the grant requirements.
- c. 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 "Fourth Quarter 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**

Special Project grantees are not required to provide matching funds for

their grant award.

### 3.6 Direct vs. Indirect Costs

a. Special 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 Special 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 and county grantees may not request administrative fees associated with the administration of the grant.

### 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, or any commitments such as a new position or contract which is likely to impact future fiscal years, 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 submitted 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 1<sup>st</sup>. 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**

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.

### **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 and Contract Administration.

#### **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. A copy of this audit must be submitted to the DFA. 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 SPG 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 SPG 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 Special 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, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
Phone: 410-260-1580  
Fax: 410-974-5577

or by email to: [Kelly.Franks@mdcourts.gov](mailto:Kelly.Franks@mdcourts.gov)