

Guidelines for
Child Welfare Grant Recipients

Foster Care Court Improvement Project
Maryland Judiciary

Federal Fiscal Year 2014
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Foster Care Court Improvement Project
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Child Welfare Grants

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 are 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 Maryland Judiciary's Foster Care Court Improvement Project provides grants 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 are awarded to support one-time events, for example educational seminars or trainings, or for on-going programs, that directly or indirectly enhance the court's ability to respond to and manage CINA and TPR cases. For best consideration, applicants should clearly identify the outcomes they seek to achieve with the specified grant activities and develop measurable objectives to determine progress in achieving these outcomes. Activities should fall into one or more of the following strategic categories to help achieve measurable outcomes: Court Function Improvement, Capacity Building, and/ or Systemic Reform. The types of projects funded with CIP funds include, but are not limited to projects:

- 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

A. Application Process

1. Application, Review and Award

1.1 Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)

The NOFA and grant application will be posted on the Judiciary’s website on the FCCIP’s webpage. This document outlines the requirements for funding, defines the funding term and provides instructions for submitting an application.

1.2 Eligibility

a. To be eligible to receive a Child Welfare 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. “Pass–Through” Prohibited

The FCCIP will only award 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.

b. Grant Review

Grant applications will be reviewed by the Foster Care Court Improvement Project Implementation Committee and FCCIP staff.

c. Award Determination

- i. The ability to award funds is contingent upon the provision of funds by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.
- 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 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 FCCIP 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 FCCIP Director and/or FCCIP Chair and provided with their Award Letter. That Agreement will indicate that the grantee agrees to abide by the terms of funding outlined in these Grant Guidelines and to strive to meet the Performance Measures described in the Agreement. In addition, by signing the Grant Agreement, grantees agree to abide by 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.

b. A Signed Adjusted Budget

Upon the request of the FCCIP, 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 FCCIP 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 to provide statistical information, on a quarterly basis.
- b. Specific program and statistical reporting requirements, including required reporting forms, will be provided to grantees prior to the start of the funding period.

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 early in the funding period.

2.3 Submission Requirements

All reports (financial and program/statistical) must be submitted to FCCIP by the due dates outlined below. Hard copies with original signatures must be submitted, postmarked by the due dates below.

<u>Reporting Period</u>	<u>Report Due Date</u>
1 st Quarter (Oct 1 thru Dec 31)	January 15
2 nd Quarter (Jan 1 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

Partial or incomplete reports will not be accepted. Reports submitted on forms other than those provided by for FFY14, 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 FCCIP in determining if the program is meeting its stated goals and objectives. Additionally, the Maryland Judiciary 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 FCCIP awards Child Welfare grants on the federal fiscal year cycle. Grants awarded for Federal Fiscal Year 2014 will support program needs from October 1, 2013 through September 30, 2014. 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. FCCIP may request documentation of expenditures if deemed necessary.
- b. FCCIP will withhold payments in the event that the grantee has failed to comply with the grant requirements.
- c. FCCIP may change funding amounts at any point in the funding period if the funds available to the FCCIP are reduced.

3.4 Matching Fund Requirement

Child Welfare grantees are not required to provide matching funds for their grant award.

3.5 Direct vs. Indirect Costs

- a. Child Welfare 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. Grantees may not request funds to support indirect costs.
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.

3.6 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 FCCIP using the Budget Modification form provided.

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 form provided. Expenditures that do not comply with the adjusted or approved budget will not be authorized until the FCCIP 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 FCCIP Implementation Committee authorizing the change.

d. Budget Modification Requests will not be accepted after August 1st. Any request to modify after that date will require an exception from the FCCIP Implementation Committee.

By the FCCIP:

When an adjustment to a grantee's award is made by the FCCIP 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.

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 FCCIP.

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 FCCIP upon request.

b. Grantees that do not have an established written procurement policy must develop one as a condition of their award. The FCCIP staff 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 federal 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 by any federal department or agency. **(2 CFR Part 376).**

4.3 Financial Accounting Requirements

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

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

c. 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 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 FCCIP, the Judiciary Internal Audit Department, and federal auditors at any time.

5. Grantee Monitoring and Review

5.1 Program Monitoring & Site Visits

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

5.3. Advisement of Audits

a. Judiciary Audit

In addition to monitoring by FCCIP 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.

b. Federal Audit

- i. As sub-recipients of federal funds, grantees may be subject to federal audit. Upon accepting a grant award, grantees agree to provide any authorized federal representative access to and the right to examine all records, papers, books, and documents related to the grant.
- ii. 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.

6. Federal Administrative Requirements

a. The Court Improvement Program and its funds are governed by the following Federal regulations:

- 2 CFR Part 376 – Nonprocurement, Debarment and Suspension;
- 2 CFR Part 382 – Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace
- 2 CFR Part 230 – Non-Profit Organizations
- 2 CFR Part 220 – Educational Institutions
- 2 CFR Part 225 – Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments;
- 45 CFR Part 16 – Procedures of the Department of Grant Appeals Board;
- 45 CFR Part 30 – Claims Collection;
- 45 CFR Part 80 – Nondiscrimination Under Programs Receiving Federal Assistance through the Department of Health and Human Services, Effectuation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964;
- 45 CFR Part 81 – Practice and Procedure for Hearings Under the Part 80 of the Title;
- 45 CFR Part 84 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Handicap in Programs and Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance;
- 45 CFR Part 86 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex in Education Programs and Activities Receiving or Benefiting from Federal Financial Assistance;
- 45 CFR Part 87 – Equal Treatment for Faith-Based Organizations;
- 45 CFR Part 91 – Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Age in HHS Programs or Activities Receiving Federal Financial Assistance;
- 45 CFR Part 92 – Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State, and Local, and Tribal Governments;
- 45 CFR Part 92.35 – “Debarment and Suspension”
- 45 CFR Part 93 – New Restrictions on Lobbying;

- 45 CFR Part 95 – General Administration – Grant Programs;
- 45 CFR Part 100 – Intergovernmental Review of Department of Health and Human Services Programs and Activities.
- 48 CFR Part 31 – Commercial Vendors or Subcontractors
- Office of Management and Budget Circular A-133- Audits of States, Local Governments and Non-Profit Organizations
- Public Law 103-333, Section 507, Section 508
- Title XII of Public Law 103-227, the “PRO-KIDS Act of 1994”
- Section 106(g) of the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000 (22 USC 7104).

7. Acknowledgement of Support & Notice Requirement

a. All Child Welfare 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 Child Welfare Grant from the Maryland Judiciary, Foster Care Court Improvement Project.”

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

8. Contact Information

a. Grantees are responsible for ensuring that the Foster Care Court Improvement Project is provided with accurate contact information for their program. This includes an email address as many important grant announcements will be sent by email.

b. Unless otherwise indicated, all communications should be directed to:

Tracy Watkins-Tribbitt, Director
 Foster Care Court Improvement Project
 2001-B Commerce Park Drive
 Annapolis, Maryland 21401
 Phone: 410-260-1272
 Fax: 410-260-3585
 Email to: tracy.watkins-tribbitt@mdcourts.gov