

**MANAGING THE JUDICIARY'S
TITLE IV-D CHILD SUPPORT
COOPERATIVE REIMBURSEMENT
AGREEMENT (CRA)**

MANUAL FOR CIRCUIT COURT CLERKS



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*Manuals and available blank forms can be found at
<https://mdcourts.gov/procurement/grants/documents>*

MANAGING THE JUDICIARY'S COOPERATIVE REIMBURSEMENT AGREEMENT (CRA)

A MANUAL FOR CIRCUIT COURT CLERKS

I. BASIC INFORMATION ABOUT THE JUDICIARY'S CRA

A. What is the CRA?

The Maryland Judiciary has a “Cooperative Reimbursement Agreement” (CRA) with the Department of Human Services Child Support Administration (CSA) of the State of Maryland. The CSA is the entity in our State designated to receive and administer Federal funds for child support. Through our CRA, the Maryland Judiciary receives Federal funds to reimburse us for the work our courts do to establish, modify and enforce child support orders involving the Offices of Child Support Enforcement. The funds are for work that is authorized under Title IV-D of the Social Security Act.

B. What are IV-D Activities?

The Maryland Judiciary can be reimbursed for activities that qualify as “IV-D” activities. This “Federal financial participation” is available to courts for certain key activities as defined in 45 CFR 304.20 (b) (2-8) and 45 CFR 304.21. This includes the establishment of paternity and the establishment and enforcement of support obligations to the extent that a case involves the local child support agency. In other words, it includes those cases in which a party has assigned the right to establish and enforce orders and collect support through the Maryland Child Support Administration (“agency”). This includes cases in which the party has paid \$25 for the agency to enforce support, or cases in which the parties receive or have previously received public assistance, foster care or medical assistance and have assigned the right to collect support to the State.

Note that IV-D activities do **not** include judicial salaries or other expenses, including training and travel costs, associated with judges. However, those types of expenses can be provided for non-judicial court staff including Magistrates.

The Judiciary may include in the CRA costs associated with establishing, modifying and enforcing child support in cases involving the local support agency. Those costs may include salaries and benefits for clerk’s office staff, magistrates and non-judge employees. Note that Federal child support funds may **not** be used to reimburse the State for judges’ salaries, benefits, or judicial training and travel.

C. How Much Money Does the Judiciary Receive Under the CRA?

The Judiciary is reimbursed several million dollars each year under the CRA. We receive .66 cents for every dollar spent to support the child support system, excluding judges' salaries and related expenditures.

D. Who Else Has CRAs?

Any state entity that contributes to child support establishment, modification or enforcement can enter into a CRA with CSA and be reimbursed for those expenditures. Each local child support office is funded by a CRA. Sheriff's offices often have CRAs through which they are reimbursed for the costs of executing service. Finally, if the court has county-employed support staff that assists magistrates with IV-D work, then the magistrate's office or court administrator may manage a CRA through which the county is reimbursed for its costs in supporting those positions. Note that these county CRAs are *different* from the CRA entered into by the Judiciary. The Judiciary's CRA provides reimbursement for state positions and expenditures only.

E. Is the CRA a Grant or Contract?

The CRA has elements of both a grant and a contract. If we expend resources in activities that are covered by the relevant Federal law, then the Federal government, through the Maryland CSA, must reimburse the State, so long as those items were included in the CRA.

F. What Rules Apply in Spending These Monies?

The Judiciary must agree to abide by certain Federal regulations that govern what type of expenditures may be included. As with all Federal grants, the Judiciary must follow its own procurement and personnel policies in expending those funds. When expenditures are covered by the CRA, it is particularly important that we follow our regular policies.

G. What Happens If We Do Not Use These Funds in Accordance with the CRA or Federal Regulations?

If funds are spent in a manner different than intended by the CRA or proscribed by the Federal regulations, we *cannot* invoice CSA to be reimbursed for those activities. The State loses Federal money it anticipated receiving and funds that were included in the Judiciary budget.

If CSA is incorrectly invoiced for activities, or Maryland Judiciary's policies are not followed, or Federal policies or regulations in expending funds are not followed,

those funds may have to be returned to the Federal government. This may occur after an audit. As a recipient of Federal funds through CSA, the Maryland Judiciary is subject to regular legislative and Federal audits.

II. BUDGET PLANNING WITH THE CRA

A. The CRA Follows the Federal Fiscal Year

Each CRA follows the Federal fiscal year cycle, which begins each year on October 1st. This means that each year of the CRA spans two state fiscal year cycles. *For example, the CRA for the period October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024, involves State Fiscal Years 2024 and 2025.*

In negotiating the CRA, the Administrative Office of the Courts projects positions and expenditures for each jurisdiction for both state fiscal years, even though it is not always known whether new positions will be required.

B. Project Needs

When creating a new CRA with the CSA, the Administrative Office of the Courts contacts Circuit Court Clerks to determine which positions need to be included in the CRA for the federal fiscal years that will be included in the contract. Each jurisdiction will be asked to project the number of positions required and the number of hours each position will devote to Title IV-D activities during the length of the contract. (Historically, the CRA was only one year, but the current CRA covers three years (FFY22, FFY23, and FFY24)). Changes can be made in position usage with each new contract.

III. MANAGING CRA POSITIONS AND EXPENDITURES

A. Use Staff as Designated in the CRA

Once the CRA has been negotiated, justifications for any deviations from the time allocated to work on IV-D matters should be provided to the Judiciary. Under the CRA, the Judiciary will provide the following services relating to Title IV-D cases, specifically: the establishment of paternity and the establishment, enforcement and modification of child support and medical support cases through the offices of the Circuit Court Clerks in all jurisdictions in Maryland. The work of the staff related to providing these services is considered “IV-D” and, for all clerks working less than 100% of their time on IV-D cases, this time should be reported through CONNECT.

- (1) In accordance with Maryland law, the Clerk’s offices maintain complete records of all support cases, including cases under the Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (UIFSA), paternity actions, and cases involving medical support orders. The Clerks’ offices accept pleadings and papers for filing, make docket entries, and issue summonses and other writs. The Clerks’ offices also assure that court files

are available for all hearings, including those before a magistrate, and provide courtroom clerk services for all such hearings.

- (2) When the court authorizes service of an earnings-withholding order for enforcement of a support order, an earnings-withholding order containing, among other information, the name and address of the obligor's employer shall be provided to the court. The Clerks' offices shall mail a copy of the earnings withholding order to the designated employer by certified mail and use Form OMB 0970-0154.

Note: *All time must be reported in the quarter that it occurred. Expenditures or staff time not expended in one quarter cannot be made up in later quarters.*

B. Personnel Changes (Form B: Title IV-D Personnel Change Form)

It is essential that your office notify the Administrative Office of the Courts any time there are personnel changes involving an employee included on the CRA using "Form B: Title IV-D Personnel Change Form." This includes any terminations, vacancies, new hires, or any time you substitute one employee for another, even if only temporarily. Make sure to provide the employee's name, PIN, effective dates and any comments or reasons for change.

This form can be found here: <https://mdcourts.gov/procurement/grants/documents>

Notify **DJFS** as soon as possible with any changes by emailing the completed form to: CRA@mdcourts.gov

C. Be Sure to Make Anticipated Expenditures Included in the CRA

If you planned to use funds for IV-D office expenditures, be sure to expend those funds as anticipated so that the Judiciary and report them in the quarter they occurred so the Judiciary can bill for the expected reimbursement.

D. Federal Program Employee Certification Form (Form F)

"To comply with CFR Part 200 – UNIFORM ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS, COST PRINCIPLES, AND AUDIT REQUIREMENTS FOR FEDERAL AWARDS, employees that are expected to work solely on a single Federal award or cost objective are required to periodically certify that they worked solely on that program for the period covered by the certification."

Employees that work exclusively on IV-D **must** complete the certification form immediately following the end of each six-month reporting period. Employees at 100% must solely work on the CRA. If the court needs deem it necessary for an employee's workload to deviate from CRA, they **must** report this time separately to the Department of Juvenile and Family Services.

Time Reporting Periods:

- **October 1 through March 31, current year** – forms should be signed April 1, current year, and returned to Department of Juvenile and Family Services.
- **April 1 through September 30, current year** - forms should be signed Oct 1, current year, and returned to Department of Juvenile and Family Services.

An updated Form F will be provided annually via email at the start of the federal fiscal year.

E. Time Reporting for CRA Employees - CONNECT

Federal regulations require that all employees included on the CRA submit a timesheet that reflects their actual hours worked on IV-D matters (detailed in III. A. above) and the type of work performed.

- Employees who perform IV-D duties for 100% of the time they are working (whether they are full-time or part-time employees) do not need to enter their IV-D activities into CONNECT. These employees must complete and sign the *Federal Program Employee Certification Reporting Form* twice a year in April and October and submit to CRA@mdcourts.gov (reference Form F above).
- Employees who are only **performing IV-D duties for part of their work week** (whether they are full-time or part-time employees) must report their IV-D activities on their weekly Judiciary timesheet in CONNECT. The CONNECT timesheets must be used to report the actual number of hours that each employee worked on IV-D matters for each pay period (**based on the State's pay schedule**).

IV. REPORTING IV-D EXPENDITURE, STATISTICAL AND REVENUE REPORTS

A. Record Keeping, Accounting, and Audit Requirements

- Please note that all financial records should be maintained for review at a minimum of 5 years based on the Administrative Office of the Courts General Grants Conditions, as stated below:

“Grantees must retain and make available for site visits and audits the records and supporting documentation for all expenses related to the grant-funded project and must reconcile those expenses to the organization’s financial records, financial reports and Grant Invoices. Grantees must keep all financial records relating to their Judiciary grant for a minimum of five years, or as otherwise directed. Either hard copy files or electronic grant files are acceptable, unless otherwise stipulated in the Grant Award.”

- Additionally, the documentation and calculation of expenditures will be requested and reviewed by the Department of Juvenile and Family Services at least annually.

Documentation must include the following information as requested by the CSA:

*“The Child Support Enforcement Agency is aware that each child support unit within the respective Clerks' Offices uses only a percentage of the supplies, photocopies and postage purchased for the entire office. A copy of the actual invoice, however, is required according to the OIG. **The invoice must display a cost per unit rate and also be accompanied by a statement showing the cost attributable to the IV-D program services. IF the invoice does not show a cost per unit rate, then the office must provide the methodology used to arrive at the cost of the expenditure.**”*

B. Report Expenditures Using the Title IV-D Expenditure Form (Form C)

Report expenses you incur for IV-D matters using the form Title IV-D Expenditure Form. The form is set up to record monthly/quarterly expenses. DJFS will provide each jurisdiction custom forms to record expenses by quarter.

- a) At the end of each month, complete the top section marked “Completed by Clerks Office” with the incurred monthly expenditures, for each account.
- b) Have expenses approved by Clerk of the Court, Court Administrator or Supervisor (Reports that do not have an approval signature will not be accepted).
- c) Email the Signed and Scanned form to CRA@mdcourts.gov by the **10th day of the following month. Please keep pay close attention to emails announcing the due dates for June Reports with regards to end of year requirements.**

The original document must be retained at your location for audit purposes. (Please make sure the scanned copies are legible.)

C. Report IV-D Court Costs Collected by Using the Daily Transaction Report - RECEIPTS Report.

Any court costs collected by clerks in IV-D matters must be deducted from the reimbursement the Judiciary receives under the CRA. An example of such costs may include court costs billed to and collected from unsuccessful respondents in an IV-D contempt matter.

Report court costs collected by your office in IV-D matters by doing the following:

a) In UCS you will run a Daily Transaction Report - RECEIPTS Report on the (#1157 Account code) for the entire month. Identify charges that are related to IV-D Child Support and provide a total.

b) In MDEC, please see instructions for running this report below:



Title IV-D (4D) Reporting

Financial Reporting

There is a fee code in the Family case category – “1408 – Filing Fee – Title IVD.” When taking in monies on this fee code, report the transactions to Family Administration on a monthly basis. Use the **Receipt Journal** report to report the totals for this fee code.

1. On the **Case Manager** home screen, click **Reporting**.
2. Under **Financial Reports**, select **Cash Management**.
3. Select **Receipt Journal**.
4. Enter the fields as shown below. (Choose your own location).
5. Click **Submit**.

This report can be scheduled to run on a monthly basis and delivered to the clerk who forwards it to the Department of Juvenile and Family Services.

c) Email the Signed and Scanned form to CRA@mdcourts.gov by the **10th day of the following month**.

- d) The original document must be retained at your location for audit purposes.
(Please make sure the scanned copies are legible.)

D. Reporting Deadlines

All Title IV-D reports and timesheets are due by the **10th day** of the following month. June reports special due dates will be announced in May of each year, due to Fiscal Year end deadlines.

Summary of Reporting Requirements

The CRA reporting requirements for clerk’s offices are summarized in the table below:

Report Name	When to Submit	Submit To	Notes
IV-D Project Activities – Reported through Judiciary Timesheet in CONNECT	Weekly through CONNECT	CONNECT	Any updates to these timesheets must be completed by the end of the quarter (12/31, 3/31, 6/30, 9/30)
IV-D Personnel Change Form FORM B *	Submit when you have CRA personnel changes.	cra@mdcourts.gov	
Expense Journal Allocation FORM C	Monthly By 10 th of each month. June Due Dates will be announced.	cra@mdcourts.gov	Retain original in Clerk’s Office. Back up documentation up does not need to be submitted but should be available for review by DJFS annually and provided in the event of an audit.
Daily Transaction Report - RECEIPTS Report	By 10 th of each month. June Due Dates will be announced.	cra@mdcourts.gov	Identify IV-D clerk’s fees on the cash register system.
Child Support Administration Federal Program Employee Certification Reporting Form FORM F *	Oct 1 April 1	cra@mdcourts.gov	Retain original in Clerk’s Office. Employees working 100% on the Cooperative Reimbursement Agreement (CRA) with the Maryland Department of Human Resources/Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSA).

**Copies of blank forms can be found at <https://mdcourts.gov/procurement/grants/documents> or by emailing CRA@mdcourts.gov.*

Email the Signed and Scanned form to CRA@mdcourts.gov by the **10th day of the following month**. For June, submit by **June 28th**. **The original document must be retained at your location for audit purposes.**
(Please make sure the scanned copies are legible.)