

**Administrative Office of the Courts  
Juvenile and Family Services  
187 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401**



**Special Conditions under the Court Improvement Program-  
Child Welfare under Foster Care Court Improvement  
Program (FCCIP) Funds Effective October 1, 2021**  
*Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Program No. 93.586*

In addition to the conditions specified in the Judiciary's General Grant Conditions, the following conditions apply to the Juvenile and Family Services **Foster Care Court Improvement Program-Child Welfare Grant**.

**General Background**

Funds appropriated by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Administration for Children and Families provide financial assistance to: state and local units of government within the State of Maryland, non-profit organizations within the State of Maryland, and institutions of higher education within the State of Maryland 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 Section 438 of the Social Security Act; Section 7401 of the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (Public Law (P.L.) 109-171); Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Social Security Act (the Act); Section 104 of the Child and Family Services Improvement and Innovation Act (P.L. 122-34). Grant recipients and subrecipients must comply with **2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards)** and **2 CFR Part 300 (HHS-specific requirements)**, as applicable. Commercial vendors or contractors are subject to **48 CFR Part 31**, as applicable. The Maryland Judiciary, Juvenile and Family Services, Foster Care Court Improvement Program (FCCIP), administers the grants.

All entities seeking funds from the Maryland Judiciary, Juvenile and Family Services, must submit a grant application with a budget and budget justification. The number of projects selected and the amounts of the grants will depend on the funds available. Funding for projects is not guaranteed.

Grant applications will be reviewed by a committee. Once funding has been approved, an application for funding, an award letter defining terms and conditions, along with a copy of the grant application, will be sent to the grantee.

Acceptance of a grant automatically gives any authorized representative of the Maryland Judiciary access to and the right to examine all records, papers, books, and documents related to a Judiciary grant for the purposes of assuring compliance with policies and guidelines, program evaluation, and research.

**Scope of Solicitation:**

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 (Court Function Improvement, Capacity Building and/or Systemic Reform) to help achieve measurable outcomes. Funds may be used for, but not limited to, the following activities:

### **Court Function Improvement**

- Implementing new initiatives, local and national best practices, and recommendations that improve the processing of child welfare cases as identified by the court.
- Formalizing and/or improving relationships with the child welfare agency.
- Increasing and improving the engagement of the entire family in court processes relating to child welfare, family preservation, family reunification and adoption.
- Improving the handling of cases involving the interstate placement of children.
- Incorporating trauma-informed services and evidenced based practices into court and legal representation practice.
- Monitoring Child in Need of Assistance (CINA) and related TPR/Guardianship and Adoption cases for statutory time frame compliance.

### **Capacity Building**

- Cross training with multi-disciplinary stakeholders.
- Educational or training programs for judges, magistrates and/or clerks in compliance with federal statutes and regulations in child welfare cases, including content of court orders.
- Collecting data and developing data collection infrastructure, sharing data among child welfare agency, board of education, and other State agencies responsible for child well-being.
- Linked agency-court data systems.
- 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.
- Training projects require a commitment to a larger/long term initiative and/or education programs for court staff, including Judges, Magistrates, 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.
- Improvement of legal representation for children and families.
- Other programs that enhance the court's ability to serve families and children.

Note: Training projects require a commitment to a longer, more sustainable initiative (i.e. train the trainer, training curriculum, task force development, etc.), beyond the training event. A template of the pre – post training knowledge assessment tool, measuring skills gained by participants, must be developed and accompany application. Additionally, further analysis of the survey outcome measures may be required.

### **Systemic Reform**

- Jurisdiction-specific CFSR program improvement plan (PIP) development and implementation, and legislative changes.
- Efforts to encourage and promote concurrent planning pursuant to ASFA.
- Increasing and improving the engagement of the entire family in court processes relating to child welfare, family preservation, family reunification and adoption.

### **Maximum Award Amount**

Determined by available appropriation and Juvenile Family Services priorities.

### **Match Requirement**

There is no match requirement.

### **Eligible Grantees**

Eligible grantees include: Local courts within the state of Maryland, State and Local Governments within the state of Maryland, Non-Profit Organizations within the state of Maryland, and institutions of Higher Education within the state of Maryland that enhance the Maryland Judiciary's effectiveness in processing child abuse and neglect cases.

### **Funding Period**

Grants are awarded on the Federal Fiscal Year cycle July 1 thru June 30. Grantees must expend all grant funds by the end of the funding period.

### **UEI Number**

Grantees are required to maintain a valid UEI (Unique Entity Identifier) and current registration in SAM.gov. Grantees may be asked to provide verification of a valid UEI number to the Juvenile and Family Services.

### **Distribution of Funds**

Funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis upon submission of a Grant Invoice along with Progress and Financial reports. Templates for reporting will be provided by Juvenile and Family Services. Grant Invoices can be submitted in two quarters: Quarter 1: April 1 thru July 15; Quarter 2: July 16 thru September 30.

Continued grant fund disbursement shall be dependent on grantees' satisfactory progress toward deliverables, and the availability of funding. As such, Juvenile and Family Services reserves the right to withhold funding or change funding amounts based on the availability of funds, or non-performance of grantee.

### **Indirect Cost Rate**

Indirect costs will be applied in accordance with 2 CFR § 200.414.

- Grantees that have a negotiated indirect cost rate (NICRA) must provide a copy of the NICRA as an attachment to the application.
- Grantees that do not have a current Federally negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may elect to charge a de minimis rate of up to 15 percent of modified total direct costs (MTDC). The grantee is authorized to determine the appropriate rate up to this limit. As the pass-through entity, The Judiciary may not require subrecipients to use a de minimis rate lower than the NICRA or the rate elected pursuant to this subsection unless

required by Federal statute or regulation. The de minimis rate does not require documentation to justify its use and may be used indefinitely.

### **Reporting Requirements**

Grantees must submit program progress and financial reports during the grant period. Templates will be provided by the funder. Failure to submit required reports and Grant Invoices may result in the Judiciary's denial of grant payments and future funding.

Grantees may also be required to develop a plan for disseminating materials developed with grant funding, and/or the outcomes and findings of their project. Such requirements will be defined in the grant award letter. The state may need to monitor programs from time-to-time as defined by the federal guidelines. Additionally, grantees may be audited as necessary, under federal and state law.

### **Project Evaluation**

Grantees shall assure that projects include an evaluation component to assess the effectiveness of the program. Juvenile and Family Services recognizes the importance of using data to identify, inform, and systematically monitor the implementation and results of programs and interventions in an ongoing manner. By accepting a Juvenile and Family Services grant, the grantee agrees to implement a continuous quality improvement approach and accurately reflect anticipated outcomes for improved court functioning, improved engagement of the entire family, and/or capacity building for the court; measurable objectives and related activities to be conducted for each anticipated outcome; and use of data and findings in improving or retooling program components cooperate with Judiciary-sponsored evaluation projects.

### **Modifications**

Grant funds may not be used for any purpose or activities other than those stated in the approved grant application unless a written change of purpose request is submitted and approved by the administering department. Unless otherwise defined in the award letter, changes under 10% of an approved budget category may be made to the request for modification worksheet. Changes that exceed 10% of an approved budget category must be submitted in writing prior to making the change for written approval by the administering department.

Grantees must inform the administering department within 15 days of any changes in key program personnel, program name, address or other contact information.

### **Personnel and Payroll Records**

Grantees must follow their respective organizations' written payroll, personnel, and time and attendance procedures for each position supported by a Judiciary grant.

Timesheets for each grant-funded employee must provide a brief description of the daily grant activity and the hours worked.

### **New Positions/Programs**

Grantees may not use grant funding to support new positions, unless otherwise approved by Juvenile and Family Services.

### **Procurement**

Grantees must follow their state or local government (in the case of a Circuit Court) or organizations' written procurement policies in expending grant funds. If an applicant does not have written policies, they must follow the Procurement Policy for the Judicial Branch.

Upon receipt of goods and/or services, ownership and liability shall transfer to the grantee, and the grantee shall assume responsibility for all routine equipment maintenance and/or replacement costs.

Grantees intending to use DHHS grant funds for contractual services must notify potential contractors that funds for the project originated from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

All procurement actions may be subject to judiciary, legislative and federal audit review.

### **Subawards**

Not permitted.

### **Travel Policies**

Grantees must follow their state or local government (in the case of a Circuit Court) or organizations' written travel policies in expending grant funds. If an applicant does not have written policies, they must follow the State Joint Travel Regulations Judicial Branch Travel Policy. Any funds used for travel must be done so in accordance with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and policies governing the use of Federal funds. Any expenditure found to have been made in violation of these requirements is subject to disallowance and recoument by Juvenile and Family Services.

### **Accounting Requirements and Audits**

Grantees shall maintain full and accurate records of all financial transactions and accounts related to the grant-funded project, in accordance with generally accepted accounting practices, for a minimum of three years after the grant period ends or based on their organization's record retention policy. Records shall include, but are not limited to, Grant Invoices and receipts for expenses incurred, and time sheets for any salaries paid for with grant funds. Grantees shall make these records available for review by authorized representatives of the Maryland Judiciary.

Grantees must establish separate revenue accounts into which they will deposit Judiciary grant funds and separate expenditure accounts to which they will charge Judiciary grant expenditures. The Judiciary shall not reimburse grantees or authorize payment for any expenditure that does not reflect compliance with the written procurement policy.

Funds specifically budgeted and/or received for one project may not be used to support another project or program. Recipients are prohibited from commingling funds.

Approved expenditures should be reviewed for accuracy, and then checked against the organization's financial records before financial reports and request for payments are submitted for reimbursement. Accounts must be reconciled before the grant can be closed out (See Close

Out).

Grantees may be subject to periodic management reviews or audits. The reviews or audits may be announced or unannounced.

2 CFR §200.501(b): Single audit. A non-Federal entity that expends \$1,000,000 or more in Federal awards during the non-Federal entity's fiscal year must have a single audit conducted in accordance with § 200.514. Grantees that receive money from the federal government (grants, cooperative agreements, etc.) and expend more than \$1,000,000 of federal dollars in a single fiscal year are required to have Single Audits.

**Close-out**

All final progress and financial reports must be satisfactorily submitted to Juvenile and Family Services within 30 days after the end of the grant period as stated in the Notice of Funding Availability; approval of the final Grant Invoice will serve as confirmation that project has been successfully completed; receipt of payment by recipient confirms close out has been completed.

**Fee collection (if authorized by law):**

Not permitted.

**Debarment**

The Judiciary will not permit a grant recipient to spend award funds on an individual or firm that is suspended or debarred from entering into contracts with the State. Grantees shall check the debarment list for all prospective sub recipients (contractors and grantees). The list of debarred and suspended contractors is available on the Board of Public Works web page at: [www.bpw.state.md.us](http://www.bpw.state.md.us)

In addition, grantees must determine if an organization or governmental unit is suspended, debarred or otherwise excluded from participation in Federal spending. The ineligible list is available on the System for Award Management website: <https://www.sam.gov>

**Certification Regarding Lobbying**

Grantees must certify that no Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of an agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal grant, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment, or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.

If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned shall complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, U.S. Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification shall be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

### **Site Visits**

Grantees may be subject to site visits by Juvenile and Family Services staff. The site visits will be designed to ensure compliance with the grant guidelines and evaluate the project in terms of its stated goals and objectives. Site visits may also include a fiscal review of grantee/programmatic expenditures.

### **Acknowledgment of Support**

Grantees are required to acknowledge the support of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Administration for Children and Families and the Maryland Judiciary on published materials or products created as part of the grant-funded project. Specific use and wording must be approved by the administering department.

### **Application Scoring Process**

Applications will be evaluated based on content, innovation, projected outcomes, and evaluation components. Application must be submitted on time and will be reviewed for accuracy and completeness; failure to adhere to these requirements may adversely affect the application evaluation.

### **Contact Information**

Grantees are responsible for ensuring that Juvenile and Family Services, Foster Care Court Improvement Program is provided with accurate and up-to-date contact information for their program. This includes an email address, as Juvenile and Family Services sends many important grant announcements by email.

For questions regarding Juvenile and Family Services, Foster Care Court Improvement Program grants, please contact:

Joanne Kerr, Child Welfare Policy Specialist, (410) 260-1259,  
or email [joanne.kerr@mdcourts.gov](mailto:joanne.kerr@mdcourts.gov)