

**Administrative Office of the Courts
FOSTER CARE COURT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
2009-A Commerce Park Drive, Annapolis, MD 21401**



FY18 Special Conditions for FCCIP Special Project Grants

In addition to the conditions specified in the Judiciary's General Grant Conditions, the following conditions apply to all FCCIP Grants.

FUNDING CYCLE: JULY 1, 2017 – JUNE 30, 2018

General Background

All entities seeking funds from the Maryland Judiciary, Foster Care Court Improvement Program, must submit a grant application with a proposed budget with 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 grant review committee. Once the committee has 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.

The Maryland Judiciary, Foster Care Court Improvement Program administers the grants. Funds appropriated by the state to provide financial assistance to State and local units of government, non-profit organizations 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.**

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. The following activities are examples of what the funds may be used for:

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 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.
- 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, 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.
- Improvement of legal representation for children and families.
- Other programs that enhance the court's ability to serve families and children.

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 FCCIP priorities.

Match Requirement

There is no match requirement.

Eligible Grantees

Eligible grantees include the courts, court-related agencies, state and local agencies within Maryland, Institutions of Higher Education, and non-profit organizations within the state that enhance the Maryland Judiciary's effectiveness in processing child abuse and neglect cases.

Funding Period

Grants are awarded on the state's fiscal year cycle: July 1, 2017 thru June 30, 2018. Grantees must expend all grant funds by the end of the funding period.

Distribution of Funds

Funds will be disbursed on a reimbursement basis upon submission of a Request for Payment along with Progress and Financial reports. Templates for reporting will be provided by the Foster Care Court Improvement Program. Requests for payment can be made in four quarters of the state fiscal year cycle: Quarter 1: July 1 thru September 30; Quarter 2: October 1 thru December 31; Quarter 3: January 1 thru March 31; Quarter 4: April 1 thru June 30.

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

Reporting Requirements

Grantees must submit four 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.

Project Evaluation

Grantees shall assure that projects include an evaluation component to assess the effectiveness of the program. FCCIP 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 FCCIP 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.

Sub awards

Not permitted.

Travel Policies

Grantees must follow their State, county governments' (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 state laws, regulations and policies governing the use of state funds. Any expenditure found to have been made in violation of these requirements is subject to disallowance and recoupment by FCCIP.

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

Site Visits

Grantees may be subject to site visits by FCCIP 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 state and the Maryland Foster Care Court Improvement Program 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 scored based on content, innovation, statement of need, projected outcomes and evaluation component. 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 score.

Contact Information

Grantees are responsible for ensuring that FCCIP is provided with accurate and up-to-date contact information for their program. This includes email address, as FCCIP sends many important grant announcements by email.

For questions regarding FCCIP grants please contact:

Foster Care Court Improvement Program at (410) 260-1427, or email fccip@mdcourts.gov