Judicial Council of California
Center for Families, Children & the Courts / Operations and Programs Division

ACCESS TO VISITATION GRANT PROGRAM

RFP Grant Applicants Teleconference Questions and Responses

The enclosed includes questions and answers from the July 30 (both sessions) and August 7, 2014 (both sessions) Access to Visitation Grant Program RFP Grant Applicants Teleconference Calls for Fiscal Years 2015–2016 through 2017–2018 funding. The *RFP Grant Application Questions and Responses* are set forth in categories to help facilitate the applicants review and completion of the grant application proposal.

To ensure a fair process, applicants are reminded that communications regarding the RFP grant application after closure of the applicant's teleconference calls must be submitted by e-mail to shelly.labotte@jud.ca.gov. Telephone assistance cannot be provided. Additionally, Access to Visitation Grant Program staff will post applicant questions (and staff responses) every Thursday (after 5 p.m.), beginning August 12, 2014, through August 28, 2014.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION & FORMATTING QUESTIONS

1. Question: If the court is applying for only parent education and/or group counseling services (i.e., not the grant-related service of supervised visitation or exchange services), does the court have to complete and answer the questions under the proposal narrative section (7.0), particularly Question number 2 (program service delivery) under section 7.2 (Program Description).

   Response: Yes, the court must complete and answer all of the questions under section 7.2 (Program Description (total of 140 points)). Specifically for Question number 2 (program service delivery), the **applicant would substitute the word** "parent education" or "group counseling" in place of supervised visitation and answer the question based on the proposed grant-related service. The grant application evaluation criteria outlined in the RFP application (see section 4.2) applies to the three types of programs: supervised visitation and exchange services; parent education, and group counseling services.

2. Question: See sections 7.1 and 7.2. Are we to use the exact same format, including tables and questions/answers or just follow the question/answers without the table format?

Response: Applicants must use the exact same tables and questions/answers and not change any of the formatting in the tables.

3. Question: In keeping with in the format you have provided, are we required to keep the numbers "7.1, 7.2 etc" along with the directions on how to complete the section. I assume to keep the headings to know the order of the narrative; however, I wasn't sure if you wanted the number of points and everything in between the tables?

   Response: Applicants are to keep the table as it is, including the numbers, instructions, headings, etc. Applicants should not change anything and all of this was taken into consideration when setting the final page number limit. Leave everything in the section as it is and enter your responses to each question in the table templates.

4. Question: As the application is in Adobe format we were unable to type into the form. Is there an alternative format available?

   Response: Yes, there is an alternative format to type in the courts responses to the grant application proposal narrative questions and Appendixes. The pdf (Adobe format) file will not allow others to type into the document so **applicants must use the abridged version of the RFP and Appendixes that are posted on the CFCC website in word doc format.** *http://www.courts.ca.gov/cfcc-accesstovisitation.htm (click on RFP Information section)*

5. Question: Are we to include the instructions in the submission of the application? So, in other words, we are to leave everything as in and just add in our responses in the spaces provided?

   Response: Yes, leave everything as is in the formatted template tables and just add in your responses to the questions. **Do not delete the instructions or headings.**

6. Question: See Page 9 3.2 #1. Does this mean that we will not deliver a hard copy as done in previous years?

   Response: The grant application must be submitted as outlined under section 3.0 *(Grant Application Submission Instructions)*. Correct, no hard copy is needed. All applications must be submitted electronically in one complete stamped "original" pdf file format according to the instructions in sections 3.2, 3.3., and 3.4.

7. Question: See Page 10 3.3. Only the items listed should be included correct? I don't see other Appendices as requested in previous years, such as the multi-court/agency agreement, counseling forms, etc?

   Response: Applicants must follow the submission process outlined under section 3.0 *(Grant Application Submission Instructions)*. As part of the effort to streamline the application process, the other Appendixes requested in previous AOC/CFCC Access to Visitation RFP Grant Applications have been removed from the current existing RFP Grant Application for FY 2015–2016 through 2017–2018. These items will be requested as a contract deliverable from only the selected courts approved and awarded funding by the Judicial Council.

GRANT ELIGIBILITY AND FUNDING AMOUNTS

8. Question: On page 5, section 1.8 Grant Topic Areas, Parent Education (parent education classes to develop healthy co-parenting relationships). Does this include co-parenting classes and do the classes have specific criteria required such as length of class, topics included, etc.?

   Response: The parent education class may include co-parenting classes. The specific criterion for any co-parenting and/or parent education class is that the class/workshop must address access to visitation issues for noncustodial parents. There is no required length for the parent education class and topics for the class/workshop must be focused on access to visitation issues.

9. Question: If multiple courts collaborate do they share the funding or does each court receive their own funds?

   Response: Multicounty collaborations include an application court (lead administering court) that is in a collaborative partnership with other counties under the umbrella of the applicant court. Each county collaborative maintains their own separate Access to Visitation Grant Program in their local jurisdiction but the Access to Visitation Grant Program is under the larger umbrella of the applicant court. Each court will receive separate grant funds pulled from the larger total fund pot administered by the applicant court. The specific amount of funding to be divided amongst the collaborative is a decision made by the collaborative partnership. Counties that are in collaboration with the applicant court will submit their billing and invoicing for reimbursement through the applicant court.

10. Question: It is assumed that the maximum requested amount is the $100,000 even for a multi-county application (provided one of the counties is at the $100,000 eligibility level).

    Response: Correct. The maximum amount of grant funding eligibility is $100,000.

11. Question: What if a court is thinking about adding another grant-related service like parent education with supervised visitation but the planning for the proposed service delivery has not been completed. Can the court add the new (second) grant-related service in year 2 of the multiyear funding cycle?

    Response: No, the court cannot add a new grant-related service during the multiyear funding period because adding a new program service would modify the grant application proposal evaluated and selected for funding. Judicial Council program staff will submit the ranking results to the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee. The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee will make grant funding recommendations to the Judicial Council and the Judicial Council makes the final decision regarding number and amounts of funding. The proposed recommendations for Judicial Council approval regarding the selected court/s for grant award funding will have been based on the applicants proposed program service delivery plan submitted through the RFP grant application process for review and evaluation.

12. Question: Are there specific forms for the subcontractors to complete to collect the data?

    Response: Yes there are specific forms for the subcontractors to complete for data collection under the grant program. These forms are part of the *Access to Visitation Grant Program Data Collection and Reporting System* and are included in the contract agreement between the superior court and the Judicial Council of California.

13. Question: Can a county apply for less than the maximum amount of funding per each category?

    Response: Yes, courts can apply for less than the maximum amount of eligible funding. Courts are encouraged and should apply for the amount of funding that adequately supports their proposed Access to Visitation Grant service delivery plan.

14. Question: Is the court responsible for providing training to its subcontractors?

    Response: There is no requirement that the court has to provide direct training to its subcontractors.

15. Question: If the maximum grant funding is $45,000 for XXX County over the entire 3 year grant period, is the $45,000 on an annual basis?

    Response: Yes, subject to the availability of federal funding, the court will receive $45,000 each fiscal year (i.e., fiscal years 2015–2016; 2016–2017; and 2017–2018).

16. Question: If part of our program was to provide parent education classes, could both the custodial and non-custodial parents attend these classes? Could the classes be held prior to the judge making a decision as to who the custodial parent is/will be? Would it be acceptable to have such a program and only seek one half the cost of the classes be funded by the grant?

    Response:
    (A) Yes the custodial and noncustodial parent may attend the parent education class but the Access to Visitation Grant will only reimburse costs for the noncustodial parent to attend the parent education class.
    (B) The grantee programs are required to have mandatory safeguards in place that ensure the safety of everyone involved, especially if both parents are attending the "same" parent education workshop at the "same time"—this practice is not recommended in cases of domestic violence.
    (C) Under the scope of the grant and permissible reimbursement, the grant funds can only be used to serve noncustodial parents. As such, the court may need to have made a determination regarding parent education services (whether mandatory or voluntary) for the custodial and noncustodial parent; however, grant funds can only reimburse services for the noncustodial parent to attend the parent education class.

17. Question: We understand the grant is targeted at low-income parents. Is there a requirement that some type of finding of being indigent be made or is it enough to state historically X% of self-represented litigants are granted fee waivers in XXX County? How are other programs handling this requirement?

    Response: There is no statutory requirement that the noncustodial parent be indigent to qualify for services under the grant program but the grant is designed and intended to serve low-income clients. Family Code section 3204(c) provides that the "family law division of the superior court in each county shall approve sliding scale fees that are based on the ability to pay for all parties, including low-income families participating in a supervised visitation and exchange, parent education, and group counseling programs."

    The court may determine client eligibility regarding what constitutes "low-income" and eligibility may include whether the parent qualifies based on court fee waiver requirements. Other Access to Visitation Grant Programs have used the following methods to determine client eligibility under the grant program: Qualification for court waiver fee; sliding scale fee based on income; individual annual income before taxes (this

is one of the Access to Visitation data collection elements); federal poverty level; and whether a parent is receiving public assistance.

18. Question: If several courts collaborate, does each court submit monthly invoices and seek reimbursement from the state or does all of the funding "flow" through the lead court?

    Response: In a multicourt, county collaboration model, each county court would submit their monthly invoices to the lead administering court for reimbursement and not Judicial Council program staff; and yes, grant funding allocation is awarded to the applicant superior court only and flows through the lead court to the other county collaborative partnering courts.

19. Question: Again in a collaboration model, when each of the two courts is eligible for a maximum of $45,000 funding, is the total funding available $45,000 or $90,000?

    Response: The total available when each of the two courts is eligible for a maximum of $45,000 funding is a maximum of $45,000 only and not $90,000.

20. Question: If your county does not have a current non-profit supervised visitation program in place, can you apply for only the Parent Education or Group Counseling category of the grant? Page 2 section 1.3 in RFP grant application.

    Response: The grant requirement is that the subcontractor (local service provider) must be a non-profit agency so if you have a qualified non-profit that could provide parent education or group counseling services, then the court could apply for funding under just those services.

21. Question: See section 4.2.1. Are we correct in assuming that the multi-court/agency collaboration can be either with courts or with agencies? It does not need to be both?

    Response: Yes, collaboration can be either with county courts or multiple agencies.

22. Question: On Page 21, section 2, Facilitated or supportive visitation: Although the grant does not encourage this type of service, is it possible to include feedback as a non-required option parents can choose while participating in the on-site supervised visitation program?

    Response: Yes, in general, courts/subcontractors can choose to develop a feedback mechanism for clients participating in the program. This may include, but is not limited to a pre-and-post survey or program questionnaire about service delivery. Feedback generated or given during or through the "facilitated or supportive" visit may compromise the neutral role of the professional provider as required under Standard 5.20.

BUDGET QUESTIONS

23. Question: Appendix C (Budget Instructions), page 3-5. In order to better budget for travel costs, can you tell us where the required Judicial Council sponsored training will be held in Northern or Southern California?

    Response: For completion of Appendix C (i.e., the budget form and narrative), there is no requirement to attend an annual Access to Visitation Grant Program training meeting so the court/subcontractor do not need set aside grant funds for this budget item.

24. Question: Can you provide some examples of matching funds requirement (see page 6 of 15 in Appendix C).

    Response: The following are some examples of matching funds, but is not limited to: Program manager or administrator; grant/billing accountant; subcontractor agency Executive Director's time; fiscal analyst; volunteers; volunteer visitation monitors; clerk; or HR/payroll specialist.

25. Question: On page 8, section 2.1, Grant Compliance Requirements: What is the "standard contract agreement" to receive AV funds?

    Response: The standard contract agreement refers to the contract agreement between the Judicial Council of California and the superior court (i.e., the applicant court).

26. Question: On page 22, number 2, Program Service Delivery, Q 4 refers to intake process. Is the intake process reimbursable under the grant?

    Response: No, intake is not reimbursable under the grant.

27. Question: The RFP states that subcontractors cannot charge indirect costs for administrative salaries. Does that include the cost of subcontractor bookkeepers and/or financial officers to prepare invoices?

    Response: Correct, subcontractors cannot claim indirect charges. However, the positions of bookkeepers and/or financial officers to prepare invoices are an allowable direct cost item and are reimbursable under the grant program or this line item can be used for the match the requirement.

28. Question: Our court is strongly considering including a subcontractor as part of our application who may elect to collect Program Income. I have read the federal regulations

and the program income requirements as stated in the RFP. However, can you please clarify the following: Is the total amount of program income (collected as a result of grant activities) *deducted* from the total grant award amount? Is this done monthly or at the end of the FY? Can we include this program income as a match in our budget? For example, if our subcontractor estimates they will collect $500 in program income each year, and the court subcontracts with them for the amount of $5,000, would their total reimbursable amount be $4,500?

Response:

(A) The state has selected to use the "Addition Alternative" so income in this category is used to increase the total amount of funds available to the program during the project period. Court/subcontractors should carefully review section 45 CFR 92.25 for additional guidance regarding program income requirements http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2004/octqtr/pdf/45cfr92.25.pdf. See the following link for federal program income requirements:

(B) Program income should be reported and expended monthly.

(C) No costs paid by program income shall count towards satisfying a cost sharing or matching requirement. Please see Part 92.24, Matching or cost sharing *http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2007-title45-vol1/pdf/CFR-2007-title45-vol1-sec92-24.pdf*

(D) For example, if our subcontractor estimates they will collect $500 in program income each year, and the court subcontracts with them for the amount of $5,000, would their total reimbursable amount be $4,500? Yes, if the program only spent $5000.

29. Question: On Page 8, section 2.2 (Program income requirement): Does this section refer to participants paying money for the services?

    Response: Yes, program income may mean income or money from clients participating in the program. Program income is viewed as any income generated from the Access to Visitation grant activity (e.g., fees for service).

30. Question: If a court applies for the maximum within their section and it is rated highly, but there are not enough funds to give funds to everyone, will they be offered a lower grant? In other words, if a county such as XXX eligible to apply on their own for $60,000 and were highly rated would they get the entire amount, or would they be offered $45,000 in order to ensure that other highly rated courts also got funds?

    Response: The grant application proposals will be ranked and scored and recommendations for funding will be considered until the total amount of available funds have been exhausted (i.e., approximately $770,000 statewide). A grant application proposal may be recommended for funding based on its score and ranking at an amount

less than the applicant requested based on the reviewers evaluation of the applicant's proposed budget and cost-effectiveness criteria. All funding decisions will be made by the Judicial Council.

GENERAL QUESTIONS

31. Question: Who is on the Grant Review Group (GRG)? Are current FCS Directors reviewers along with non-court, retired FCS Directors serve as reviewers?

    Response: The GRG will include, but is not limited to, non-court, retired FCS Directors and grantee programs (previous or currently funded) from both northern and southern regions and subject matter experts from the field of practice of supervised visitation and exchange services. Applications are divided into review groups based upon funding level requested. Current grantees would not review any applications from their court or county or in their funding level.

32. Question: Can we see a copy of a successful grant application awarded funding?

    Response: We can provide courts with a copy of different successful grant application to review as a guide for grant writing. Information can also be provided to the courts regarding various courts who have previously submitted an Access to Visitation Grant RFP application and the superior court can contact the other court directly to request a copy of their grant application. See posting on CFCC website at *http://www.courts.ca.gov/cfcc-accesstovisitation.htm (click on RFP Information section).* **NOTE:** The sample should be posted to the CFCC website by 8/15/2014.