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## FACT SHEET

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# California's Access to Visitation Grant Program

The Judicial Council is charged with administering and distributing California's share of the federal Child Access and Visitation Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement. These grants, established under section 391 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 (Pub.L. No. 104-193, 110 Stat. 2258), title III, section 469B of the Social Security Act, enable states to establish and administer programs that support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation with their children. The federal allocation to each state is based on the number of single-parent households.

### **Purpose of the Grant Program**

The purpose of the federal Child and Visitation Grant Program is "remove barriers and increase opportunities for biological parents who are not living in the same household as their children to become actively involved in their children's lives."

### **Federal and State Program Goals**

Under the federal statute, Child Access and Visitation Grant funds may be used to support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation with their children by means of activities, including mediation (both voluntary and mandatory), counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement (including monitoring, supervision, and neutral drop-off and pick-up), and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements.

The use of funds in California, however, is limited by state statute to three types of programs: supervised visitation and exchange services, education about protecting children during family disruption, and group counseling services for parents and children.

## *California's Access to Visitation Grant Program*

Page 2 of 2

The primary goals of California's Access to Visitation Grant Program are to enable parents and children to participate in supervised visitation, education, and group counseling programs—irrespective of the parents' marital status and whether the parties are currently living separately permanently or temporarily—and to promote and encourage healthy relationships between noncustodial parents and their children while ensuring the children's health, safety, and welfare. The overarching policy goal of the grant program has been to ensure accessible and available services statewide for low-income families going through family court.

### **Grant Funding Eligibility**

- Family courts throughout California are eligible to apply for and receive Access to Visitation Grant funds. The family law divisions of the superior courts are required to administer the programs.
- Nonprofit agencies desiring to participate as the courts justice partner for direct service delivery are not allowed to apply directly to the AOC for these grant funds but must do so as part of the individual court's Access to Visitation Grant application.
- Grant funding allocation is awarded to the superior courts through a statewide request-for-proposals grant application process. In fiscal year 2013, an Access to Visitation stakeholder workgroup will convene charged with proposing new funding methodology options for future grant funding.
- The recipients of Access to Visitation grant-related services are low-income separated, separating, divorced, or unmarried parents and their children who are involved in custody and visitation proceedings under the Family Code.
- All supervised visitation and exchange programs funded must comply with Standard 5.20 of the California Standards of Judicial Administration (Uniform Standards of Practice for Providers of Supervised Visitation) and effective January 1, 2013, Family Code section 3200.5.

### *Contact:*

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### *Additional resources:*

AOC/CFCC Access to Visitation Grant Program, [www.courts.ca.gov/cfcc-accesstovisitation.htm](http://www.courts.ca.gov/cfcc-accesstovisitation.htm)

Standard 5.20 (Uniform standards of practice for providers of supervised visitation), <http://www.courts.ca.gov/7260.htm?title=standards>

Family Code section 3200.5, <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/cgi-bin/displaycode?section=fam&group=03001-04000&file=3200-3204>