



Judicial Council of California  
Administrative Office of the Courts

455 Golden Gate Avenue • San Francisco, CA 94102-3660  
Telephone 415-865-7739 • Fax 415-865-7217 • TDD 415-865-4272

RONALD M. GEORGE  
Chief Justice of California  
Chair of the Judicial Council

WILLIAM C. VICKREY  
Administrative Director of the Courts

RONALD G. OVERHOLT  
Chief Deputy Director

February 27, 2002

Mr. E. Dotson Wilson  
Chief Clerk of the Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 3196  
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: *California's Access to Visitation Grant Program for Enhancing Responsibility and Opportunity for Nonresidential Parents—The First Five Years: Report to the Legislature*

Dear Mr. Wilson:

Enclosed is the Judicial Council's 2002 report to the Legislature on California's Access to Visitation Grant Program for Enhancing Responsibility and Opportunity for Nonresidential Parents (hereinafter called the Access to Visitation Grant Program) required by Family Code section 3204(d). The report was prepared through the coordination of staff members and with the assistance of the council's Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee. It will be released to the public on March 4, 2002. A press release will also be distributed on that date.

In 1999 the California Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 673 (Honda), which charged the Judicial Council with administering and distributing the federal Access and Visitation Grant Program funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement.<sup>1</sup> These grants, established under section 391 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act ("welfare reform") of 1996 (Pub. L. 104-193, 110 Stat. 2258)—also known as title III, subtitle I (Enhancing Responsibility and

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<sup>1</sup> Fam. Code, § 3204(a).

Opportunity for Nonresidential Parents), section 469B of the Social Security Act<sup>2</sup>—enable states to establish and administer programs that support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation with their children.

Each year, subject to the availability of funding, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has awarded a total of \$10 million in block grants to all states to promote access and visitation programs that increase noncustodial parents' involvement in their children's lives. The grant funds may be used for such activities as mediation (both voluntary and mandatory), counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement (including monitoring, supervision, and neutral drop-off and pickup), and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements.<sup>3</sup> However, AB 673 expressed the Legislature's intent that funding for the state of California is limited by statute to the following three types of programs:

- Supervised visitation and exchange services;
- Education about protecting children during family disruption; and
- Group counseling services for parents and children.

State funding allocations are based on the number of single-parent households. California reported 2,178,600 single-parent households with children and therefore receives the maximum amount of federal funds (approximately \$1 million per year). The Administrative Office of the Courts' Center for Families, Children & the Courts has the primary responsibility for administering the program.

The total amount of federal funds received in California for the five-year grant period was \$5,191,003. The total funds requested for the five-year grant period was \$8,439,071. The total amount of grant funds awarded to the administering superior courts throughout California was \$4,304,943. Each year, the amount of funds requested has far exceeded the amount available for awards.

The enclosed report provides the Legislature with details of the programs funded for federal fiscal years 1997–2001 and the extent to which those programs have achieved the goal of promoting and encouraging healthy parent-and-child relationships while

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<sup>2</sup> 42 U.S.C. 669B.

<sup>3</sup> 110 Stat. 2258.

Mr. E. Dotson Wilson  
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ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of the children. In addition, the report provides information on program administration and accomplishments, review and selection processes, and reporting requirements (participant data). It also assesses the extent to which the scope and availability of support services to families with children in family courts have been expanded.

Although the report contains no specific recommendations at this time, the following ideas for improving parents' access to and visitation with their children are raised and deserve the Legislature's consideration: (1) establishment of mandatory training and education requirements for service providers; (2) expansion of the program's services to the courts and communities that are currently not funded, especially in rural areas; (3) recognition of these programs as necessary in the continuum of court-based services for parents and children; and (4) identification of adequate resources for these types of program services to meet the increasing demands of the court and of parents struggling with access to visitation disputes.

If you should have questions or need additional information, please contact Shelly Danridge, Access to Visitation Grant Coordinator, Center for Families, Children & the Courts, Administrative Office of the Courts, at 415-865-7565.

Sincerely,



William C. Vickrey  
Administrative Director of the Courts

WCV/SD/yk  
Enclosure

cc: Members of the Judicial Council  
Members of the Judicial Council's Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee  
Mr. Ray LeBov, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs, Administrative Office of the Courts  
Mr. Michael Bergeisen, General Counsel, Administrative Office of the Courts  
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February 27, 2002

Mr. Gregory P. Schmidt  
Secretary of the Senate  
State Capitol, Room 400  
Sacramento, California 95814

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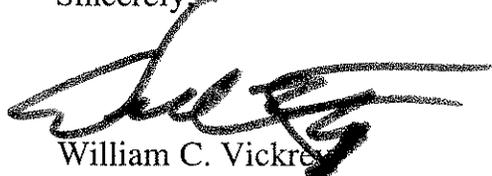
Mr. Gregory P. Schmidt  
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Sincerely,



William C. Vickroy  
Administrative Director of the Courts

WCV/SD/yk

Enclosure

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Legislative Counsel  
State of California  
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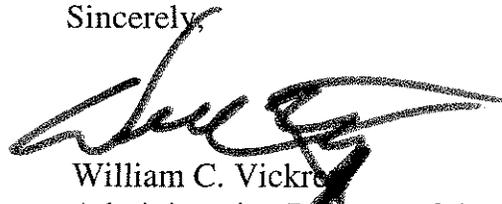
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WILLIAM C. VICKREY  
Administrative Director of the Courts

MICHAEL BERGEISEN  
General Counsel

DIANE NUNN  
Director

**TO:** Kate Howard  
Assistant Director  
Office of Governmental Affairs

Tracy Kenny  
Legislative Advocate  
Office of Governmental Affairs

**FROM:** Shelly Danridge   
Access to Visitation Grant Coordinator

**DATE:** February 27, 2002

**SUBJECT/PURPOSE OF MEMO:** Judicial Council Access to Visitation Grant Program:  
2002 Report to the Legislature

**ACTION REQUESTED:** None

**DEADLINE:** None

<b>CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:</b>	<b>NAME:</b> Shelly Danridge	<b>TEL:</b> 415-865-7565	<b>FAX:</b> 415-865-7217	<b>EMAIL:</b> shelly.danridge@jud.ca.gov
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Kate Howard and Tracy Kenny  
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Juvenile Law Advisory Committee. It will be released to the public on March 4, 2002. A press release will also be distributed on that date. Additionally, the report will be sent via overnight mail on February 27, 2002, as instructed by the directions for transmitting reports to the Legislature to the following persons: Legislative Counsel for the State of California (not addressed to Mr. Bion M. Gregory because he is retired); Mr. Gregory P. Schmidt, Secretary of the State; and Mr. E. Dotson Wilson, Chief Clerk of the Assembly.

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