

DATE

State Child Access and Visitation Program Coordinators

SUBJECT: Grants to States for Access and Visitation:
Availability of Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 Funds and
Application for FYs 2017 – 2019

I am pleased to announce the availability of funding for the Access and Visitation (AV) program for FY 2017 and institution of an updated application process for the AV Grant.

OCSE reviewed previous application requirements, consulted with states, and identified key fiscal and programmatic elements to include in the FY 2017 - 2019 application. This new application reflects a greater emphasis on program efficiency, coordination of services, and increased attention to family safety. This application will cover three fiscal years (FYs 2017 – 2019). Any change in the plan during this period will require prior approval by the federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE).

The deadline for submission of your application to OCSE is [DATE], 2016.

While the AV program legislation and regulations remain unchanged (click on these hyperlinks, program [legislation](#) and [program regulations](#)), OCSE encourages states to review the guidance found in Public Law 113-183 (Section 303. Sense of the Congress Regarding Offering of Voluntary Parenting Time Arrangements - see appendix) when determining AV grant program priorities.

Services can be provided directly by the state agency administering the grant or through grants or contracts with courts, state/local public agencies, and/or nonprofit entities such as community- and faith-based organizations. Note: for-profit entities may not receive AV grant funds. Non-AV-related services, such as job training or placement or other services not specified in law, are not allowable under this federal grant program. This is a formula grant program and state/territory participation remains optional.

To apply for funds the state must complete an application that addresses all elements in the following list:

1. Cover letter from senior level official in the state agency administering the AV grant funds
2. Description of the target population to be served with grant funds - OCSE strongly encourages states to prioritize noncustodial parents with child support cases in the Title IV-D program
3. Description of direct services/interventions provided with grant funds
4. Description of indirect services/resources provided with grant funds
5. Description of the administrative structure for the AV grant program and an estimate of administrative costs, including an explanation of how this administrative approach will ensure grant activities are conducted in an effective and efficient manner
6. Description of safeguards to ensure safety for parents and children receiving AV grant services
7. Estimated expenditures by program activity (use FY16 grant amount for estimation)

8. Description of other funds the grantee anticipates using to support AV program services
9. Description of the process the state/territory will use to obligate and distribute grant funds
10. Description of how the state/territory will monitor program services delivered by grantees/contractors and fulfill grant reporting requirements

1. Cover Letter

The senior level official in the state agency that administers the AV program will need to submit a signed cover letter. The cover letter should come from a senior level official in the state agency administering the grant funds, or their designee. The letter will need to include:

- How the state will comply with its minimum 10 percent share (exception: Guam and the Virgin Islands are not required to contribute a share). Federal funds must constitute no more than **90 percent** of total program expenditures. The remaining **10 percent** share of program expenditures must be derived from non-federal sources, including state funds, local funds or cash or in-kind contributions. [Note: To comply, the grantee must provide 10 percent of the total program funds, not a 10 percent match. For example, if the federal grant amount is \$100,000, then the state share is \$11,111 for a total of \$111,111 (here is the formula: $\$100,000 / .90 = \$11,111$)].
- A statement that expenditure of the AV program dollars will be used for services to increase and facilitate noncustodial parents' (NCPs') access to and visitation of their children.
- **A statement of how the direct and in-direct services planned by the state/territory relate to the parenting time policy goals included in PL113-183 (see appendix).**
- Assurance that the designated state agency will monitor the program.
- Notation that the agency will submit its annual survey data by December 30.

2. Target population to be served with grant funds

- a. Describe the parents the state/territory plans to serve with AV grant funded services and resources. (e.g. noncustodial parents who were not married to the other parent, low-income parents, and parents establishing child support orders in the Title IV- D system), how those parents were identified as the service population, and an estimated number of parents the state/territory plans to serve in the grant year.
- b. Describe outreach and recruitment efforts the state/territory will take to ensure the target population is aware of and effectively reached with AV program services.
- c. If the state plans to use AV Grant funds to provide services to parents involved in the child welfare system (Title IV-E or Title IV-B), please describe how the state will ensure the AV grant funded services do not duplicate services funded through Title IV-E or Title IV-B.

3. Direct Services: Describe the direct services the state/territory plans to provide and how those direct services will support increased non-custodial parent time with and access to their children. Allowable activities include (but are not limited to): parent education, visitation enforcement, development of parenting plans/orders, mediation, counseling, development of guidelines for visitation (parenting time).

- a. Location of services - please indicate where the state/territory plans to implement program services and a rationale for areas chosen if less than statewide.
- b. Coordination with Title IV-D Child Support Agency - please describe efforts or plans to integrate delivery of AV grant services with state/local child support services.
- c. Rationale - describe the process used by the state to determine funding priorities for planned activities and how those activities are likely to maximize the impact of the AV grant on noncustodial

parenting time.

- d. Service Providers – please describe the process used to secure professional service providers, including the standards for examining their qualifications, determining the reasonableness of the costs for their services, establishing deliverables, measuring the work quantity, and evaluating its quality.
4. **Indirect Services/Activities:** Describe planned indirect services and activities that support increased parenting time for NCPs. Examples of in-direct activities include: training for family court judges or child support staff regarding domestic violence and safe parenting time, outreach to community organizations to build support for parenting time services, inclusion of parenting time information on child support agency or court websites, and development of parenting time templates/forms.
 5. **Administrative Structure:** Describe how AV grant oversight and administration will be conducted including: rationale used to determine the state agency responsible for administration, a description of staff qualifications for the program coordinator, expected amount of staff time dedicated to program administration, and accounting controls in place to ensure grant funds are expended for allowable purposes.
 6. **Safeguards:** Describe how the state will ensure the safety of parents and children who are served through AV grant funded services.
 - a. If the state/territory plans to fund supervised visitation and/or neutral drop-off and pick-up services, this description must provide details of the operational standards with which providers of supervised visitation services must comply (e.g. state standards, Supervised Visitation Network standards, Department of Justice- Safe Havens standards). Include descriptions of screening procedures and provide copies of screening tools and protocols.
 - b. For services other than supervised visitation/neutral exchange please describe how the state/territory will incorporate a domestic violence informed approach to parenting time services, including a description of current and planned collaborations with domestic violence experts.
 - c. Additionally, if grant services are provided by a sub-recipient, how will the state monitor sub-grantee safety procedures?
 7. **Expenditures by program activity:** Estimate the amount and percent of total AV grant funds the state/territory plans to use for each direct activity, in-direct activity, and **for administrative purposes**. Please include estimated travel costs for the program coordinator to attend the annual coordinators' meeting. Include estimated numbers of parents to be served by direct activity area.
 8. **Other funding sources:** Please describe any funds (state funds, private foundation funds, local funds) the state/territory expects to be dedicated to AV program activities. Describe any plans the state/territory has to try and secure additional funding for AV program activities.
 9. **Partner agencies:** Please describe any existing partnerships with other government agencies, community, or faith-based agencies the AV grant program has to serve as referrals or resources for families participating in AV grant funded activities. Please also list partnerships you are exploring or ones that you would like to explore with assistance from OCSE.
 10. **Funds obligation process:** Briefly describe the procedure the state is likely to use in obligating the FY 2017 grant funds, such as: request-for-proposals, sole source, interagency transfer of funds (e.g., Administrative Office of the Courts), and/or continuing grants/contracts to existing providers. If the state/territory plans to distribute funds to other entities, please include copies of MOUs or contracts controlling use of funds.
 11. **Monitoring and Reporting:** Describe how the state intends to conduct the required monitoring to

ensure funds are properly spent, including a schedule and planned methods for sub-recipient monitoring. If an issue is identified requiring a special review, please notify OCSE within 10 business days.

- 12. Data collection and accuracy:** Describe how the state will gather data on AV grant services and ensure the accuracy of program performance data submitted to OCSE by December 30 of each year. Describe any reporting required of sub-recipients in addition to federal reporting requirements.
- 13. Evaluation:** Describe any current or planned evaluation of AV grant activities and include copies of evaluation reports/findings from any evaluations conducted in the previous three grant years.

Terms and Conditions: See attachments.

Financial Reporting Requirements

Compliance with Terms and Conditions: Prior to and during the process of expending federal AV grant funds, states must adhere to the Terms and Conditions which will accompany the grant award.

Obligation/Liquidation Dates: States must obligate their FY 2017 AV grant funds by September 30, 2018 and liquidate the funds by December 30, 2018.

Reporting Financial Status: A financial status report is required at the end of each fiscal year:

- a. 90 days from the end of the first fiscal year (i.e., for the FY 2017 grant, this date would be December 30, 2017); and
- b. 90 days from the end of the final fiscal year (i.e., for the FY 2018 grant, this date would be December 30, 2018).

Employer Identification Number (EIN): Please include the current number and note if it has changed.

D-U-N-S Requirement: All AV grantees must have a D&B Data Universal Numbering System (D U-N-S) number. A D-U-N-S number is required for every application for a new award or renewal/continuation of an award, including applications or plans under formula, entitlement, and block grant programs.

State Point-of-Contact: Provide the name, title and address of the official to whom the annual notice of grant award letter will be mailed. We also will provide an e-copy of the letter to the state AV program coordinator.

On-line Data Collection: As of October 1, 2013, all financial reports must be submitted through the On-line Data Collection (OLDC) System. If you do not currently have access to OLDC System, please contact Michael Bratt (michael.bratt@acf.hhs.gov) in the Office of Grants Management.

Send an electronic copy of the signed cover letter and accompanying application to: michael.hayes@acf.hhs.gov.

If you have questions regarding this application or the requirements of the AV grant, please contact Michael Hayes via email.

Thank you for the important work that you are doing to help noncustodial parents gain increased parenting time with their children.

Sincerely,

Vicki Turetsky
Commissioner
Office of Child Support Enforcement

Attachments: Grant Award Terms and Conditions
Section 303 PL113-183

cc: State Child Support Enforcement Directors
OCSE Regional Program Managers

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THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13)

Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 10 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information.

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