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## State Court Improvement Program

	 <h1 style="text-align: center;">Deadline: October 3 2023</h1>
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The program provides three grant opportunities to state courts to improve court efficiency and the quality of legal representation; a basic grant for assessment work; a grant for data collection and analysis; and a grant to increase training of court personnel, including cross training with agency staff. The program provides state courts flexibility to design assessments which identify barriers to timely and effective decision-making, highlight practices which are not fully successful, examine areas they find to be in need of correction or added attention, and then implement reforms which address the state courts specific needs. State courts are required to collaborate with the state child welfare agency and tribes in this work. The program also provides \$1,000,000 annually for a Tribal Court Improvement Program.

General information about this opportunity

Last Known Status

Active

Program Number

93.586

Federal Agency/Office

Administration For Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services


## Type(s) of Assistance Offered

A - Formula Grants; B - Project Grants

## Program Accomplishments

**Fiscal Year 2016** It is anticipated that between formula and discretionary grants, a total of 163 grants will be awarded. 165 grants were awarded.

**Fiscal Year 2017** 165 formula and discretionary grants were awarded.



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**Fiscal Year 2018** A total of 168 grants were awarded between formula and discretionary grants.

**Fiscal Year 2019** It is anticipated that 159 new grants will be awarded between formula and discretionary grants to states and territories and there will be 8 tribal grant non-competing continuations.

## Authorization

Social Security Act, Title IV-B, Part 2, Section 438

Who is eligible to apply/benefit from this assistance?

## Applicant Eligibility

The highest state courts in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are eligible to apply for funding. The term "highest state court" means the judicial tribunal which is the ultimate court of appeals in the state. Tribal courts or tribal governments of federally recognized Tribes may apply for grants. To be eligible, a tribe must be operating an approved title IV-E program in accordance with section 479B of the Social Security Act (the Act); or plan to operate a title IV-E program and have received a title IV-E plan development grant, as authorized by section 476 of the Act; or have a court responsible for proceedings related to foster care or adoption (section 438(c)(3)(A)(iv) of the Act).

## Beneficiary Eligibility

Families and children who are served by state and tribal courts in proceedings related to foster care, guardianship and adoption.

## Credentials/Documentation

All state courts which submit applications as per instructions released by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families (ACYF) are eligible to receive Court Improvement Program grant funds. Tribal Court Improvement Program grants are discretionary and will be awarded on a competitive basis to federally recognized tribes. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) adopted the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidance in 2 CFR part 200, and has codified the text, with HHS-specific amendments in 45 CFR Part 75. ACF recipients must follow the requirements in 45 CFR Part 75.

What is the process for applying and being award this assistance?

## Pre-Application Procedure

Preapplication coordination is not applicable.

## Application Procedure

2 CFR 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards applies to this program. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) adopted the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidance in 2 CFR part 200, and has codified the text, with HHS-specific amendments in 45 CFR Part 75. ACF recipients must follow the requirements in 45 CFR Part 75. Program instructions can be obtained from the Children's Bureau, ACYF and the appropriate Health and Human Services (HHS) Regional Offices.

Funding opportunity announcements for the tribal program are published on [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) website as available.

### Award Procedure

Recipients are notified that funds have been awarded through a Notice of Award (NOA) issued by the Administration for Children and Families. Funds are disbursed through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System (PMS).

### Deadlines

Contact the headquarters or regional location, as appropriate for application deadlines

### Approval/Disapproval Decision Time

Federal approval time will be between 30 and 120 days.

### Appeals

Subject to the limitations of the Appendix A to 45 CFR Part 16, appeals may take place in accordance with 45 CFR Part 16.

### Renewals

Renewal applications will be accepted every five years for the State Court Improvement Program with the option to apply annually for any grant not previously received. The discretionary Tribal Court Improvement Program will be re-competed following completion of the five year project period for existing projects.

### How are proposals selected?

Applicable to tribal program: Applications competing for financial assistance will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using only the criteria described in FOA. Each panel is composed of experts with knowledge and experience in the area under review. Generally, review panels include three reviewers and one chairperson. Results of the competitive objective review are taken into consideration by ACF in the selection of projects for funding; however, objective review scores and rankings are not binding. Scores and rankings are only one element used in the award decision-making process.

### How may assistance be used?

Grants under the State Court Improvement Program may be used for assessment and improvement activities, broadly defined, of the child welfare functions of a court system to promote continuous quality improvement with respect to: due process; timeliness and quality of court hearings; quality legal representation; engagement of the entire family in court processes; improved case tracking and analysis of child welfare cases; data collection, analysis and sharing; and training of legal and judicial personnel in child welfare cases, including cross-training with child welfare agency staff and contractors. Grants under the Tribal Court Improvement Program may be used to conduct assessments of how tribal courts handle child welfare proceedings and to make improvements to court processes to provide for the safety, permanency, and well-being of children, enhance engagement of the entire family in court processes, and provide for training of judges, attorneys, and legal personnel in child welfare cases.

### What are the requirements after being awarded this opportunity?

#### Reporting

Not applicable.

#### Auditing

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) adopted the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Guidance in 2 CFR part 200, and has codified the text, with HHS-specific amendments in 45 CFR Part 75. ACF recipients must follow the requirements in 45 CFR Part 75. Audits are conducted in accordance with the requirements of 45 CFR Part 75 Subpart F.

#### Records

Retention requirements for records are covered by the provisions of 45 CFR SSSS75.361-365 and generally must be retained for three years from the submission date of the final expenditure report.

#### Other Assistance Considerations

##### Formula and Matching Requirements

Statutory Formula: Title IV Chapter 7 Part B Subpart 2 Section 438(d) Social Security Act 42 U.S.C. 629h

Matching is mandatory. 25%. Each state court with an approved application is allotted \$85,000. In addition to this base amount, the remainder of the amount appropriated for all state courts will be divided among those courts with approved applications according to each state's proportionate share of children under the age of 21. If any state courts do not apply for their share of these funds, the unclaimed amount will be reallocated each year to all other state courts with approved applications. Non-federal share (or match) is required at the rate of 25 percent of the total budget. The same formula and match requirements apply to each of the three CIP grants. There is no match requirement for the Tribal Court Improvement Program.

MOE requirements are not applicable to this assistance listing.

### Length and Time Phasing of Assistance

Funds are disbursed through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Payment Management System (PMS). Method of awarding/releasing assistance: Quarterly.

Who do I contact about this opportunity?

Regional or Local Office

Contact the Children's Bureau Regional Program Manager.

Headquarters Office

Gail Collins

, 330 C Street SW, Room 3512

Washington, DC 20201 US

[gail.collins@acf.hhs.gov](mailto:gail.collins@acf.hhs.gov)

**Phone:** 2022058552

Website Address

<http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb>

Financial Information

Account Identification

75-1512-0-1-506

Obligations

(Project Grants (Discretionary)) FY 18\$934,000.00; FY 19 est \$937,999.00; FY 20 est \$1,000,000.00; FY 17\$19,551,000.00; FY 16 est \$930,000.00; - (Formula Grants) FY 18\$29,058,245.00; FY 19 est \$29,058,243.00; FY 20 est \$30,972,245.00; FY 17\$8,379,000.00; FY 16\$27,960,000.00; -

Range and Average of Financial Assistance

FY 2018: State grant awards ranged from \$87,123 to \$814,267 with an average of \$199,582. FY 2018: Tribal grant awards ranged from \$105,003 to \$150,000 with an average of \$133,429.

Regulations, Guidelines and Literature

ACYF-CB-PI-16-05, issued October 27, 2016. The Court Improvement Program is not regulated.

Examples of Funded Projects

Not applicable.



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