

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SUPPORT SERVICES

P.O. Box 419064, Rancho Cordova, CA 95741-9064



January 23, 2004

CSS LETTER: 04-02

ALL IV-D DIRECTORS
ALL COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS
ALL BOARDS OF SUPERVISORS

SUBJECT: FEDERAL GRANT OPPORTUNITIES AND GRANT APPROVAL
PROCESS

This letter is to notify local child support agencies (LCSAs) of upcoming grant opportunities and to set out the process for LCSAs to follow before applying for such grants. Grants can help LCSAs test innovative ways to improve child support performance and better serve children and families. However, it is important that we coordinate our efforts and maximize resources to further the goals and objectives of the California child support program.

New Grant Opportunities

The federal Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) has recently announced its Special Improvement Project grants (SIP Grants) for projects, which further the goals of the nation's child support program. The seven priority areas are: (1) Improving the judicial/administrative processing of child support enforcement case activities; (2) Educating the public on parental responsibilities and promoting healthy marriage; (3) Encouraging more timely and appropriate order modifications; (4) Expanding customer service through agency-initiated contact; (5) Helping noncustodial parents meet their child support and family responsibilities; (6) Improving child support services for ethnic and culturally diverse populations; and (7) Furthering the child support mission to ensure all children receive financial and medical support from their parents.

OCSE anticipates awarding 13 SIP Grants, each for approximately \$100,000, except for grants awarded under area (5), which will be for \$200,000 each. SIP Grants do not require a matching financial contribution. SIP Grant applications are due to OCSE by March 3, 2004. The grants are expected to operate for approximately 17 months from May 2004 through September 2005.

Reason for this Transmittal

- State Law or Regulation Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order or Settlement Change
- Clarification requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by DCSS

More information on the SIP Grants is available at:

http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/pubs/2003/grants/sip/federal_register_SIP.pdf
or 68 Federal Register 244, pages 70801-10 (Dec. 19, 2003).

In addition, the federal government has established a web site that provides information on upcoming federal grant opportunities. The web site sets forth information on federal grants, allows for on-line application and provides an email service to notify interested individuals of upcoming grant opportunities in particular areas. The web site is grants.gov.

Grant Approval Process

Grants provide an excellent opportunity to test new ways to improve the child support program and better serve families, especially during times of fiscal constraint; and the Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) strongly encourages LCSAs to pursue appropriate grant opportunities. In order to ensure that all grants adhere to the mission, vision and values of the California child support program, to coordinate grant proposals across the State, and to maximize grant opportunities for California's child support program, all LCSAs are required to submit to DCSS any grant conceptual proposal before submission of a grant proposal to the granting entity. A Grant Proposal Review Form is attached. This is particularly important for the SIP Grants where OCSE will look to each state IV -D agency for review of grant proposals before awarding grants in that state. DCSS will review the proposal for consistency with the goals and objectives of the statewide child support program, cost-effectiveness, and avoidance of duplication with other projects.

All LCSAs who are interested in applying for SIP Grants must provide DCSS with a conceptual proposal or proposed grant idea by January 30, 2004. To notify DCSS, please contact Leora Gershenzon at (916) 464-5195 or leora.gershenzon@dcss.ca.gov. DCSS will review all proposed grant ideas and notify the requesting LCSAs which proposal it will support by February 6, 2004. DCSS will also work with the selected LCSAs in completing their grant applications, as appropriate. Additionally, any LCSA who is contacted by an outside organization seeking support or commitment for a SIP Grant proposal should first seek review of the proposal by DCSS before providing the requested commitment or support.

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If you have any questions about grant opportunities, please contact Leora Gershenzon at (916) 464-5195.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donna S. Hershkowitz', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

DONNA S. HERSHKOWITZ
Deputy Director
Child Support Services Division

Attachment

