


**CALIFORNIA'S ACCESS TO VISITATION GRANT PROGRAM**

*2016 Access to Visitation Forum Meeting:  
Summary Report to the Family and Juvenile Law  
Advisory Committee*

November 7, 2016  
San Francisco, California



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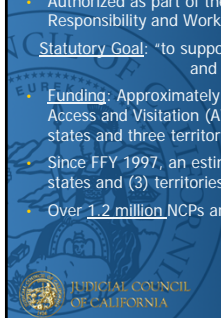
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**FEDERAL CHILD ACCESS AND VISITATION PROGRAM**

- Authorized as part of the 1996 welfare reform legislation (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act)

**Statutory Goal:** "to support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation of their children"

- **Funding:** Approximately \$10 million is appropriated annually for the Access and Visitation (AV) Program, which provides funding to all 50 states and three territories
- Since FFY 1997, an estimated \$190 million has been made available to states and (3) territories for the provision of AV services and
- Over 1.2 million NCPs and their families have been served to date



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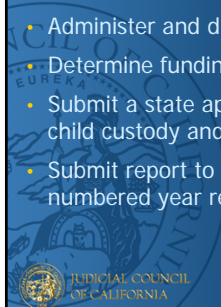
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**CA ACCESS TO VISITATION PROGRAM**

Judicial Council shall (FC section 3204):

- Administer and distribute AV grant funds
- Determine funding allocation awards to courts
- Submit a state application to federal OCSE to fund child custody and visitation programs
- Submit report to the state Legislature, even-numbered year regarding the grant program



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### FEDERAL FUNDING ALLOCATION TO STATE

- Formula grant based on number of single-parent households
- CA receives maximum amount —less than a million
- CA allocation represents less than 10% of total national funding
- States required to provide 10% match (non-federal source)
- Match can be cash or in-kind



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### ELIGIBLE GRANT RECIPIENTS

- Low-income
- Separated, separating, divorced, or never married parents
- Involved in custody and visitation proceedings under the Family Code
- Funds cannot be used for Tribal, dependency, home visitation, off-site visitation, or therapeutic / facilitated visitation services



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### GRANT SERVICE AREAS

- FC section 3204(b)(1) funds shall be used for:
  - Supervised visitation and exchange services
  - Parent education
  - Group counseling
- FC section 3201 defines parent education
- FC section 3202 defines "eligible provider" for the three service activities



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### GRANT FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

- Family courts eligible to apply
- Family law divisions required to administer the program
- Applicants “strongly encouraged” to involve multiple courts and counties; must designate one court as administering court
- Community-based agencies must apply as part of the courts application; court required to follow separate procurement process
- Subcontractor agency must be nonprofit agency
- Supervised visitation services must be on-site facility, center-based
- Contract agreements are made only with designated court; courts subsequently enter into MOU agreement with subcontractor service provider
- AV grant contract agreement mentions Family Law Facilitators



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### GRANT FUNDING AMOUNTS

- Funding cap and funding amounts divided into three categories:
  1. Maximum of \$45,000
  2. Maximum of \$60,000
  3. Maximum of \$100,000
- Demographic factors determine which category applies to a given court: (1) the number of single-parent households in the county; and (2) number of individuals with income below the poverty level in the county



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### FUNDING RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensure funds expended to support program goal...“to establish programs to support and facilitate noncustodial parents’ access to and visitation with their children”
- States permitted to contract with courts and nonprofit entities
- States must:
  1. Monitor all programs funded
  2. Evaluate the programs funded
  3. Ensure safeguards are in place for clients served
  4. Ensure domestic violence protocols established / in place



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## PROGRAM MONITORING

- Required to monitor program services: (1) authorized by the statute; (2) ensure being conducted in an effective and efficient manner; (3) complies with federal evaluation and reporting requirements; and (4) contain safeguards that ensure safety of parents and children
- Annual data reporting requirement through the "State Child Access Program Survey"
- Collect Outcome data (i.e., number of NCP whose parenting time with children increased as a result of services)



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## PURPOSE OF 2016 FORUM MEETING

- August 2016 State AV Coordinators/Managers Meeting
- New Sense of Congress Legislation
- State efforts to respond Sense of Congress: Goal was to bring together court leadership, child support, grant recipients, key stakeholders, and community-just partners to dialogue and exchange information regarding coordination and collaboration of services and how to integrate the states AV grant program to increase NCP parenting time – how can we create "on ramps" through the AV funded services that will reach a greater number of NCP parents
- Respond to State Grant Application Plan for FY's 2017-2019
- Respond to funder directive that: (1) states should explore how to support parenting time arrangements that increase NCP access to and visitation with their children; (2) develop creative, innovative collaborations with state child support; (3) consider AV funded service delivery linkages and connections; and (4) greater federal emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness of program services and family safety



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## MEETING SUMMARY

- Approximately 42 attendees; 27 counties statewide
- Representatives included the co-chairs from the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee, judiciary, grant recipient courts, child support, community justice partners, Family Court Services Directors/Managers, Family Law Facilitators, Self-Help Center staff, and other key stakeholders
- Meeting facilitated by outside expert
- Several Roundtable group discussions AND presentation by San Diego representatives PTOC grant recipient
- Six centralized themes emerged from Roundtable groups
- Attendees completed evaluation form including suggestions for next steps, and ideas for if another meeting is convened



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**Challenges and Opportunities for Increased Parenting Time: AV, Courts & Child Support**



[www.flcourts.edu/Workgroups/etp](http://www.flcourts.edu/Workgroups/etp)

- AV-funded Services
- Child Support, Family Law Facilitators, and Self Help

**Objectives:**

1. Identifying barriers for families and obstacles for programs to increasing noncustodial parenting time from the professional perspectives of workgroup participants
2. Identifying possible solutions to barriers and interagency connections ("on ramps" to services) for increasing noncustodial parenting time

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**SIX PRIMARY THEMES EMERGED**

- Costs (affordability and accessible services)
- Fear (e.g., of system, of parent, court process, etc.)
- Compliance (e.g., court order/ visitation order)
- Lack of information, knowledge, and education about the various processes (i.e., the court system, child support, and the AV funded services)
- Safety concerns (DV, child abuse)
- Increased collaboration with community
- Availability of resources statewide

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**ATTENDEES FEEDBACK COMMENTS**

- Overwhelmingly positive (excellent, well planned and executed)
- More advanced time for next meeting and invite other stakeholders
- Learned and gained a lot of information about the AV program, grant requirements, and various ways grant has been implemented
- Learned about other county programs and potential resources
- Continue collaboration and outreach efforts
- Cross participation b/t AV, child support and the courts (e.g., conferences, meetings, trainings)
- Hearing innovative ideas; interaction / networking with other agencies and attendees
- The discussion opened up possibilities
- Additional funding needed (AV, court, and child support)
- Additional resources that have statewide benefit for all courts, child support agencies

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## NEXT STEPS

- Comments Forum meeting
- Seeking Committee feedback and guidance next steps
- Forum Facilitator report completed 11/4/2016
- 2017 AV Grant Program RFP grant application for next three years of AV funding anticipated to be released in June 2016 – targeted to seek funding allocation approval at the council's Nov 2017 meeting
- Ideas, suggestions regarding 2017 RFP grant application



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