Access and Visitation Pre-Proposal Conference

Invited Lesa Britt   Erin Easton -DHS- CSA   Kanisha Reed -DHS-   Samuel Eduful -DHS-   Adam Schlager   Patricia Ryan -MDH-   Laticia Muse -DHS- CSA   spc@jssa.org   psbaer@harfordcountymd.gov   Judith Wilson   Brian Auchincloss -DHS-   Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA   Myra Davis -DHS- CSA   Regina.chester@mdcourts.gov   Cynthia Shockey -DHS- CSA   ~~Sherrel.Peterson@baltimorecity.gov~~   ~~kmull@jssa.org~~   ~~mary.odonnell@mdcourts.gov~~

Attachments 🗓 Access and Visitation Pre-Proposal Conference
🎬 Access and Visitation Pre-Proposal Conference - 2025/06/11 08:50 EDT - Recordi...
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📄 Agenda - Pre-Proposal Conference - CSA AV 26 001-S 6-3.docx

Meeting records 📄 Transcript   🎬 Recording   🎬 Recording 2   🎬 Recording 3

Summary

Kanisha Reed -DHS- and Erin Easton -DHS- CSA provided an overview of the Access and Visitation Program and the Request for Grant Proposal (RFGP) CSA AV26001s, with Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA detailing the scope of work across five new service regions and emphasizing domestic violence safeguarding. The presenters outlined grant details, compliance requirements, proposal format, evaluation criteria, and required documentation, clarifying resubmission requirements per Samuel Eduful -DHS- and addressing questions from participants like Judith Wilson and Lesa Britt regarding regional coverage, service levels, eligibility, and cost of services. Samuel Eduful -DHS- and Laticia Muse -DHS- CSA also discussed the grant approval process and the evaluation committee.

Details

- **Meeting Recording and Introductions** Kanisha Reed -DHS- started the meeting recording and asked attendees for patience while others joined ([00:00:23](#)). Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA suggested recording the meeting as well ([00:00:00](#)). Kanisha Reed -DHS- requested attendees to state their name and company for the record when asking questions and to add their contact information to the chat for an attendance list ([00:04:25](#)).

- **Opening Remarks and Program Background** Erin Easton -DHS- CSA provided background on the Access and Visitation Program, highlighting its goal to increase non-custodial parents' access to children and promote healthy parenting time, supported by federal grant funding. They noted the imbalance between the strict enforcement of child support and the civil handling of visitation rights, emphasizing the potential of mediation to improve outcomes ([00:07:23](#)).

- **RFGP Key Information** Kanisha Reed -DHS- presented key information for the Request for Grant Proposal (RFGP), including the solicitation number (CSA AV26001s), issue date (April 16, 2025), issuing officer contact details, and the closing date (July 2, 2025) ([00:08:47](#)). Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA corrected the phone number listed. The Department of Human Services (DHS) intends to award up to five grants, one per region, to operate access and visitation services ([00:10:41](#)).

- **Grant Details and Requirements** Kanisha Reed -DHS- stated that applicants cannot submit more than one proposal per region and a 10% match is required. The grants will be for approximately four years, from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2029 ([00:12:11](#)). Kanisha Reed -DHS- emphasized the need for subcontractors to be identified with a complete description of their role. Applicants must be registered with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation (ESTAD) ([00:12:11](#)).

- **Compliance and Electronic Transactions** Kanisha Reed -DHS- outlined regulations against falsifying information in connection with the solicitation. Payment will be made via electronic fund transfers (EFT) for grants exceeding $100,000, and applicants must register using the CAT GADX form unless an exemption is granted ([00:17:22](#)). Certain transactions, such as submission of documents requiring original signatures, grant execution, and modifications, are not authorized to be conducted electronically ([00:21:08](#)).

- **Conflict of Interest and Non-Disclosure** Kanisha Reed -DHS- stated that applicants must complete and sign a conflict of interest affidavit and disclosure. Successful grantees and their subcontractors' personnel will also need to complete similar agreements. The solicitation and resulting grants are subject to the terms of a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) (00:23:06).

- **Scope of Work and Service Regions** Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA presented the scope of work, emphasizing the goal to increase parenting time and compliance with child support (00:25:38). Maryland is shifting to five service regions: Western, Capital, Central Maryland, Southern Maryland, and Eastern Maryland, with specific counties listed for each region. The objectives include expanding service areas, improving accountability, and expanding remote mediation services with secure digital platforms (00:32:06).

- **Domestic Violence Safeguarding** Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA highlighted the strong focus on improved domestic violence safeguarding, requiring disclosure of safety concerns, staff training, service referrals, and a comprehensive domestic violence plan (00:33:27). Approved programs will be required to connect with the local child support agency and provide a log of participating child support customers (without PII or FTI) (00:34:48).

- **Proposal Format and Submission** Kanisha Reed -DHS- detailed the proposal format, requiring simultaneous submission of a technical proposal (Volume One) and a financial proposal (Volume Two) electronically to the procurement officer by the deadline. A second redacted electronic version in searchable PDF format is required for Public Information Act (PIA) requests (00:35:58). The technical proposal should include an executive summary, minimal qualification documentation, a response to RFGP requirements, a proposed work plan, applicant qualifications, staff experience, financial information, a certificate of insurance, subcontractor details, and a legal action summary .

- **Evaluation Criteria and Procedures** Kanisha Reed -DHS- explained that the financial proposal will be evaluated for compliance and budget reasonableness but will not be ranked. Grants will be awarded using the Competitive Sealed Proposal (CSP) method, which may include discussions and proposal revisions (00:45:49). Technical proposals will be evaluated for technical merit and ranked. The grant will be awarded to the responsible applicant whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the state (00:47:38).

- **Required Documentation Upon Award Recommendation** Kanisha Reed -DHS- listed the documents required from the recommended awardee within five business days of notification, including the grant agreement, non-disclosure agreement (if applicable), HIPPA business associate agreement (if applicable), and a copy of a current certificate of insurance ([00:49:19](#)).

- **RFGP Attachments Overview** Kanisha Reed -DHS- briefly reviewed the various attachments to the RFGP, including the grant agreement (Attachment A), proposal affidavit (B), pre-proposal conference response form (C), financial proposal instructions and forms (D), federal funds attachment (E), conflict of interest affidavit (F), non-disclosure agreement (G), HIPPA business associate agreement (H), locations of service performance (I), monthly expenditure reports (Exhibit 1), monthly progress reports (Exhibit 2), and mediation and confidentiality agreements (Exhibit 3) .

- **Clarification on RFGP Amendment and Resubmission** Adam Schlager inquired if the only change to the Notice of Intent to Solicit was the dates. Kanisha Reed -DHS- confirmed this and Samuel Eduful -DHS- clarified that the initial proposal was cancelled, requiring all applicants, including those who previously submitted, to resubmit their proposals with current dates on signed forms ([00:53:56](#)).

- **Questions Regarding Regional Coverage and Funding** Judith Wilson asked about the process for awarding grants if there are multiple applicants in one region and none in others, and how funds would be allocated ([00:55:14](#)). Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA explained that vendors work within their region, and if multiple are selected in one region, they would be encouraged to expand coverage within that region ([00:56:47](#)). She clarified that there is one pool of funds that will be divided among the awarded vendors. Judith Wilson also inquired about a target number of parents/families to be served per region ([00:58:25](#)). Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA stated that the target number is based on connecting with the child support agency in that jurisdiction or region ([00:59:30](#)).

- **Child Support Agency Objectives and Service Levels** Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA clarified that the objective of connecting with the child support agency is to disseminate information and aid participants requesting services. Based on past experiences with two vendors who each serviced over 100 participants, Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA suggested aiming for a similar service level ([00:59:30](#)).

- **Required Service Components** Judith Wilson inquired about the mandatory services listed in the RFP. Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA stated that while a program may not offer every listed service, supervised visitation is a core requirement for the access and visitation model ([01:00:45](#)). Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA further specified that counseling and mediation are also essential components to facilitate safe connections between non-custodial parents and their children ([01:02:19](#)).

- **Eligibility for Existing Service Providers** Lesa Britt asked if current county service providers could apply for the state grant in the same county ([01:03:21](#)). Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA explained that the application is directly to the Department of Human Services for federal funds and is separate from county-level funding ([01:04:56](#)). Samuel Eduful -DHS- clarified that due to potential legal implications, Lesa Britt should submit their question in writing to Kisha for review by the legal department, but advised Lesa Britt to proceed with the application in the meantime as the information will be shared on the department's website ([01:05:53](#)).

- **Cost of Services for Participants** Judith Wilson confirmed that all services provided under this program must be free of charge to the participants. Arlette Thomas Fletcher -DHS- CSA emphasized that no third-party billing, including insurance, is allowed, and the grant funding will be the sole source of compensation for service providers ([01:07:56](#)).

- **Letters of Recommendation for Non-State Agencies** Judith Wilson inquired about the requirement for a letter from the state, noting their organization primarily works directly with parents and not state agencies ([01:11:34](#)). Samuel Eduful -DHS- clarified that if the RFGP specifies letters of recommendation, they are typically from entities or state agencies the applicant has worked with. However, Samuel Eduful -DHS- assured Judith Wilson that references from non-state agencies could also be provided for background checks ([01:13:00](#)).

- **Proposal Deadline and Contact Information** Judith Wilson verified the proposal response deadline as July 2nd at 2:00 p.m. local time. Kanisha Reed -DHS- encouraged participants to email any further questions before the deadline and indicated they would aim for a same-day response ([01:10:28](#)).

- **Grant Approval Process and Evaluation Committee** Samuel Eduful -DHS- and Laticia Muse -DHS- CSA discussed the grant approval process, confirming it is an exempt contract that does not require BPW approval ([01:14:08](#)). Samuel Eduful

-DHS- also requested the list of evaluation committee members to schedule the kickoff meeting and oral presentations, and Laticia Muse -DHS- CSA agreed to provide the list to the procurement officer, Kisha, promptly (01:15:17).

Suggested next steps

- ☐ Laticia Muse -DHS- CSA will provide the list of evaluation committee members to Kanisha Reed -DHS- today, who will then schedule the kickoff meeting based on their availability.
- ☐ Lesa Britt will put the question about potential conflict of interest in writing and send it to Kanisha Reed -DHS- for a legal opinion, which will be updated on the department website.

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