

FY 2012 OCSE Section SIP Grant Opportunities Pre-Application Conference Call Transcript

Michelle: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the preapplication call for fiscal year 2012 special improvement projection funding opportunity announcement offered by the Office of Child Support Enforcement, or OCSE for short. This year's special improvement project funding opportunity announcement is entitled, "Parenting Time Opportunities for Children in the Child Support Program," or PTOC for short. And the purpose of this call is to clarify the information provided in this funding announcement. Please note that this call is being recorded. A transcript and recording will be placed on the OCSE grants webpage at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/grants> by June 26, 2012. Thank you for taking the time to listen in and learn more about the PTOC program. Before we begin, I would like to introduce myself and my colleague who will be on the line today.

My name is Michelle Jadcak, and I am OCSE's Program Development Branch Chief. OCSE's Program Development Branch maintains responsibility for the administration of OCSE's discretionary grants and will coordinate the competitive award process, administration, and evaluation of the special improvement project grants awarded under the funding opportunity announcement we will discuss today. With me today is John Langrock who serves as the Lead Specialist for the PTOC grant program. As a reminder, PTOC stands for Parenting Time Opportunities for Children in the Child Support Program. John and I will take turns presenting information on today's call. We have designed the call to conform to Federal grant policy requirements. The PTOC grants are competitive; and as such, OCSE must ensure that no applicant receives information that could provide a potential advantage over any other applicant. Before we begin, I will read a statement from our office, Office of Grants Management, that speaks to this point.

"ACF does not provide direct guidance or instruction in the development of an applicant's project design or in writing their application. Applicants should use their best judgment in determining whether they are able to meet the requirements contained in the funding opportunity announcement, whether they are able to develop applications they believe to be responsive to the funding opportunity announcement, and in designing and writing their application. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using criteria described in Section V.1 of the funding opportunity announcement. The review panels will use the funding announcement as their principle guidance available to them in the same way that it is principle guidance for applicants."

Please keep this statement in mind as you consider your questions for today's live Q&A session. Because the applicant must primarily depend on the grant announcement when preparing applications, John and other OCSE staff have worked incredibly hard to provide all the information that is necessary and pertinent to the PTOC program in the funding announcement. Today's call will simply seek to better clarify that announcement. Given this, you will find that much of the information we will present will directly reference the open funding opportunity announcement. I encourage you to keep it handy during this call and to spend ample time reading and re-reading it if you intend to prepare an application. Along these same lines, I would like to take this opportunity to let you know that you should be cautious and selective about the information you receive about our grant opportunities. I realize that many potential applicants are likely to have existing relationships with OCSE staff and other child support experts and that you may consider looking to them for guidance as you prepare your application. Please be cautious of asking questions of or accepting information from anyone other than John Langrock or myself when it comes to questions that you have about the funding opportunity announcement. We are the individuals directly responsible for administering the grant award process for this announcement and have purposely determined what information is okay to clarify and share based on what is already provided in the funding announcement.

The agenda of today's call is to first walk through some frequently asked questions about the Parenting Time Opportunities for Children grant opportunity and provide responses that we have researched in advanced of this call. After we share the frequently asked questions, we will then open up the phone line and take any further questions you may have. We will provide further instruction on how the open Q&A will work later in the call. But for now, let's get on with prepared questions. I am now going to hand the call over to John Langrock to share the frequently asked questions or FAQs about the current special improvement projects funding announcement PTOC, Parenting Time Opportunities for Children in the Child Support Program. John.

John Langrock: Thanks, Michelle. I will read through each of our FAQs, frequently asked questions, and indicate both the question and the OCSE response. The questions range from basic grant information to more complex programmatic questions, so please listen carefully. So let's begin.

Program funding opportunity announcement related to the Parenting Time Opportunities for Children in the Child Support Program first question:

Q: How to I submit an application?

A: Please see page 10, section V, Application and Submission Information. All applications must be submitted electronically at www.grants.gov. ACF, the Administration for Children and Families, will no longer accept paper applications unless the applicant has requested and received an exemption in advance from ACF. Please direct any questions you may have about the www.grants.gov system to the www.grants.gov help desk by phone at 1-800-518-4726 or by email to support@grants.gov. The help desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, except it does close on Federal holidays. OCSE program staff are unable to assist with questions related to www.grants.gov.

Q: What will the grant fund?

A: Please see page 1, Executive Summary. OCSE plans to fund award designs to “plan, pilot, and evaluate strategies to establish parenting time orders at the same time as the initial child support orders.” Parenting time is defined as the amount of time a child spends with each parent that is agreed upon by the parents in a parenting plan and/or ordered by the court, as cited on page 3 of the funding opportunity announcement.

Q: What kinds of applicant organizations are eligible to apply?

A: Please note that this section was modified on Friday, June 8, 2012, so please refer to the currently posted funding announcement on page 8, section III, Eligibility Information. The updated eligibility language states, and I quote, “Eligibility is open to states including the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands Title IV-D agencies, county, city, or township special district Title IV-D agencies, and umbrella agencies of Title IV-D agencies. Individuals, foreign entities, and sole proprietorship organizations are not eligible to compete for or receive awards under the announcement.

Q: What is the total budget for this four-year cooperative agreement?

A: See page 7 please, section II, Award Information. It provides detailed information on the expected four-year budget. The funding opportunity announcement indicates the following amount of estimated award ceiling for each fiscal year budget period of the four-year cooperative agreement. In fiscal year

2012, the estimated award ceiling is \$100,000. In fiscal year 2013, the estimated award ceiling is \$100,000. In fiscal year 2014, the estimated award ceiling is \$100,000. And the final year is in fiscal year 2015, the estimated award is \$100,000. Over the course of the 48-month project with four 12-month budget periods, the estimated ceiling award total is \$400,000 in Federal funds. The initial award will be for fiscal year 2012, which is the first 12 months of the grant's project period. This period will begin October 1, 2012, and end September 30, 2013. Continuation awards for the subsequent 12-month budget periods will be subject to the availability of funds, satisfactory progress by the recipient, and the determination that continued funding would be in the best interest of the Federal government.

Q: Is there a cost sharing or match requirement for states?

A: No.

Q: Can grant funds not obligated for planning purposes in year one be used in year two?

A: Yes. Funds can be carried over to subsequent budget periods with prior approval from the ACF pursuant the availability of Federal funds for subsequent years of the grant. Recipients who wish to carry over grant funds from one budget period to the next must provide OCSE with the requisite carry-over package in accordance with HHS grants policy requirements.

Q: What are the application requirements?

- A: Please see pgs. 11 – 30, *Section IV.2 thru Section IV.6: Content and Form of Application Submission and related sub-topics.*

The chart on page 12 offers the applicant with a quick overall glance of the application package components and page limitation requirements. Details cited in section IV.2 thru IV.6 include reference to the following:

- Project Summary/Abstract is limited to one page, single spaced.
- The Project Description is limited to 30 pages, double-spaced, 12 point font. This must include, in order:
 1. Table of Contents – list the contents of the application including corresponding page numbers
 2. Project Design
 3. Project Management
 4. Evaluation

- Appendices are limited to 30 pages, and must be included, in the following order:
 1. Third-Party Agreements
 2. Resumes of proposed project management staff
 3. Supporting Information
 4. Letters of Support
- The Budget Justification may be single-space, in 12-point font, and is limited to 10 pages and will not count against page limitations. With the exception of the required Standard Forms (SFs), all application materials must be formatted so that they will print out onto 8 and one-half by 11 inch white paper with 1-inch margins.
- All pages of the application component, i.e., **Project Description, Budget Justification, Appendices**, must be sequentially numbered. Application materials must be printed on one side only of each page so that they may be easily reproduced.

Q: Will I be penalized if the full project description in my application is shorter than 30 pages?

A: See page 18, section IV.2, General Expectations and Instructions. It states, and I quote, "Project descriptions are evaluated on the basis of substance and measurable outcomes, not length."

Q: How will applications be evaluated?

A: Please see pages 30-32, section V.1, Criteria. Applications will be evaluated based on the following four categories of review criteria:

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|----|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. | Program design. | Maximum 50 points. |
| 2. | Program management. | Maximum 20 points. |
| 3. | Evaluation design. | Maximum 20 points. |
| 4. | Budget and budget justification. | Maximum 10 points. |

Q: Are the required personnel positions listed in the grant announcement required all four years of the project?

A: Yes. The grant requirements regarding minimum staffing, as outlined on page 6, Section I.D, Program Management, in the announcement, are required for all four years subject to the continuation of the grant and the availability of Federal funds.

Q: Are there any hiring restrictions?

A: Please see page 6, Section I.D, Project Management. This section states, and I quote, “Child support agencies must ensure appropriate project management for Parenting Time Opportunity for Children in the Child Support System pilot project. At a minimum, PTOC pilots must employ: (A) A half-time project manager who is an employee of the child support agency, and (B) A sure and effective number of hours from an on-site family violence prevention and safety coordinator.”

Q: Can grantees provide additional funds from other sources including child support funding to fund project activities, personnel, and other required project elements?

A: Yes, but this is not a requirement; and including a source of additional funding in your application and budget will in no way advantage the overall scoring of the application. If an applicant intends to provide matching funds for project activities, personnel, or other elements, then the applicant should note these funds as part of the overall project budget so that reviewers can ensure that required project elements are present in the grant budget. Additionally, if a grantee intends to use Federal sources for their matching funds, then supplementing funds must be authorized by statutory authority.

Q: What services are required to be provided as part of this demonstration?

A: Please see pages 4-6, Section I.C, Program Design. It provides the PTOC service related requirements for grantees. They are as such:

- Establishment of parenting time responsibilities in child support orders. That is a requirement. The proposed strategy to establish parenting time orders must be appropriate within the States IV-D program process, and grantees will be responsible for ensuring that the strategy can be integrated with existing State laws, structures, and programs.
- Coordination with State access and visitation AV programs. That is a requirement. At a minimum, the state child support agency must identify how state AV funds are currently used, and the grantee must appropriately coordinate with the AV program in the development of the PTOC design.
- Family violence preparedness and response plan. This is required. Grantees must have a preparedness and response plan to screen, prepare for, and address possible or disclosed cases of family violence.

- Support services. This is an elective. This grant funding does not require the grantees to provide support services to participate in the Parenting Time Opportunities for Children pilot project aside from required family violence response services. Potential PTOC partnerships may include but are not limited to state AV programs, family violence prevention and service organizations, fatherhood programs, and community based organizations.

Q: What are the stage of this four-year grant demonstration?

A: Please see page 4, Section I.C, Program Design. It notes the following, and I quote:

“Over the four-year project period of these pilot programs, the first year is devoted to start-up, setting up an evaluation design, planning for data collection, development of the pilot program design, and testing. The pilot program and any related support or referral services are provided for a two-year period, and the final year is devoted to evaluation, grant close-out, sustainability work.”

Q: Do grantees need to develop a MIS (management information system) for the pilot project?

A: Please see page 7, Section I.E, Evaluation Design. It states, and I quote:

“PTOC funds may be used for the development or procurement of management information systems necessary for data collection and analysis. The implementation evaluation shall include components to help us learn how PTOC pilot programs best interface where family violence was a factor.”

Q: If we need to request a waiver, should that be noted in the application?

A: No. Indicating that an applicant needs to request a waiver is not a requirement of this application, and it is not listed as a component for which applications will be judged in the criteria section of the announcement.

Q: Do we have to identify project partners at the time of application?

A: Please see page 22, section IV.2., under Project Description. It states:

“ To provide information about plans regarding the family violence preparedness and response plan, applications must identify the experts with whom the organization intends to partner and include a signed third party agreement.”

Q: There is a program component of the PTOC pilot project requiring OCSE approval in the area of domestic violence. How does the grantee satisfy this requirement?

A: Please see pages 4 and 5, section I.C, under Program Design, under subsection 3, titled Family Violence Preparedness and Response Plan. This section requires applicants to submit a related action plan to OCSE for approval by June 30, 2013, or at least 60 days prior to the start of the project. Again, the pilot project will go through years two and three.

We are now ready to transition to live question and answer. Before we begin, I would like to reiterate that OCSE may not provide applicants with advice or guidance on program design. To emphasize on this point, I am going to again read the following statement from our Division of Grants policy.

“ACF does not provide direct guidance or instruction in the development of an applicant’s project design or in writing their application. Applicants should use their best judgment in determining whether they are able to meet the requirements contained in the FOA, funding opportunity announcement, whether they are able to develop an application they believe to be responsive to the FOA, and in designing and writing their application. Applications will be reviewed and evaluated by objective review panels using the criteria described in Section V.1 of the FOA. The review panels will use the FOA as their principle guidance available to them in the same way that it is the principle guidance for applicants.”

Given this, please be aware that we may elect not to answer questions that could be directly related to the design of your particular program. You may send me any questions not answered for further consideration. My email is john.langrock@acf.hhs.gov. Also, this appears in the funding announcement. We will now open the line for questions. We invite anyone with a question to ask, and we will first collect all the questions and then will address them one by one. When you ask a question, please do not say your name, the state, or organization of affiliation. Rather, simply state your question. The line is now open for questions. Thank you.

The conference is now in talk mode.

Female: I have two questions. The first question is: if parenting time is included in a court order, a child support court order, is the expectation that the grantee will enforce the access and visitation piece? From our understanding, anything in an order has to be enforced. The second question is: if a case is going to court to become a child support order but not going to receive traditional child support enforcement services, is it still applicable? So basically, it would be setting up sort of on a voluntary agreement that will sort of be certified by the court. Would something like that be applicable for this grant?

Michelle: Could you repeat question 2?

Female: Sure. If a case is going to court to become a child support order but not receiving child support enforcement services, is it applicable?

Michelle: **[inaudible]**.

John: Any other questions?

Michelle: No other questions?

Female: I have a question please.

John: Yes, go ahead.

Michelle: We heard somebody say they have a question, but we are not hearing anything. Maybe you want to make sure your line is not on mute.

Female: Can you hear me now?

Michelle: Yes.

Female: Is a state prosecutorial county, a county within a state, that actually contracts with the state's IV-D agency eligible to apply for the grant?

John: Okay.

Michelle: Thank you. Any other questions?

Male: I had just one clarification question from the original questions you were answering concerning the family violence prevention and safety. I understood you to say that we had to have a third party agreement submitted or identified in the original application, and you referenced in the announcement where that was; but I thought you said page 22, and I cannot find it there.

John: Okay.

Michelle: All right, thank you. Any others? (Pause) Okay, we are going to mute the line for just a moment to gather ourselves before we answer. We will be right back. Please hold.

The conference is now in silent mode. (Pause)

Michelle: All right, this is Michelle Jadczak. I am the Program Development Branch Chief, and I will be facilitating the answer question of our Q&A today. Thank you very much for your questions; and fortunately, it looks like we will be able to respond to all of them, though in a couple cases our responses may be somewhat limited from our requirements that we cannot provide plan advice. So, I will begin with the first question that we received.

Q: If parenting time is in a court order, must a grantee enforce that order?

A: For the answer to this question, I encourage you to look at page 4 of the program announcement. Underneath section C, Program Design, #1, Establishment of Parenting Time Responsibilities in Child Support Orders. The first sentence says to the degree possible, the State's responsibility under the Parenting Time Opportunities for Children program is limited to establishment of the parenting time order and providing elective support services. Child support agencies are not required to enforce parenting time orders. In this case, you were talking about how your state structure may require enforcement of the court order; and to speak to that piece, I send you to the first sentence of the third paragraph under section #1, Establishment of Parenting Time Responsibilities in Child Support Orders, where it says that whatever strategy is proposed to establish parenting time orders must be appropriate within the State's IV-D program processes and that grantees are responsible for ensuring that their strategy can be integrated with existing State laws, structures, and programs. So that is as much guidance as I can present to you. You will have to come up with an agreeable solution for how you might want to implement this program in your State based on taking into account those

two sentences. But the one I think really answers your question is, again, the second, so I will re-read it. The proposed strategy to establish parenting time orders must be appropriate within the State's IV-D program processes, and grantees will be responsible for ensuring that their strategy can be integrated with existing State laws, structures, and programs. And just to clarify again, the other part, we are not requiring that child support agencies that receive these grants enforced parenting time orders. We are not requiring it. It does not mean that that is not allowed to happen.

Michelle: All right, so I will move to question 2.

Q: If a case goes to court to get a child support order but will not get a child support enforcement order via the State system, is it applicable for receiving parenting time orders?

A: Again, I will redirect you to the same sentence that I just read on page 4 where it says the proposed strategy to establish parenting time orders must be appropriate within the State's IV-D program process, and grantees will be responsible for ensuring that the strategy can be integrated with existing State laws, structures, and programs.

Michelle: Okay, question #3.

Q: Is a State prosecutorial county that contracts with the IV-D agency eligible to apply?

A: I will go back and quote the part of the program announcement on page 8, Section III, Eligibility Information. The applicant organizations that are eligible include states, including the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands Title IV-D agencies, county, city, or township special district IV-D agencies, and umbrella agencies of Title IV-D agencies. So given that, you can see that the applicant organizations that are eligible must be a Title IV-D agency. However, please note that the program announcement, the funding announcement, does not prohibit a IV-D agency at any point from partnering with and/or contracting with any other kinds of organizations.

Michelle Jadczak: All right, question #4.

Q: Someone asked for clarification regarding the family violence prevention and safety, the part that John read about needing a third party agreement. You noted that we had quoted page 22. This is, in fact, an error. We apologize. Let us rephrase. For this information, you should go to section

IV.2, Content in Form of Submission. There you will see on page 20 information about the family violence preparedness and response plan. Additionally, page 32 of our grant criteria addresses this. I will now read the text from page 20.

On page 20, it says:

“To provide information about plans regarding the family violence preparedness and response plan, applications must provide an informed appropriate and detailed plan for the development of an evidence based screening tool, identify appropriate plans for screen-out and alternative parenting time establishment model when family violence cases are identified including a sound plan for how the applicant expects to meet the program requirement for a minimum of eight hours training for PTOC program staff and any preferred partners using a family violence preparedness curriculum developed from widely accepted knowledge and practice and include this training in the first year budget, to provide adequate information about what family violence support services the PTOC pilot expects to provide to participants, and identify the experts with whom the organization intends to partner and include a signed third party agreement and include a brief but sound plan detailing expected steps to develop protocols for data safeguards.”

Again, that is on page 20 of the announcement, and we apologize for misstating the page.

John: Me, too.

Michelle: Then you can also look at page 32 of our grant criteria under the second, Program Management. That section has a maximum of 20 points; and within it, it breaks it down. Three points are applicable for reviewers to give to applications that, to the degree possible, demonstrate or provide information about a brief but sound plan detailing expected steps to develop protocols for data safeguards.

All right, so that concludes our question and answer period. Actually, it concludes the call. We are very excited, and thank you for your interest in our Office of Child Support Enforcement Parenting Time Opportunities for Children in the Child Support Program grant program. We are really glad you were able to join us for today's call and that you took the time to listen to this recording on line after the fact. We wish you the best of luck as you prepare your grant applications and are very excited to see the innovative projects we anticipate receiving for competitive review. Thank you very

much for joining us. As a reminder, a transcript and recording of this call will be placed on our OCSE grant webpage at www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cse/grants by Tuesday, June 26, 2012. That way you can feel free to listen as many times as you want. Additionally, I encourage you to send any follow-up questions that you may to this call or after you read the announcement to John Langrock. It is john.langrock@acf.hhs.gov. He can also provide you with the dial-in number to call in and listen to the recording of this call should you want it.

Thank you very much for joining us.

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