

Judicial Council of California

455 Golden Gate Avenue · San Francisco, California 94102-3688
courts.ca.gov

REPORT TO THE JUDICIAL COUNCIL

Item No.: 26-084

For business meeting on April 24, 2026

Title

Report to the Legislature: California's
Access to Visitation Grant Program
(Federal Fiscal Years 2024–25 and 2025–26)

Report Type

Information

Date of Report

March 30, 2026

Submitted by

Judicial Council staff
Sarah Davis, Director
Center for Families, Children & the Courts

Contact

Gregory Tanaka, 415-865-7671
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Executive Summary

Family Code section 3204(d) requires that the Judicial Council submit a report to the Legislature, on the first day of March of each even-numbered year, on the Access to Visitation Grant programs administered by the Judicial Council. *California's Access to Visitation Grant Program (Federal Fiscal Years 2024–25 and 2025–26): 2026 Report to the Legislature* provides information on the programs funded for federal fiscal years 2024–25 and 2025–26 under California's Access to Visitation Grant Program for Enhancing Responsibility and Opportunity for Nonresidential Parents.

Relevant Previous Reporting or Action

The council has received this report since 2002, and each subsequent even-numbered year, on the Access to Visitation Grant programs administered by the Judicial Council. The previous reports to the Legislature are available at courts.ca.gov/cfcc-accesstovisitation.htm.

Analysis/Rationale

The Judicial Council is charged with administering and distributing California's share of federal Child Access and Visitation Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Support Enforcement.¹

¹ Fam. Code, § 3204(a).

These grants are established under section 391 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Pub.L. No. 104-193 (Aug. 22, 1996) 110 Stat. 2258) and enable states to establish and administer programs that support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation with their children. The use of these federal grant funds in California is limited by state statute to three types of programs:

- Supervised visitation and exchange services;
- Education about protecting children during family disruption; and
- Group counseling services for parents and children.²

Family Code section 3204(d) requires the Judicial Council to report to the Legislature on (1) the programs funded and whether and to what extent those programs are achieving the goal of promoting and encouraging healthy parent and child relationships between noncustodial parents and their children while ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of children; and (2) other goals of the grant program. The report provides information about the grant program and the families served for federal fiscal years 2024–25 and 2025–26. The report contains no recommendations.

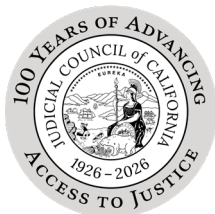
Fiscal Impact and Policy Implications

No costs or operational impacts will result from submission of this informational report to the Legislature.

Attachments and Links

1. Attachment A: *California's Access to Visitation Grant Program (Federal Fiscal Years 2024–25 and 2025–26): 2026 Report to the Legislature*

² Fam. Code, § 3204(b)(1).



JUDICIAL COUNCIL of CALIFORNIA

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HON. PATRICIA GUERRERO

*Chief Justice of California
Chair of the Judicial Council*

HON. BRAD R. HILL

Chair, Executive and Planning Committee

HON. STACY BOULWARE

EURIE
Chair, Legislation Committee

HON. JOAN K. IRION

Chair, Rules Committee

HON. MARIA D. HERNANDEZ

Chair, Technology Committee

HON. ANN C. MOORMAN

*Chair, Judicial Branch Budget Committee
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Administrative Director

Judicial Council

February 27, 2026

Ms. Cara L. Jenkins
Legislative Counsel
1021 O Street, Suite 3210
Sacramento, California 95814

Ms. Erika Contreras
Secretary of the Senate
State Capitol, Room 305
Sacramento, California 95814

Ms. Sue Parker
Chief Clerk of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 319
Sacramento, California 95814

Re: California's Access to Visitation Grant Program (Federal Fiscal Years 2024–25 and 2025–26): 2026 Report to the Legislature, as required under Family Code section 3204(d)

Dear Ms. Jenkins, Ms. Contreras, and Ms. Parker:

Under Family Code section 3204(d), the Judicial Council is submitting *California's Access to Visitation Grant Program (Federal Fiscal Years 2024–25 and 2025–26): 2026 Report to the Legislature* on the programs funded by California's Access to Visitation Grant Program for Enhancing Responsibility and Work Opportunity for Nonresidential Parents for federal fiscal years 2024–25 and 2025–26.

Ms. Cara L. Jenkins
Ms. Erika Contreras
Ms. Sue Parker
February 27, 2026
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If you have any questions related to this report, please contact Ms. Sarah Davis, Director, Judicial Council Center for Families, Children & the Courts, at 415-865-7572 or sarah.davis@jud.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle J. Curran".

Michelle Curran
Administrative Director
Judicial Council

Ms. Cara L. Jenkins
Ms. Erika Contreras
Ms. Sue Parker
February 27, 2026
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SC/SD/GT

Enclosures

cc: Eric Dang, Counsel, Office of Senate President pro Tempore Monique Limón
Emelyn Rodriguez, General Counsel, Office of Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas
Drew Soderborg, Deputy Legislative Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office
Shaun Naidu, Policy Consultant, Office of Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas
Gabriel Petek, Legislative Analyst, Legislative Analyst's Office
Mark Jimenez, Principal Program Budget Analyst, Department of Finance
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Margie Estrada, Chief Counsel, Senate Judiciary Committee
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Eric Csizmar, Consultant, Senate Republican Policy Office
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MS. MICHELLE CURRAN
Administrative Director
Judicial Council

Report title: *California's Access to Visitation Grant Program (Federal Fiscal Years 2024–25 and 2025–26): 2026 Report to the Legislature*

Code section: Family Code section 3204(d)

Date of report: March 1, 2026

The Judicial Council has submitted a report to the Legislature in accordance with Family Code section 3204(d). The following summary of the report is provided under the requirements of Government Code section 9795.

The Judicial Council is charged with administering and distributing California's share of federal Child Access and Visitation Grant funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Child Support Services. These grants are established under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (Pub.L. No. 104–193 (Aug. 22, 1996) 110 Stat. 2258) and enable states to establish and administer programs that support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation with their children.

The report provides information on the programs funded for federal fiscal years 2024–25 and 2025–26 under California's Access to Visitation Grant Program for Enhancing Responsibility and Work Opportunity for Nonresidential Parents and is legislatively mandated. Family Code section 3204(d) directs the Judicial Council to report on the programs funded and whether and to what extent those programs are achieving the goals of promoting and encouraging healthy parent and child relationships while ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of children.

The full report can be accessed at www.courts.ca.gov/7466.htm.

California's Access to Visitation Grant Program

FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2024-25 AND
2025-26

2026 REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE



Judicial Council of California

This report has been prepared and submitted to the California Legislature pursuant to Family Code section 3204(d).

This report is available on the California Courts website at courts.ca.gov/7466.htm.

For additional copies or more information about this report, please call the Judicial Council Center for Families, Children & the Courts at 415-865-7739, or write to:

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1997, the federal Child Access and Visitation Grant Program has provided \$10 million annually to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands to support services that help noncustodial parents maintain meaningful relationships with their children. Federal funds are awarded based on the number of children living in single parent households.

States may use these funds for mediation, parenting plans, enforcement of visitation orders, parent education, counseling, and other services that promote parent-child contact. In California, Family Code section 3204 limits use of the funds to three categories: supervised visitation and exchange services, parent education, and group counseling. Each state must provide a minimum 10 percent match, which California courts and contracted service providers may meet through cash or in-kind contributions.

Family Code section 3204(a) requires the Judicial Council of California to apply for this federal funding each year and allocate it to superior courts. The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee recommends funding allocations, and the Judicial Council's Center for Families, Children & the Courts (CFCC) administers the program. Family Code section 3204(d) also directs the Judicial Council to:

report to the Legislature on the [access to visitation] programs funded ... and whether and to what extent those programs are achieving the goal of promoting and encouraging healthy parent and child relationships between noncustodial or joint custodial parents and their children while ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of children

For federal fiscal years 2024–25 and 2025–26, California's Access to Visitation Grant Program primarily served low-income noncustodial parents. Services were delivered by superior courts through regional collaborations and community based nonprofit subcontractors. Eligible clients included divorced, separated, or never married noncustodial parents involved in custody and visitation matters under the Family Code.

Grant activities are designed to remove barriers that prevent noncustodial parents from maintaining contact with their children. California's program promotes safe, healthy parent-child relationships by:

- Improving compliance with court orders;
- Increasing the likelihood of financial support through improved parental involvement;
- Facilitating safe contact between children and noncustodial parents;
- Teaching conflict resolution and communication skills; and

- Providing opportunities for continued, safe, and structured contact through supervised visitation.

Parent education and counseling activities help parents understand the effects of separation and divorce on children, reduce conflict, and develop healthier communication patterns.

Across both federal fiscal years, Access to Visitation funded programs served 858 parents and 1,198 children and delivered 12,061 hours of services. Each parent is counted once per fiscal year regardless of multiple service uses.

Despite the numerous accomplishments of California’s Access to Visitation Grant Program, limited federal funding continues to constrain service availability—particularly for supervised visitation. Pandemic related disruptions reduced services, and providers have since faced increased demand, longer waiting lists, and financial pressures due to rising costs for families and agencies.

The Judicial Council will continue partnering with the federal Office of Child Support Services, courts, service providers, and the Legislature to address ongoing funding challenges and support children and families who rely on access to visitation services.

CALIFORNIA’S ACCESS TO VISITATION PROGRAM

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), enacted August 22, 1996, established federal Child Access and Visitation block grants beginning in 1997. Under Family Code section 3204, the Judicial Council must apply annually to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for these federal funds and distribute them to superior courts throughout California. Family Code section 3204(d) also directs the Judicial Council to:

report to the Legislature on the [access to visitation] programs funded ... and whether and to what extent those programs are achieving the goal of promoting and encouraging healthy parent and child relationships between noncustodial or joint custodial parents and their children while ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of children

This report summarizes programs funded during federal fiscal years 2024–25 and 2025–26, including service activities, client populations, and overall service delivery. While the report makes no formal recommendations, insufficient funding remains a major barrier to statewide access.

Background

The Judicial Council is charged with administering and distributing California’s share of federal child access and visitation grant funds from the federal Office of Child Support

Services.¹ These grants are allocated based on each state’s number of single parent households. California receives the maximum amount available, representing less than 10 percent of national funding. Federal law requires a 10 percent nonfederal match and the California Access to Visitation Grant Program requires an additional 10 percent match to support program sustainability.

Federal and State Program Goals

Congress’ stated goal of the Child Access and Visitation Grant Program is to remove barriers and increase opportunities for biological parents who are not living in the same household as their children to become more involved in their children’s lives. Under the federal statute, Child Access and Visitation Grant funds may be used to:

support and facilitate noncustodial parents’ access to and visitation [with] their children, by means of activities including mediation (both voluntary and mandatory), counseling, education, development of parenting plans, visitation enforcement (including monitoring, supervision and neutral drop-off and pickup), and development of guidelines for visitation and alternative custody arrangements.²

California law limits use of the funds to:³

- Supervised visitation and exchange services;
- Education about protecting children during family disruption; and
- Group counseling services for parents and children.

The primary goals of California’s Access to Visitation Grant Program are (1) to enable parents and children to participate in supervised visitation, education, and group counseling programs—irrespective of the parents’ marital status and whether the parties are living separately on a permanent or temporary basis;⁴ and (2) to promote and encourage healthy relationships between noncustodial parents and their children while ensuring the children’s health, safety, and welfare.⁵ The overarching policy goal of the grant program has been to ensure accessible and available services statewide for low-income families with children whose custody and visitation issues are now or have been before the family courts.

The recipients of California’s Access to Visitation Grant Program are low-income separated, separating, divorced, or unmarried parents and their children who are involved in custody and

¹ Fam. Code, § 3204(a).

² 42 U.S.C. § 669b.

³ Fam. Code, § 3204(b)(1).

⁴ Fam. Code, § 3203.

⁵ Fam. Code, § 3204(d).

visitation proceedings under the Family Code. Grant funds serve noncustodial parents (i.e., fathers and/or mothers who do not live with their children) as the target population clientele.⁶

Funding Allocation to States

Federal funds are awarded each year on October 1. California allocates its annual funding to courts for the 12-month period beginning the following April 1. California's Access to Visitation Grant Program funding period begins on April 1 and ends on March 31 the following year.⁷ The federal allocation for 2024–25 was \$879,073, and for 2025–26 was \$870,651. On March 15, 2024, the Judicial Council approved distributing approximately \$655,000 to \$670,000 among eight superior courts for fiscal years 2024–25 through 2025–27.⁸

Program Administration

The Judicial Council administers the program pursuant to Family Code sections 3200–3204, federal grant requirements, and guidance from the Executive and Planning Committee and the Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee. CFCC staff manages day-to-day implementation.

Grant Funding Eligibility

All superior courts may apply for Access to Visitation funding through a statewide request for proposals (RFP). Because funding is limited, courts are encouraged to collaborate regionally. Only courts—not service providers—may apply directly. Contracts are executed with the designated lead court.

Grant Funding Criteria and Amounts

Family Code section 3204(b)(2) authorizes the Judicial Council to determine the final number of and amounts for grants. The Judicial Council has approved both the funding allocation process and the amount of funds distributed to the courts since the inception of the grant program in 1997.

⁶ Supervised visitation and exchange services are for noncustodial parents (not custodial parents, grandparents, distant relatives, etc.). According to the goal of the federally funded Child Access and Visitation Grant Program, grant funding to the states increases opportunities for *biological parents who are not living in the same household as their children* to become involved in their children's lives.

⁷ California's Access to Visitation Grant Program funding period follows the standard contract agreement period for the grant program, which begins on April 1 and ends on March 31 each fiscal year. The grant program does not operate on the federal fiscal year cycle (i.e., October 1 through September 30) except for the required data collection-reporting period each fiscal year.

⁸ The difference between the federal funding allocation to the state and the \$655,000 to \$670,000 allocated to the courts represents the amount of funds necessary for Judicial Council staff and contractors to provide the funded courts with technical assistance, education and training, evaluative site visits, and assistance in required program data collection. Some portions of the grant funds have been allocated to provide statewide services since the inception of the grant program in 1997.

California’s Access to Visitation Grant Program funding allocation formula sets the maximum grant funding levels, as adopted, and approved by the Judicial Council in federal fiscal year 2015–16.

The grant funding cap and grant funding amounts are divided into three categories: maximum of \$45,000, maximum of \$60,000, and maximum of \$100,000. Two demographic factors are used to determine which of the three funding categories apply to a given court: (1) the number of single-parent households in the county, and (2) the number of individuals with income below the federal poverty level in the county.⁹ Each of these factors is weighted equally. Counties are ranked by this measure: counties in the top third eligible for up to \$100,000, counties in the middle third eligible for up to \$60,000, and counties in the lowest third eligible for up to \$45,000 in funding. A list of superior courts and grant amount eligibility is available on the California Courts’ “Access to Visitation” webpage at courts.ca.gov/cfcc-accesstovisitation.htm.

Midyear Reallocation

Federal rules prohibit unspent funds from rolling over. To ensure full use of grant funds, California conducts a midyear reallocation process. Courts submit information about projected expenditures, and unused funds may be redistributed to courts demonstrating unmet need, subject to Judicial Council approval.

Under the Judicial Council’s approved funding allocation methodology, grant funds that become available when a grantee court withdraws from the program or does not spend its full grant award will be distributed to courts that are currently receiving Access to Visitation Grant Program funds through this midyear reallocation process. Reallocation of additional funds is based on a needs assessment of all requesting courts, with an opportunity given to courts to submit a justification for why they should receive additional funding. The Judicial Council must approve any reallocation of grant funds.

Grant Service Areas

Under Family Code section 3204(b)(1), grant funds may support:

Supervised Visitation and Exchange

Supervised visitation and exchange under California’s Access to Visitation Grant Program is “visitation between the noncustodial party and one or more children in the presence of a neutral third person.” “Supervised exchange service” is defined as “the supervision of the transfer of the child from one parent to another for the purpose of visitation.” Eligible providers of supervised visitation and exchange services are local public agencies¹⁰ or

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, *2011–2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*, Table B09002: Own Children Under 18 Years by Family Type and Age; and Table S1701: Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months.

¹⁰ Under Government Code section 66905.8, “local public agency” means a city, county, district, or joint powers agency. Under Public Resources Code section 31017, “public agency” includes but is not limited to local public agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, colleges and universities, intergovernmental bodies, and federally recognized Indian tribes. For purposes of the California Access to Visitation Grant Program, the legislative intent

nonprofit entities that satisfy California Standards of Judicial Administration, standard 5.20 (Uniform standards of practice for providers of supervised visitation).¹¹

Parent Education

Parent education is defined under Family Code section 3201 and includes education on parenting skills and the impact of parental conflict on children, how to put a parenting agreement into effect, and the responsibility of both parents to comply with custody and visitation orders. Eligible providers of education are professionals with a bachelor's or master's degree in human behavior, child development, psychology, counseling, family-life education, or a related field, and with specific training in subjects related to child and family development, substance abuse, child abuse and neglect, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, effective parenting, and the impact of divorce and interparental conflict on children. Interns working under the direct supervision of such professionals are also eligible providers.¹²

Group Counseling

Group counseling services include but are not limited to those provided by mental health professionals and social workers to help parents work through their interpersonal conflicts by focusing on the best interest of the child and the importance of shared parenting. Desired results include reduced parental conflict, increased noncustodial parent access to their children, and/or an improvement in co-parenting relationships. Eligible providers of group counseling are professionals licensed to practice psychotherapy in this state—including but not limited to licensed psychiatrists, licensed psychologists, licensed clinical social workers, and licensed marriage and family therapists—or mental health interns working under the direct supervision of professionals licensed to practice psychotherapy.

Promotion and Encouragement of Healthy Parent-Child Relationships

California's Access to Visitation Grant Program—funded service activities have been instrumental in maximizing noncustodial parenting time by providing opportunities for noncustodial parents to establish healthy and positive relationships with their children. The grant-related services seek to promote and encourage healthy parent-child relationships by:

- Improving parents' compliance with court orders;
- Facilitating safe contact between noncustodial parents and their children;
- Teaching parents effective conflict resolution and communication skills for problem solving and strategies for co-parenting separately; and

behind “local public agency” as being an eligible provider under the grant per Family Code section 3202(b)(1) was to allow colleges and universities to provide services as a grant recipient.

¹¹ The standards are available at courts.ca.gov/cms/rules/index.cfm?title=standards&linkid=standard5_20.

¹² Fam. Code, § 3203.

- Increasing opportunities for noncustodial parents and their children to maintain continued contact through safe and secure supervised visitation and exchange services that allow noncustodial parenting time with trained, skilled professionals.

Supervised Visitation and Exchange Service Activity

All supervised visitation and exchange programs funded through California's Access to Visitation Grant Program must comply with Family Code section 3200.5 and California Standards of Judicial Administration, standard 5.20 (Uniform standards of practice for providers of supervised visitation). These standards include the duties and obligations for providers of supervised visitation under Family Code sections 3200 and 3200.5. The goal of these standards of practice is to ensure the safety and welfare of the child, adults, and providers of supervised visitation. Additionally, grant recipient courts and local service providers or subcontractors selected for grant funding must certify compliance with standard 5.20 through submission of a Certification Statement for standard 5.20 and Family Code section 3200.5 as a term and condition under the Judicial Council contract agreement. This also includes completion of Judicial Council form FL-324(P), *Declaration of Supervised Visitation Provider (Professional)*, regarding compliance with the statutory requirements.

Court-ordered, professionally supervised visitation and/or exchange services are often not available or affordable for parents, or parents have to use nonprofessional supervised visitation providers that are not trained. Often, low-income families lose contact with one another because the parent is unable to facilitate the visit due to cost and accessibility barriers. The grant program aims to support the goal of noncustodial parents' access to and visitation with their children by increasing the likelihood of subsidized financial assistance to help satisfy the requirement of the court order that visitation be professionally supervised.

Supervised visitation and/or exchange services provide an essential service for cases when there are potential risks from abuse or violence, mental illness, substance use/misuse, or parenting concerns. A safe and secure environment with trained, skilled staff allows for contact between the noncustodial parents and the child, *when appropriate*, to maintain access to their children to help strengthen the parent-child relationship.

Parent Education and Group Counseling Service Activities

Parent education and counseling programs teach parents how to support their children through family transitions, maintain healthy relationships, and improve communication. These programs help parents understand the legal process, manage conflict, and stay engaged in their children's lives.

Program Monitoring

According to federal statute, states are required to annually monitor, evaluate, and report on programs funded through the grant in accordance with regulations prescribed by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (45 C.F.R. § 303.109 (1997)). California's Access to Visitation Grant Program draws on multiple resources and methods to monitor the

grant recipient programs. These resources include feedback from the courts, clients, community stakeholders, and service providers at local, regional, and state levels.

In addition, grant recipients are required to submit quarterly statistical data reports using California's Access to Visitation Grant Program Data Collection and Reporting System. The data collection system complies with state and federal grant reporting requirements. These reports provide information about the families served by the program. Monitoring service providers is also conducted through submission of biannual progress summary reports. The biannual report provides a thorough and accurate account of project activities, programmatic challenges, and court/subcontractor compliance during the required reporting period.

Furthermore, to ensure grant recipients' adherence to timely submission of federal and state grant reporting requirements, Judicial Council program staff uses an *Acceptance and Sign-Off Form* containing a Description of Work Provided by Court section required under the grant program. Under the Judicial Council's standard contract agreement, the court/subcontractors are required to provide the work to the state in accordance with direction from Judicial Council program staff. The state is required to accept the work, provided the court has delivered the work in accordance with the criteria outlined in the contract agreement. Judicial Council program staff utilizes this form to notify grant recipients regarding their work's acceptability.

Moreover, grant recipients must monitor and evaluate whether the programs are achieving their intended goals and objectives. Grant recipient programs follow their individual program logic models for qualitative and quantitative data in system evaluations. Feedback from these systems is used to identify program strengths and weaknesses, and to improve overall service delivery.

The program adapted its monitoring activities during the COVID 19 pandemic by shifting to remote methods, such as virtual site visits, online meetings, and remote technical assistance. A hybrid monitoring model continues today.

Program Accomplishments

Despite limited funding and the non-continuation nature of the grant, which requires courts to reapply every three years, Access to Visitation funding has enabled courts and community agencies to maintain free or low-cost supervised visitation services. Collaboration among courts and local providers has strengthened program sustainability and resource sharing.

During the 2024–25 and 2025–26 grant period, Judicial Council staff expanded statewide resources by:

- Developing new web content on the *Self-Help Guide to the California Courts* website to assist parents better understand virtual visitation and when it may be appropriate in child custody and visitation cases.¹³
- Providing statewide technical assistance on supervised visitation policies, procedures, and best practices,
- Conducting statewide trainings—both remote and in person—on implementing the Uniform Standards of Practice for Providers of Supervised Visitation as set forth under standard 5.20 of the California Standards of Judicial Administration.

GRANT PROGRAMS FUNDED FOR FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2024–25 THROUGH 2025–26

Grant Application

On September 8, 2023, the Judicial Council issued an open request for proposals (RFP) for federal fiscal years 2024–25 through 2026–27. Nine superior courts submitted applications covering 14 counties and 12 subcontractor agencies. Funding requests exceeded available resources by \$109,756. The expected federal allocation was between \$817,000 and \$876,000, with \$655,000 available for distribution.

Appendix A lists the approved courts.

Grant Review Process

Under Family Code section 3204, the Judicial Council must use an RFP process consistent with state and federal grant requirements. Section 3204(b)(2) outlines mandatory selection criteria, including service availability, expansion capacity, coordination with community services, hours of operation, number of counties served, cost effectiveness, and promotion of healthy parent child relationships.

The Family and Juvenile Law Advisory Committee established a Grant Review Group of subject matter experts to evaluate proposals. Reviewers scored applications using a structured rating tool and recused themselves from proposals involving their own courts or counties. Applications were ranked by score, and funding recommendations emphasized statewide geographic diversity.

¹³ See Self-Help Guide to the California Courts: <https://selfhelp.courts.ca.gov/child-custody>.

CALIFORNIA'S ACCESS TO VISITATION GRANT DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

Federal Grant Reporting Requirements

Under section 469B(e)(3) of the Social Security Act, as added by section 391 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, states are required to monitor, evaluate, and report on programs funded through Child Access and Visitation Grants.¹⁴ The purpose of this data requirement is to provide information to Congress on the progress of services provided under the Child Access and Visitation Grant Program, the goal of which is to support and facilitate noncustodial parents' access to and visitation with their children.

Each state is required to collect and submit an annual report that includes two types of data:

- *Program descriptions*, including service providers and administrators, service area, population served, program goals, referral process, voluntary or mandatory nature of the programs, types of activities, and length and features of the program; and
- *Participant characteristics*, including the number of referrals for each program, the number of participating individuals, and the number of persons who have completed program requirements through authorized activities.¹⁵

Grant recipients are required to collect data on one mandatory federal outcome measure: increased noncustodial parents' time with children. This is defined as "an increase in the number of hours, days, weekends, and/or holidays as compared to parenting time prior to the provision of access and visitation services."¹⁶

Federal Data Survey Summary

California's Access to Visitation Grant Program uses a standardized, automated data collection system for consistent reporting across all courts. Only parents receiving direct services are counted, and each client is counted once per year, per service category. Judicial Council staff provide technical assistance on data reporting.

Table 1 (2024–25) and Table 2 (2025–26) summarize California's Access to Visitation Grant Program reported data. Notes following Table 2 describe data collection methods and limitations.

¹⁴ See State Child Access Program Survey: Guidance, <https://vdocuments.net/health-and-human-services-omb-0970-0204.html>.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

Table 1. Summary of Program Data: October 1, 2023–September 30, 2024

1.1. Clients Served. The total number of clients include fathers, mothers, grandparents, and legal guardians. Only noncustodial parents are included. Each person is counted only once.

Total No. of Clients Served	No. of Noncustodial Fathers	No. of Noncustodial Mothers	No. of Grandparents & Legal Guardians
426	289	137	0

1.2. Children of Clients Served. The total number of children involved includes only children of the biological parents and those under the care of grandparents and/or legal guardians.

Total No. of Children in Common
581

1.3. Services Provided to Clients. The services provided to clients are the total number of services provided to a client who received service under each category. Some clients may have received more than one service and, as a result, are counted under more than one service category. Clients are only reported once under each service received. The frequency of service is not reported.

Mediation	Parenting Plans	Counseling	Parent Education	Neutral Drop-off	Supervised Visitation	Visitation Enforcement
0	0	16	47	12	351	0

1.4. Marital Status Between Biological Parents. Marital status is counted between biological parents only and does not report the marital status of grandparents or legal guardians.

Never Married to Each Other	Married to Each Other	Separated From Each Other	Divorced From Each Other	Data Not Reported
235	0	103	78	10

1.5. Annual Income. Annual income is reported by the client, includes all sources of annual income before taxes, and does not include income of any other household members.

Less Than \$10,000	\$10,000 to \$19,999	\$20,000 to \$29,999	\$30,000 to \$39,999	\$40,000 & Above	Data Not Reported
113	67	77	66	72	31

1.6. Race/Ethnicity. Race/ethnicity (self-reported) reports the data for each client served: parents, grandparents, and legal guardians.

American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races	Data Not Reported
9	18	20	153	2	171	36	17

1.7. Source of Client Referrals to Services. The source of client referrals to services is reported for each client served: parents, grandparents, and legal guardians. If a client was referred by more than one source, all applicable sources are recorded.

Self	Court	Child Support Agency	Domestic Violence Agency	Child Protection Agency	Other	Data Not Reported
12	407	1	1	2	3	6

1.8. Outcome Data. Outcome data is reported for biological noncustodial mothers and noncustodial fathers only. Does not include parental education.

Noncustodial Parents Who Gained Increased Parenting Time With Children	Total No. Served	Percentage Gaining Increased Time
Mothers	108	100%
Fathers	255	100%
Total	363	100%

Table 2. Summary of Program Data: October 1, 2024–September 30, 2025

2.1. Clients Served. The total number of clients include fathers, mothers, grandparents, and legal guardians. Only noncustodial parents are included. Each person is counted only once.

Total No. of Clients Served	No. of Noncustodial Fathers	No. of Noncustodial Mothers	No. of Grandparents & Legal Guardians
432	307	125	0

2.2. Children of Clients Served. The total number of children includes only children of the biological parents and those under the care of grandparents and/or legal guardians.

Total No. of Children in Common
617

2.3. Services Provided to Clients. The total shown for each service category represents the number of clients who received that specific service. Clients who received multiple services are counted once in each relevant category.

Mediation	Parenting Plans	Counseling	Parent Education	Neutral Drop-off	Supervised Visitation	Visitation Enforcement
0	0	0	96	13	351	0

2.4. Marital Status Between Biological Parents. Marital status is counted between biological parents only and does not report the marital status of grandparents or legal guardians.

Never Married to Each Other	Married to Each Other	Separated From Each Other	Divorced From Each Other	Data Not Reported
242	0	103	75	12

2.5. Annual Income. Annual income is reported by the client, includes all sources of annual income before taxes, and does not include income of any other household members.

Less Than \$10,000	\$10,000 to \$19,999	\$20,000 to \$29,999	\$30,000 to \$39,999	\$40,000 & Above	Data Not Reported
147	70	45	52	87	31

2.6. Race/Ethnicity. Race/ethnicity (self-reported) reports the data for each client served: parents, grandparents, and legal guardians.

American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Black or African American	Hispanic or Latino	Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	White	Two or More Races	Data Not Reported
12	12	28	145	3	180	33	19

2.7. Source of Client Referrals to Services. The source of client referrals to services is reported for each client served: parents, grandparents, and legal guardians.

Self	Court	Child Support Agency	Domestic Violence Agency	Child Protection Agency	Other	Data Not Reported
6	416	6	1	0	3	0

2.8. Outcome Data. Outcome data is reported for biological noncustodial mothers and noncustodial fathers only. Does not include parental education.

No. of Noncustodial Parents Who Gained Increased Parenting Time With Children	Total No. Served	Percentage Gaining Increased Time
Mothers	96	100%
Fathers	262	100%
Total	358	100%

Hours of Service Delivery

The number of service delivery hours are recorded differently depending on the service type, as highlighted in Table 3. For supervised visitation, only the direct contact time between the noncustodial parent and child is counted, excluding transition and administrative tasks. However, supervised exchanges include the entire session time, including staff waiting periods. For parent education and group counseling, hours are based on the duration of group sessions, with data collected on participants, families served, sessions held, and hours spent per session. This approach provides a more accurate reflection of program workload and service intensity, with supervised visitation and exchange requiring more staff time due to longer and more intensive sessions compared to typically shorter parent education workshops.

Supervised visitation and exchange services are specifically for families where unsupervised visits present serious safety concerns. Staff are required to ensure client safety by implementing safeguards before, during, and after visits. These precautions often include deploying two staff members per visit and limiting visits to a maximum of two hours as mandated by statutory requirements. The services demand highly trained and skilled personnel to manage the complex issues related to custody and visitation disputes in family law cases.

Table 3. Number of Service Delivery Hours

California Grant Service Areas	October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024	October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025
Group counseling*	0	0
Parent education	89	82
Supervised exchange	134	97
Supervised visitation	5,660	5,999
Total service hours	5,883	6,178

* Under the Access to Visitation Grant Program, data was collected on clients served (i.e., noncustodial parent mother and father, legal guardian, and grandparents) through three grant service areas: supervised visitation and exchange, parent education, and group counseling services. Data on clients served also included number of hours of service. Children were counted and reported as part of the client (parent) data but not as part of the services provided to clients. Under parent education and group counseling service areas, a parent may or may not have participated in and/or completed the counseling or parent education session itself; however, the child may have participated in the service without the noncustodial parent.

CONCLUSION

The services delivered by grant recipient courts and local subcontractors are crucial for safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of parents and children. Despite significant accomplishments and efforts to secure additional funding, the program faces ongoing challenges due to inadequate funding, which limits the ability to maintain current service levels and meet the demand for both in-person and remote services. This report emphasizes the need for increased funding to support and expand services statewide across all 58 California counties.

The Access to Visitation Grant Program plans to continue collaborating with federal and state agencies, courts, grant recipients, stakeholders, and the legislature to support grantees in

obtaining diverse supplementary funding. The program will also focus on administering high-quality services, addressing challenges, and enhancing service delivery for families in need.

Should additional state and federal funding become available, the program priorities include:

- Establishing professional supervised visitation, exchange, and parent education services for low-income families in all 58 counties.
- Creating a supervised visitation Parent Education Program in each county.
- Launching a statewide Access to Visitation Grant Program Hotline for quick access to family law, custody, and visitation resources.
- Developing Standards of Practice for offsite/community-based supervised visitation and enhancing safety protocols, especially where supervised visitation intersects with domestic violence cases.
- Providing continuing education and training for professional providers to improve their expertise in working with parents and children.
- Creating a centralized statewide clearinghouse of resources for supervised visitation and exchange services.
- Conducting research on evidence-based practices, including the impact of supervised and virtual visitation services, particularly in cases involving domestic violence and child abuse.

This comprehensive approach aims to strengthen the program's capacity to serve families effectively and safely across California.

**APPENDIX: SUPERIOR COURTS AWARDED GRANT FUNDING
IN FEDERAL FISCAL YEARS 2024–25 THROUGH 2025–26**

	Applicant Court	Counties Served	No. of Counties	No. of Subcontracting Agencies	Region Service Area^a	Supervised Visitation	Supervised Exchange	Parent Education	Group Counseling	Grant Award Allocation
1	Humboldt	Humboldt	1	1	BA	X	X			\$58,780.50
2	Orange	Orange	1	2	SO	X	X			\$98,780.50
3	San Bernardino	San Bernardino	1	2	SO	X	X			\$98,780.50
4	San Francisco	San Francisco, Marin, and San Mateo	3	1	BA	X	X			\$98,780.50
5	Santa Clara	Santa Clara	1	1	BA	X	X			\$83,536.50
6	Shasta	Shasta and Trinity	2	1	NO	X	X	X	X	\$58,780.50
7	Tulare	Tulare and Kings	2	1	NO	X				\$98,780.50
8	Yuba	Yuba and Sutter	2	1	NO	X				\$58,780.50
	Subtotal	13	13	10						\$655,000

^a BA = Bay Area/Northern Coastal Region; NO = Northern/Central Region; SO = Southern Region.