



Office of the Governor

Criminal Justice Division

Funding Announcement:

Specialty Courts Program

December 1, 2017

Opportunity Snapshot

Below is a high-level overview. Full information is in the funding announcement that follows.

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to support specialty problem-solving courts as defined in Chapter 121 of the Texas Government Code. Courts allowed under this announcement include family drug court programs, adult drug court programs, juvenile drug court programs, veterans court programs, mental health court programs, commercially sexually exploited persons court programs, and problem-solving court programs that combine two or more types of court programs above into a multi-purpose program designed to bring multiple types of treatment for co-occurring disorders or issues.

Eligible Purpose Areas

Projects must fall under the Recidivism Reduction purpose area category.

Organizational Eligibility

Applications may be submitted by county governments affiliated with a specialty court authorized under Ch. 121, Texas Government Code. Only projects that received an award under this program in either FY 2017 or FY 2018 – or new Public Safety Employees Treatment Court Program courts operating under Ch. 129, Texas Government Code – are eligible to apply. (See [Eligibility](#) section for more details.)

Project Periods

Continuation projects may not exceed a 12-month period.

Budget

The minimum allowed under this program is \$10,000 and the maximum can be no more than the most recent year’s award under this program.

Match

There is no match requirement under this program.

Process

Applications under this funding announcement must be submitted in eGrants at: eGrants.gov.texas.gov

Timelines

Action	Date
Funding Announcement Release	12/01/2017
Online System Opening Date	12/18/2017
Final Date to Submit an Application	02/20/2018 at 5:00PM CST
Earliest Project Start Date	09/01/2018
Latest Project Start Date	11/01/2018

Contact Information

For more information, contact the eGrants help desk at eGrants@gov.texas.gov or (512) 463-1919.

Table of Contents

Opportunity Snapshot	1
Overview of Application Process	3
Application Resources.....	3
Eligibility	4
Eligible Organizations.....	4
Eligible Activities and Costs.....	4
Eligible Purpose Areas.....	5
Program-Specific Details	5
Funding and Reporting Details.....	5
Timeline	6
Program-Specific Requirements	6
Special Application Procedures	7
Standard CJD Requirements	8
Selection Process	8
Announcements.....	9
About CJD	10

Specialty Courts Program

Overview of Application Process

Applicants should carefully review the application process as outlined below. CJD will not consider applications that fail to adequately address the application requirements and prompts, including those that have been previously approved for funding.

☐ **Step 1 – Review eligibility and requirements:**

- The [Eligibility](#) section outlines who may apply, which purpose areas will be considered, and the expenses and activities eligible to be included.
- The [Program-Specific Details](#) section has information on timelines, reporting, and funding.
- The [Standard CJD Requirements](#) section addresses application and project requirements.

☐ **Step 2 – Develop your project:** Before starting your application, applicants should develop a concrete understanding of their project and read CJD’s *Developing a Good Project Narrative* at <http://gov.texas.gov/cjd/resources>, which details how to explain:

- **What the project will accomplish:** What problem will the project solve? Who is the targeted population to serve and/or prosecute? What does success look like and how do you measure it?
- **How the project will help:** What specifically will you do? What standards or evidence says it’s an effective approach? What capabilities are needed to succeed?
- **What is required for success:** What resources (including funding) does the project require?

☐ **Step 3 - Apply in eGrants:** Compile and submit your grant application via eGrants, at <http://eGrants.gov.texas.gov>. For more instructions and information, see *How to Apply for a CJD Grant*, available at <http://gov.texas.gov/cjd/resources>.

☐ **Step 4 - Funding Decisions and Grant Acceptance:** Await the funding decision, which is provided through a grant award or other notice from CJD. If you receive an award, complete the acceptance process to access funds.

Application Resources

CJD has published several resources to assist applicants in understanding and applying for funding, all of which can be found at <http://gov.texas.gov/cjd/resources>

- ***Developing a Good Project Narrative:*** Guidance on how to formulate an effective project, and how to communicate it clearly in the application’s narrative prompts.
- ***How to Apply for a CJD Grant:*** Instructions on how to file an application in eGrants.
- ***Guide to Grants:*** CJD policies and guidance on common grant issues.
- ***Grantee Conditions and Responsibilities:*** A compendium of CJD and Homeland Security Grants Division policies for all grantees.

- **Standard Certifications and Requirements:** CJD’s standard requirements that the Authorized Official must certify upon applying for a grant.
- **CJD Grant Activities and Measures:** A reference for applicants on the activities allowed for different project types and the measures associated with each.

Eligibility

Eligible Organizations

Applications may be submitted by county governments affiliated with a specialty court authorized under Ch. 121, Texas Government Code. Specialty court programs operated by community supervision and corrections departments, juvenile boards, or other agencies must be submitted under an affiliated county government, but the authorizing resolution may designate an official or employee at that agency as the authorized official.

Only projects that received an award under this program in either FY 2017 (beginning Sept. 1, 2016) or FY 2018 (beginning Sept. 1, 2017) – or new Public Safety Employees Treatment Court Program courts operating under Ch. 129, Texas Government Code – are eligible to apply.

“Teen courts” that do not operate under Ch. 121 should apply under the Juvenile Justice Grant Program.

Eligible Activities and Costs

The following list of eligible and ineligible activities and costs apply generally to all projects under this announcement. For definitions, see *CJD Grant Activities and Measures* (available at <http://gov.texas.gov/cjd/resources>).

Eligible:

1. Casework, non-licensed counseling, individual advocacy, or other support (including funding for probation officers and similar personnel);
2. Counseling or treatment for substance abuse (including Medication Assisted Treatment);
3. Counseling, therapy, or other care performed by a licensed professional;
4. Emergency shelter, housing, or transportation;
5. Equipment and technology;
6. Instruction and support for academic programs;
7. Instruction and support for employment or the workforce;
8. Instruction and support for life, social, or emotional skills;
9. Program evaluation and assessment;
10. Research or statistical activities; and
11. Training, professional development, or technical assistance received (for staff or volunteers of the grantee organization).

Ineligible:

Projects funded under this announcement may not be used to support the unallowable services, activities, and costs listed in the *Guide to Grants* (available at <http://gov.texas.gov/cjd/resources>) and:

1. General law enforcement or public safety;
2. Legal assistance;
3. Materials or curriculum development;
4. Remodeling and construction;
5. Targeted prosecution or investigation (including prosecutor and defense attorney salaries);
6. Training, professional development, or technical assistance provided (to others outside the grantee organization)
7. Vehicles or equipment for government agencies that are for general agency use;
8. Medical services other than those integral to a substance abuse treatment regime; and
9. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, state or local law or regulation.

Eligible Purpose Areas

Projects must be classified in the Re-Entry purpose area (for post-adjudication programs) or the Diversion and Community Supervision purpose area (for pre-adjudication programs) in the Recidivism Reduction category. These projects have the ultimate goal of reducing crimes committed by offenders.

Program-Specific Details

Funding and Reporting Details

Category	Detail
Funds Available	Up to \$8.5 million ¹
Budget Minimum	\$10,000
Budget Maximum	No more than the most recent year’s award under this program
Match Requirement	None
Project Period	May <i>not</i> exceed 12 months
Program Income Method	Addition method until \$60,000; deduction method thereafter
Funding Source	State: Authorized under Section 102.056 of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure and Section 772.006 of the Texas Government Code. Funds are appropriated by the Texas Legislature from funds collected through court costs and fees.
Financial Reporting	At least quarterly, submitted via Financial Status Reports in eGrants
Financing Method	Reimbursement-for-costs basis
Progress Reporting	Semi-annually, submitted via the Public Policy Research Institute at Texas A&M University at http://cjd.tamu.edu . ¹

1) Progress reports from grantees must follow the format prescribed by CJD, which requires information on each participant, rather than just aggregate statistics. In order to be considered for an award under this funding announcement, currently funded courts must be up-to-date on their progress reports.

Timeline

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Program-Specific Requirements

Felony-Level TRAS Assessments

Grantees are required to perform the full, felony-level TRAS (Texas Risk Assessment Score) assessment on each participant enrolled during the project period. Sub-section scores must be recorded and reported in the semi-annual progress reports. Grantees must also include the TRAS scores for all adult participants in their regular reports to the Criminal Justice Assistance Division (CJAD) of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, as directed by CJAD.

Registration Requirement

The court program must meet all requirements in the Texas Government Code, Section 121.002, which include:

1. Written notice of the program;
2. Any resolution or other official declaration under which the program was established; and
3. A copy of the applicable community justice plan that incorporates duties related to supervision that will be required under the program.

The court program must also be registered with the Texas Department of State Health Services, Clinical Management for Behavioral Health Services database. Information about registration procedures may be accessed at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/cmbhs/default.shtm>.

Judge Requirements

The presiding judge of a drug court must be an active judge holding elective office, an associate judge or magistrate assigned to preside over drug court, or a retired judge available as a sitting judge.

Program Income

Applicant must agree to comply with all state rules and regulations for program income and agrees to report all program income that is generated as a result of the project's activities. Applicant must also agree to report program income to CJD through a formal grant adjustment no less than once per quarter, to secure CJD approval prior to use of the program income, to use program income only for allowable costs, and to expend program income immediately after CJD's approval of a grant adjustment and prior to requesting reimbursement of CJD funds. For the purposes of this program, the additive method applies to the first \$60,000 of program income. Thereafter, the deductive method applies.

Participation in Training and Technical Assistance Program

Grantees are required to participate in activities under the Specialty Courts Training and Technical Assistance program operated by Sam Houston State University and funded by CJD.

Special Application Procedures

Applicants under this funding announcement should follow the guidance in the CJD document, *How to Apply for a CJD Grant*, available at <http://gov.texas.gov/cjd/resources> and include the following additional information in the corresponding sections of the Project Narrative on the Narrative tab of the eGrants application:

Project Approach & Activities: Due to character limits in the eGrants system, applicants – particularly adult drug courts (includes adult DWI/alcohol courts) – may upload a pdf document to eGrants with answers to these prompts:

1. If an adult drug court (includes adult DWI/alcohol courts), explain how the program conforms to the following standards in the *Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards* developed by the National Association of Drug Court Programs:
 - a. Roles and Responsibilities of the Judge (Vol I, standard III);
 - b. Incentives, Sanctions, and Therapeutic Adjustments (Vol I, standard IV);
 - c. Substance Abuse Treatment (Vol I, standard V); and
 - d. Multidisciplinary Team (Vol II, standard VIII)
2. Explain how the program will address the key components provided in the Texas Government Code, Title 2, Subtitle K, Specialty Courts for the specific court program for which funding is sought.
3. Provide the method that will be used to access the target population.
4. How will the program ensure thorough and accurate assessment of each participant to identify specific needs of each?
5. How will the court program identify and address participants with multiple underlying issues or co-occurring disorders (ex. drug addiction and mental health, or veteran facing family-related legal challenges)?
6. How will the court program partner with other agencies/organizations to address all identified needs of participants? (Adult drug courts: please address standard VI in Vol. II of the best practices, Complementary Treatment and Social Services.)
7. Will the court program have Generated Program Income (GPI)? How much is the participant charged?
8. Is this a regional program? If not, how will this court program work to collaborate with smaller counties to serve the rehabilitation and treatment needs of those with less access to resources.

Capacity & Capabilities:

1. Provide description of the team and necessary staff and role of each in achieving the court program's goals.

CJD Funding Announcement: Specialty Courts Program

2. List any training or certifications received that have prepared or will prepare staff to properly execute stated program goals.
3. Describe your staff training plan.
4. Adult drug courts, address standard IX in Vol. II of the best practices, Census and Caseloads.

Performance Management:

1. Address the court program plan for continuous self-assessment.
2. Adult drug courts, address standard X in Vol. II of the best practices, Monitoring and Evaluation.

Data Management:

1. Describe the method used for data collection. If the program uses a case management system, describe its capabilities.

Target Group:

1. What risk level will offenders will need to be classified as under TRAS to participate in the program? If an additional assessment tool is used and/or exceptions are made to program risk level guidelines, explain the tool/determination process and how often exceptions to the TRAS-assessed risk level are used.
2. Adult drug courts, address standards I and II of Vol. I of the best practices, Target Population and Historically Disadvantaged Groups.

Standard CJD Requirements

When accepting an award under this funding announcement, the grantee agrees to comply with a variety of state and federal laws and regulations, including requirements related to Uniform Crime Reports, criminal history reporting, and immigration and customs enforcement requests. For more information see the following documents, available at <http://gov.texas.gov/cjd/resources>.

- *Standard Certifications and Requirements*
- *Grantee Conditions and Responsibilities*
- *Guide to Grants*

Selection Process

Application Screening: CJD will screen all applications to ensure that they meet the requirements included in the funding announcement. Applications that meet those requirements will move forward to the merit review phase.

Merit Review: The executive director will convene a panel, to include the Specialty Courts Advisory Council (SCAC), to review and score applications in an effort to prioritize funding. The merit review panel will assess and score each application on a 100-point scale, and then report its findings to the executive director. Scores will be based on applicants' responses to the instructions specific to specialty courts in

this funding announcement's [Special Application Procedures](#) section and on the standard criteria that are detailed in *How to Apply for a CJD Grant*, available at <http://gov.texas.gov/cjd/resources>.

For adult drug courts (including alcohol/DWI courts), adherence to the *Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards* adopted by CJD, SCAC, and the Texas Judicial Council – including the planned risk level of participants during the project period – will be an important factor in decisions. CJD will generally not fund projects that serve primarily low-risk participants, as determined by a TRAS assessment. More information is available at https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/specialty_courts.

Final Decisions: The executive director will consider merit review rankings along with other factors and make all final funding decisions. Other factors may include cost effectiveness, overall funds availability, CJD or state government priorities and strategies, legislative directives, need, geographic distribution, balance of focuses and approaches, or other relevant factors.

CJD may not fund all applications or may only award part of the amount requested. Per Rule 3.9 of the Texas Administrative Code, all funding decisions made by the executive director are final and are not subject to appeal. The receipt of an application by CJD does not obligate CJD to fund the grant or to fund it at the amount requested.

Announcements

After CJD makes final funding decisions, each applicant will receive either an unfunded notice or a preliminary decision notification or final grant award. Release of final grant awards for federally funded programs are always contingent on CJD's receipt of the federal grant award for that program and CJD cannot release or guarantee funding to any applicant until it has received and accepted the federal award and a determination is made that adequate funding is available.

About CJD

Our mission at the Criminal Justice Division is to direct much needed resources to those who are committed to making Texas a safer place and those who help victims of crime to recover and feel safe again. In carrying out this mission, we are committed to helping our grantees by actively finding ways for them to accomplish their goals and by making sure that we always have our eye to identifying the approaches that work best. We envision positive and beneficial working relationships with our grantees where we provide as much assistance as is needed and where we are always ready with answers, not burdensome restrictions or requirements.

CJD will make over \$275 million in funding available to hundreds of organizations during state fiscal year 2018 for juvenile justice, delinquency prevention, victims services, law enforcement, prosecution, courts, specialty courts, prevention of child sex trafficking, and other types of projects to benefit Texans.