



# Office of the Governor, Public Safety Office Criminal Justice Division Funding Announcement: *Specialty Courts Program, FY2020*

## Purpose

The purpose of this announcement is to solicit applications for specialty court programs as defined in Chapters 121 through 129 of the Texas Government Code.

## Available Funding

State funds are authorized under the Texas General Appropriations Act, Article I, Rider 12 for Trusteed Programs within the Office of the Governor. All awards are subject to the availability of appropriated funds and any modifications or additional requirements that may be imposed by law.

## Eligible Organizations

Applications may be submitted by county governments affiliated with a specialty court authorized under Chapters 121 through 129 of the Texas Government Code.

### FY2020 Update

Counties seeking to establish a new specialty court program are eligible to apply but must meet registration requirements, as defined in 121.002 Texas Government Code, within 30 days of award. Existing specialty court programs that do not currently receive CJD funding are also eligible to apply but must annotate in their application how the additional funds will expand the program beyond its current capacity. Priority for applications received from new applicants may be given to courts operating in jurisdictions without a currently operational court or based on demonstrated need.

All adult drug court programs should be able to demonstrate substantial implementation of Vol. I & II of the Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards to meet the deadline of August 31, 2019 as set by the Texas Judicial Council (TJC).

## Application Process

Applicants must access the PSO's eGrants grant management website at <https://eGrants.gov.texas.gov> to register and apply for funding. For more instructions and information, see *Developing a Good Project Narrative Guide*, available [here](#).

Note: Special application procedures apply to this program. See the [Special Application Procedures Addendum](#) for more information.

## Key Dates

Action	Date
Funding Announcement Release	12/21/2018
Online System Opening Date	12/21/2018
Final Date to Submit and Certify an Application	02/28/2019 at 5:00 PM CST
Earliest Project Start Date	09/01/2019

## Project Period

Projects selected for funding must begin on or after 09/01/2019 and expire on or before 08/31/2020.

## Funding Levels

Minimum: \$10,000

Maximum: Current grantees may not exceed most recent year's award amount.

Match Requirement: There is no match requirement under this program.

## Standards

Grantees must comply with standards applicable to this fund source cited in the State Uniform Grant Management Standards ([UGMS](#)), [Federal Uniform Grant Guidance](#), and all statutes, requirements, and guidelines applicable to this funding.

## Eligible Activities

Funding may be used to support the following types of specialty court programs:

1. Adult Drug Court;
2. Family Drug Court;
3. Veterans Treatment Court;
4. Mental Health Court;
5. Juvenile Specialty Court;
6. Commercially Sexually Exploited Persons Court; and
7. Public Safety Employees Treatment Court.

## Program-Specific Requirements

### Risk Assessment Tools

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 annual progress reports. Grantees must also include the TRAS scores for all adult participants (including those in pre-adjudication court programs) in their regular reports to the Criminal Justice Assistance Division (CJAD) of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, as directed by CJAD.

The TRAS is not applicable to family reunification courts, courts dealing with adults without pending criminal charges, and juvenile courts. Juvenile courts are required to perform the PACT risk assessment as mandated by the Texas Juvenile Justice Department.

### **Registration Requirements**

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.

For more information on how to register: [https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/specialty\\_courts](https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/specialty_courts)

### **Judge Requirements**

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

### **Participation in Training and Technical Assistance Program**

Grantees are required to participate in activities under the Specialty Courts Resource Center (SCRC) operated by Sam Houston State University and funded by CJD. Information about services and resources provided by SCRC can be accessed at <http://txspecialtycourts.org/>.

### **Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards**

The Texas Judicial Council unanimously approved the National Association of Drug Court professionals (NADCP) Adult Drug Court Best Practices Standards (Volumes I & II) as the best practices for adult drug court programs. All adult drug court programs must have substantially implemented best practice standards by no later than August 31, 2019.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

1. Entities receiving funds from CJD must be located in a county that has an average of 90% or above on both adult and juvenile dispositions entered into the computerized criminal history database maintained by the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) as directed in the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Chapter 60. The disposition completeness percentage is defined as the percentage of arrest charges a county reports to DPS for which a disposition has been subsequently reported and entered into the computerized criminal history system.
2. Eligible applicants operating a law enforcement agency must be current on reporting Part I violent crime data to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) for inclusion in the annual Uniform Crime Report (UCR). To be considered eligible for funding, applicants must have submitted a full twelve months of accurate data to DPS for the most recent calendar year.
3. The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has established a goal set by the Texas Legislature for all local law enforcement agencies to implement and report crime statistics data by using the requirements of the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) no later than September 1, 2019. Additionally, the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) will collect required crime statistics solely through the NIBRS starting January 1, 2021. Due to these upcoming state and federal deadlines, grantees are advised that eligibility for future grant funding may be tied to compliance with NIBRS. Financial grant assistance for transitioning to NIBRS may be available for your jurisdiction from the Criminal Justice Division (CJD).

4. Local units of government, including cities, counties and other general purpose political subdivisions, as appropriate, and institutions of higher education that operate a law enforcement agency, must comply with all aspects of the programs and procedures utilized by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (“DHS”) to: (1) notify DHS of all information requested by DHS related to illegal aliens in Agency’s custody; and (2) detain such illegal aliens in accordance with requests by DHS. Additionally, counties and municipalities may NOT have in effect, purport to have in effect, or make themselves subject to or bound by, any law, rule, policy, or practice (written or unwritten) that would: (1) require or authorize the public disclosure of federal law enforcement information in order to conceal, harbor, or shield from detection fugitives from justice or aliens illegally in the United States; or (2) impede federal officers from exercising authority under 8 U.S.C. § 1226(a), § 1226(c), § 1231(a), § 1357(a), § 1366(1), or § 1366(3). Lastly, eligible applicants must comply with all provisions, policies, and penalties found in Chapter 752, Subchapter C of the Texas Government Code.

Each local unit of government, and institution of higher education that operates a law enforcement agency, must download, complete and then upload into eGrants the [CEO/Law Enforcement Certifications and Assurances Form](#) certifying compliance with federal and state immigration enforcement requirements. This Form is required for each application submitted to OOG and is active until August 31, 2021 or the end of the grant period, whichever is later.

5. Eligible applicants must have a DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) number assigned to its agency (to request a DUNS number, go to <https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>).
6. Eligible applicants must be registered in the federal System for Award Management (SAM) database located at <https://sam.gov/>.

Failure to comply with program eligibility requirements may cause funds to be withheld and/or suspension or termination of grant funds.

## Prohibitions

Grant funds may not be used to support the unallowable costs listed in the [Guide to Grants](#) or any of the following unallowable costs:

1. Construction, renovation, or remodeling;
2. Medical services;
3. Law enforcement equipment that is standard department issue;
4. Transportation, lodging, per diem or any related costs for participants, when grant funds are used to develop and conduct training;
5. Legal assistance;
6. Judges; and
7. Any other prohibition imposed by federal, state or local law or regulation.

## 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.

**Peer/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. For adult drug courts (including alcohol/DWI courts), adherence to the *Adult Drug Court Best Practice Standards* 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.

**Final Decisions:** The executive director will consider 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. In the event that funding requests exceed available funds, CJD may revise projects to address a more limited focus.

## Contact Information

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

## Project Narrative

Within eGrants, applicants will complete several narrative fields. Below are special instructions related to required information that must be included in your Specialty Court Program Narrative. These instructions are not contained on eGrants, so applicants must review the instructions below. Failure to provide the information requested may result in an application being deemed ineligible for funding.

**Project Approach & Activities:** Describe the methodologies, approaches, and activities to be employed by the project. This should logically tie back to the Problem Statement. **Additionally, specialty court applicants must address the following information in this section:**

1. If the applicant is 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? Address if participants will have separate tracks for high-risk and low-risk participants.
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:** Describe the applicant organization's background as well as any organizational and staff capabilities and qualifications necessary to carry out this project using the approaches and activities provided above, including any essential collaborative partnerships. **Additionally, specialty court applicants must address the following information in this section:**

1. Describe your staff training plan.
2. Adult drug courts, address standard IX in Vol. II of the best practices, Census and Caseloads.

**Target Group:** Describe or list the agencies, individuals, or other group to whom you expect to provide services. **Additionally, specialty court applicants must address the following information in this section:**

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.