

**ABA CHILD CUSTODY AND ADOPTION PRO BONO PROJECT
REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR DIRECTED GRANTS**

2005 Directed Grants Focus: Mental Health and Social Services

Guidelines

The Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project (the “Project”) hereby invites pro bono programs, legal service programs, children’s law centers, law-school sponsored legal aid clinics, court-connected programs, and other similar organizations –to apply for directed grants supporting the delivery of legal services to children in custody cases.

A. What is the Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project?

The Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project is jointly sponsored by the ABA Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service and the ABA Family Law Section. The Project is administered by and housed at the ABA Center for Pro Bono. The Project was established in February 2001 through a grant from Bill and Melita Grunow, in memory of their niece, Ann Liechty, a dedicated child law advocate.

The mission of the Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project is to design and implement programs and policies that foster children’s well-being, development, and safety during custody matters. The project focuses on pro bono representation of children in divorce, guardianship, adoption, parentage, and civil protective order cases.

In the past the Project has awarded general mini-grants. The Project recently raised additional funds for the specific purpose of awarding grants over a five-year period, focusing on a different directed topic during each of those five years.

B. Who is Eligible for the Grants?

All organizations that involve attorneys, legal assistants, court personnel, law students, or other social or public service providers in the delivery of pro bono legal services to children in custody cases, including pro bono programs, legal service programs, children’s law centers, and law-school sponsored legal aid clinics. For the 2005 year only, organizations providing mental health or social services also are eligible. The organization must be a 501(c)(3) non-profit entity. Past ABA grantees are eligible.

C. What Types of Projects Will Be Funded in 2005?

Funding will be directed to enhancing the interaction between legal advocacy for children in custody cases and (1) mental health services or (2) social services. Grant proposals must lay out a detailed plan to bring pro bono or low-cost mental health or social services into the representation of children in private custody cases. Proposals should address (1) the need for more mental health and social service training, mentoring, partnering, consulting and cross-education of legal professionals with mental health or social service professionals; (2) ways for children's attorneys to tap into free or low-cost mental health and social services for their clients; and/or (3) development of local mental health or social service resource materials for children's attorneys and their clients. Note that proposals can address one, two, or all three of these issues. Programs are encouraged to be creative in their planning and think beyond current models.

In addition, the project will fund only programs with a proven expertise with children's legal issues. The Project will give preference to programs that currently or plan to provide pro bono representation to children in custody cases. The Project will give preference to projects that likely will continue beyond the one-year grant period and that raise other funds. The grants are not an ongoing source of funding, but are meant to start or enhance projects that can be sustained by other resources.

D. What is an Eligible "Custody" Case?

To be eligible, the proposed pro bono project must address proceedings in one of the five following areas: divorce/dissolution (including post-decree); parentage/unmarried parents; adoption; private guardianship; or civil protective orders. The project must currently, or propose to, directly represent the **children** involved in these proceedings, and **not the adults**. However, the proposed mental health or social service piece need not be provided directly to children, but rather can be provided to pro bono or program staff attorneys to enhance their direct representation of children. Projects which provide services in the area of abuse/neglect/dependency proceedings are **not** eligible, except to the extent they also address one of the five eligible areas.

E. What are the Application Requirements?

The proposal must be prepared in an electronic format using the "2005 Directed Grant Application" developed by the Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project. A copy of the Application is available at www.abachildcustodyproject.org or by email from hermank@staff.abanet.org. The completed Application may not exceed **ten pages, 12 point font, single-spaced**.

In addition to the Application Form, applicants must submit two letters of support from other organizations involved in the applicant's project or with knowledge of the needs to be addressed by the project. At least one of these letters must be from a mental health or social service organization relevant to the proposed project. The letters must be signed by the president, board chair, chief executive, or other equivalent authority of the organization. The letters of support are not part of the 10-page limit.

F. What Funding is Available?

In 2005, the Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project will award grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000, from a total grant pool of \$50,000.

G. What is the Grant Period?

A grant is for a period up to twelve months. Funds will be distributed in one lump sum in May 2005, following receipt by ABA of the program's signed grant agreement. Funds must be expended by May 2006.

H. How and When to Apply?

By **February 22, 2005**, at 5:00 PM Central Time:

- (1) email the completed 2005 Directed Grant Application to Linda Rio Reichmann, Project Director, at lrrio@staff.abanet.org, AND
- (2) place in the U.S. mail a hard copy of the Application and two letters of support, addressed to Linda M. Rio Reichmann, ABA Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project, 321 N. Clark 19th Floor, Chicago, IL 60610.

Grant decisions will be made in April 2005.

I. Reporting

Because a major goal of the Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project is to identify successful projects that can be replicated by other groups, grant recipients will be expected to provide the Project with a report at the end of the grant period. The report will include such things as record-keeping procedures, intake forms, surveys, client education materials, advocate training materials, a project summary, and documents that will help other programs develop successful child custody projects.

J. Questions about the Directed Grants

All questions about the grants should be directed to the Child Custody and Adoption Pro Bono Project Director, Linda M. Rio Reichmann, at lrio@staff.abanet.org or 312-988-5805. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Director with any questions regarding the process or eligibility.