



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY

Date: May 15, 2024
Subject: Children's Justice Act – Minimal Facts – Tools for First Responders
To: Interested Parties
From: Michael Pennington
Executive Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Michael D. Pennington".

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), announces the availability of federal Children's Justice Act (CJA) funding to support the development of specialized training for first responders to child abuse allegations. For purposes of this funding announcement, the term "first responder" includes traditional first responders to child abuse, such as law enforcement and child protective service agencies, but also may include other mandated reporters¹ such as teachers or therapists who are likely to be the first to encounter a child abuse victim. The purpose of this training is to provide first responders with the "basics" of conducting a minimal facts interview and to provide additional, specialized training for conducting minimal facts interviews with children who are non-traditional communicators, and children who have disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum diagnosis, or who are hearing and/or sight impaired.

The goals and objectives of this initiative include, but are not limited to:

- Development of an online training curriculum for first responders, as defined above, on the basics of minimal facts interviewing, including specialized training on conducting minimal facts interviews with child abuse victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.
- Development and distribution of materials containing information on how and when to conduct a minimal facts interview, including methods to engage child abuse victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities during these interviews.
- Development of an overall "best practices" document to help first responders understand appropriate and successful interview strategies when conducting a minimal facts interview with a child abuse victim who may have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.

The curriculum must include evidence-based education and training relating to conducting minimal facts interviews generally, and also include training regarding best practices when conducting these interviews with child abuse victims who are non-traditional communicators, or who have disabilities such as, intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum diagnosis, or who are hearing and/or sight impaired.

A total of \$150,000 in federal Children's Justice Act funds is being announced to support this initiative. PCCD expects to fund one grant with a budget not to exceed \$150,000 over the 26-month project period.

Questions concerning the Egrants System should be made directly to the Egrants Help Desk at either (717) 787-5887 or you may call toll-free at (800) 692-7292 and select option 9 and then option 6 when prompted, or by email at RA-egrantssupport@pa.gov.

We look forward to receiving applications under this funding opportunity, and the possibility of working with you in developing and strengthening services for children in the Commonwealth.

¹ The [Child Protective Services Law](#) provides a definition of who constitutes a mandated reporter in Pennsylvania.



Office of Research, Evaluation and Strategic Policy Development

Minimal Facts – Tools for First Responders

Please Note: Applications are *only* accepted through PCCD's Egrants system. Applicants must register in Egrants prior to submitting an application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Egrants system and allow adequate time to prepare and submit an application.

Recommended Egrants Agency Registration Date:
May 24, 2024

Recommended Egrants User Registration Date:
May 31, 2024

Mandatory Egrants Application Deadline:
June 7, 2024

This funding guideline contains information not appearing in the Egrants application. Applicants are advised to print and review this document and refer to it while completing your Egrants application.

PCCD Program staff may only respond to questions to clarify the funding announcement. Questions must be sent via email to ra-pccd-cacac@pa.gov with "Minimal Facts – Tools for First Responders" in the subject line. All questions regarding this funding announcement must be received by close of business on June 5, 2024. PCCD staff will post responses to questions, as they are received, on [PCCD's website](#). Select the appropriate funding announcement to view questions and answers.

For any technical or system questions, contact and ask for the Egrants Help Desk at (717) 787-5887 or (800) 692-7292, or by emailing RA-eGrantsSupport@pa.gov.

PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
Office of Research, Evaluation and Strategic Policy Development

Funding Stream: Children’s Justice Act (CJA)

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PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
Office of Research, Evaluation and Strategic Policy Development

Funding Announcement Title: Minimal Facts – Tools for First Responders

Funding Stream: Children’s Justice Act (CJA)

Submission Requirements for Applications:

- **Scoring** – All applications received will be [competitively reviewed and scored](#) based on the applicant’s adherence to the funding announcement guidelines and timely submission in the PCCD Egrants system.
- **Due Date** – Applications must be submitted electronically through PCCD’s Egrants system no later than 11:59 PM on June 7, 2024.
- **Technical Assistance** – Grant application and administrative guides can be accessed on [PCCD’s website](#) under the Funding section. Applicants are strongly encouraged to review the application and administrative guides before calling the Egrants Help Desk for assistance. The Egrants Help Desk is available to assist with technical or system questions Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM, and may be reached by calling (717) 787-5887 or (800) 692-7292, or by emailing RA-eGrantsSupport@pa.gov.
- **Egrants Submission** – An application submitted in Egrants by the deadline is not considered complete until PCCD has received the original signature page, as well as any other required documents.
- **Administrative Rejection** – An application that does not meet all the listed requirements in this funding announcement may be administratively rejected.
- **Corrections** – If PCCD returns an application for corrections, the final application (including all corrections and required documents) must be returned to and approved by PCCD for the requested funding to be awarded.
- **Non-supplantation** – Funding must not be used to supplant/replace state, federal, or local funds that would otherwise be available to provide for program-related services. PCCD funding is to be used in addition to other funds that are made available for services.
- **Keywords** – Applicants are required to select “Keywords” from the dropdown menu located on the Main Summary screen in Egrants. The required keyword is below. Applicants may also select other keywords that apply specifically to their application.

Keyword: Child Abuse

PENNSYLVANIA COMMISSION ON CRIME AND DELINQUENCY
Office of Research, Evaluation and Strategic Policy Development

1. Overview:

The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD), in partnership with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services (DHS), announces the availability of federal Children’s Justice Act (CJA) funding to support the development of specialized training for first responders to child abuse allegations. For purposes of this funding announcement, the term “first responder” includes traditional first responders to child abuse, such as law enforcement and child protective service agencies, but also may include other mandated reporters¹ such as teachers or therapists who are likely to be the first to encounter a child abuse victim.

Of children who experience child abuse and maltreatment, children with disabilities are more likely to be abused or neglected than their peers without disabilities.² These children may face difficulties in understanding questions or communicating their experiences and some may have difficulty expressing themselves. The purpose of this training is to provide first responders with the “basics” of conducting a minimal facts interview and to provide additional, specialized training for conducting minimal facts interviews with children who are non-traditional communicators, and children who have disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum diagnosis, or who are hearing and/or sight impaired.

The goals and objectives of this initiative include, but are not limited to:

- Development of an online training curriculum for first responders, as defined above, on the basics of minimal facts interviewing, including specialized training on conducting minimal facts interviews with child abuse victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.
- Development and distribution of materials containing information on how and when to conduct a minimal facts interview, including methods to engage child abuse victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities during these interviews.
- Development of an overall “best practices” document to help first responders understand appropriate and successful interview strategies when conducting a minimal facts interview with a child abuse victim who may have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.

The curriculum must include evidence-based education and training relating to conducting minimal facts interviews generally, and also include training regarding best practices when conducting these interviews with child abuse victims who are non-traditional communicators, or who have disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum diagnosis, or who are hearing and/or sight impaired. The successful applicant will engage subject matter experts to ensure that the training includes the latest best practices from evidence-based, peer-reviewed research by recognized experts in conducting minimal facts interviews, as well as conducting these interviews with child abuse victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.

Pre- and post-training surveys must be utilized to measure the effectiveness of the training and educational materials must be made available to participants after the training to assist with the continued development of basic knowledge of minimal facts interviewing and how

¹ The [Child Protective Services Law](#) provides a definition of who constitutes a mandated reporter in Pennsylvania.

² Jones, L., et al. (2012). Prevalence and risk of violence against children with disabilities: A systematic review and meta-analysis of observational studies. *Lancet*, 380, 899–907.
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22795511/>

to engage child victims who may have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities when conducting these interviews.

The anticipated impacts resulting from this solicitation include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Development of a curriculum focused on minimizing additional trauma to a child who is the subject in the investigation of child abuse allegations.
- Development and distribution of materials containing information on how and when to conduct a minimal facts interview.
- Development of specialized training and materials that include methods to engage child abuse victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities during minimal facts interviews and strategies to improve communication with these populations.
- Increased knowledge for first responders in appropriate methods of conducting minimal facts interviews, specifically when working with child abuse victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.
- Increased knowledge of appropriate and effective strategies to elicit relevant information from a child victim of abuse during a minimal facts interview and decrease the likelihood of causing additional trauma to the child.
- Increased success of prosecuting cases of child abuse with victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities due to the implementation of best practices when conducting minimal facts interviews.

This is a competitive solicitation open to local governments, non-profit organizations, and institutions of higher education which demonstrate in their application an ability to collaborate with state partners and/or subject matter experts to develop and deliver an online training. The successful applicant should have experience providing training to first responders on the basics of minimal facts interviewing and/or training with a focus on strategies for interviewing child abuse victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.

2. Funding Availability:

A total of \$150,000 in federal Children’s Justice Act funds is being announced to support this initiative. PCCD expects to fund one grant with a budget not to exceed \$150,000 over the 26-month project period.

Award letters will be available in Egrants as soon as possible after the applications are approved.

There is no cash or in-kind match requirement under this funding announcement.

PCCD is not liable for costs incurred prior to the official start date of the award.

3. Project Dates:

Approved applications will be 26-month projects and have a start date of August 1, 2024 and an end date of September 30, 2026.

4. Eligible Applicants:

Funding under this solicitation is specifically limited to local governments, local and national nonprofit organizations, and institutions of higher education which demonstrate in their application an ability to collaborate with state and local partners and/or subject matter experts to develop and deliver an online training on the basics of minimal facts

interviewing. Applicants should have additional experience providing training with a focus on strategies for interviewing child abuse victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities. The successful applicant may be required to consult with DHS, Children's Advocacy Centers of Pennsylvania, and any other state agency or association deemed relevant by PCCD during the development of the curriculum.

Applicants must be in good standing with PCCD to be eligible for these funds.³ The applicant and recipient agencies' historical success in implementing PCCD-funded programs/initiatives that met their intended goals will be considered in the review process. Applicants are not required to have a prior funding history with PCCD to be eligible.

5. Eligible Program Activities and Expenses:

Funds for the proposed program shall be used to support the following:

- Costs associated with the development and delivery of an online training for law enforcement, child protective service agencies, and other possible "first responders" (including teachers, therapists, etc.) in appropriate methods of conducting minimal facts interviews, specifically when working with child abuse victims who are non-traditional communicators, or who have disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum diagnosis, or who are hearing and/or sight impaired.
- Costs associated with the development and distribution of materials containing information on how and when to conduct a minimal facts interview, and best practices for engaging child abuse victims during these interviews who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.
- Costs associated with engaging subject matter experts.
- Costs associated with providing continuing education credits for participants.
- Other costs associated with curriculum/material development and delivery of an online training focused on the basics of minimal facts interviewing and strategies for improving communication with child abuse victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.

6. Ineligible Program Activities and Expenses:

The following program activities are not eligible for funding and shall be administratively rejected:

- Luxury items.
- Any trainings outside of Pennsylvania.
- Any costs not **directly** related to the CJA goal of improving knowledge for law enforcement, child protective service agencies, and other possible "first responders" (including teachers, therapists, etc.) in appropriate methods of conducting minimal facts interviews, specifically when working with child victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.
- Any costs not **directly** related to curriculum/material development and delivery of an online training focused on the basics of minimal facts interviewing and strategies on improving communication with child abuse victims who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.

³ This may include, but is not limited to, compliance with PCCD program and fiscal reporting requirements, State and Federal funding guidelines, and acceptable risk rating as determined by PCCD.

7. Required Egrants Sections/Documents:

- Required Egrants Sections – All sections identified in Egrants are required. Applicants will not be able to submit their grant application in Egrants until all sections are marked as complete.
- Required Signed Documents – A successful application must be accompanied by the following:
 - The completed Signature Page (page 2 of the application).
 - Any other signed documents as required under section 8(e).

Any signed documents required under section 8(e) should be uploaded into the Required Attachments section in Egrants.

8. Scoring:

Applicants must submit the requested information for each section specified below within the defined response fields provided in Egrants. Responses should not be duplicated in multiple sections.

The following application sections in Egrants have a point value associated with them and will be scored as described below:

- **Executive Summary - Maximum of 5 points**

- All applicants should fill out the following script and paste into the executive summary section:

The name of applicant is requesting \$_____ to *[provide a single sentence or two of what you are seeking to implement with your grant funding]*.

These funds will be used for the following: *[provide bullet points of what the funds will be used for]*.

- Please note that responses in this section will be used in grant summaries and could be mentioned in press releases. Plain language that clearly describes the intent of the project is most effective.

- **Budget Detail - Maximum of 25 points**

Please note: Applicants should provide an explanation in the justification box in each budget category (personnel, travel, supplies, etc.) as to why each of the requested line items are necessary for the successful completion of the project. Failure to provide an adequate narrative of the costs being requested may impact your overall score in this section.

The Budget Detail must:

- Include a comprehensive budget detail section; and
- Provide a clear description of all costs including salary and benefits of personnel for which grant funds will be utilized. You must include information as how each position or item requested is currently funded. Each benefit must be listed as a separate line item.

- **Applicant Overview - Maximum of 25 points**

Applicants must provide the following information:

- Provide an overview of your organization, to include any experience in the development and delivery of training for “first responders” as defined by this funding announcement. For a definition of first responder, refer to the Overview section of the funding announcement.
- Describe your understanding of appropriate strategies for communicating with children who are non-traditional communicators and children who have disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum diagnosis, or who are hearing and/or sight impaired. Include a description of any subject matter expertise within your organization.
- Provide at least two (2) references of individuals/organizations who can speak to their experiences working with your organization in the development and/or delivery of training curriculum to “first responders” and/or the development and delivery of training related to minimal facts interviewing and/or training that includes strategies to improve communication with children who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.

- **Project Description - Maximum of 45 points**

Provide a detailed description of the proposed project, the following **must** be included in this description:

- Describe the proposed project and how this project will address the goals and objectives of this funding announcement.
- Describe the key stakeholders and subject matter experts who will be directly involved in this project and how they will be identified and recruited.
- Provide a clear and specific explanation on how you will facilitate the development of an online training curriculum, targeted to first responders, that includes both the basics of minimal facts interviewing and additional specialized training strategies for improving communication with child victims of abuse who have verbal, cognitive, and/or physical disabilities.
- Provide a detailed timeline, including specific benchmarks for curriculum development and training delivery and a description of the individual(s) responsible for each task within the timeline.
- Provide the expected impact or outcomes of the project; describe any potential barriers to achieving desired outcomes and how you expect to address those barriers.
- Describe how data will be collected; include information on who will be responsible for collecting data, what method of data collection will be utilized, and how data will be interpreted at the end of the project period to assess project success.

- **Required Attachments**

The following document(s) should be attached in the Required Attachment section in Egrants:

- Letter(s) of Support from stakeholders who will be directly involved in the development and delivery of the curriculum (i.e. subject matter experts, state agency or association).
- Examples of prior training curriculum that you have developed in the past.

9. Performance Measures:

Under this funding announcement, successful applicants are required to comply with all reporting, data collection, and evaluation requirements as prescribed by PCCD.

Successful applicants are **required** to submit quarterly program reports via the PCCD Egrants System. Award recipients will be required to report on performance measures that fulfill federal guidelines for the use of the CJA funds.

In addition, the recipient will be required to report on the following:

- The number of law enforcement participating in the training.
- The number of individuals from child protective service agencies participating in the training.
- The number and specific disciplines of other possible "first responders" (e.g. teacher, therapist, etc.).
- Pre- and post-survey results that assess (at least) the following:
 - Participant knowledge surrounding the basics of minimal facts interviewing;
 - Participant knowledge surrounding communication strategies when working with children who are non-traditional communicators, or children who have disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, autism spectrum diagnosis, or who are hearing and/or sight impaired; and
 - Participant knowledge surrounding trauma-focused approaches to child victims of abuse.

The award recipient is strongly encouraged to develop additional performance measures that are specifically related to the activities outlined in their application and may track and report all measures on a quarterly basis through the PCCD Egrants System.

10. Competitive Bidding/Sole Source Procurement:

All procurement transactions shall be conducted in a manner that provides open and free competition. Grant recipients must follow the Procurement Standards section in PCCD's [Applicant's Manual](#).

Procurements by noncompetitive proposal are strongly discouraged and must demonstrate an economic benefit or lack of alternate resources to be justified. If a request is made, the prospective applicant must identify the request as a procurement by noncompetitive proposal and provide a substantial justification for the request within their funding request (See PCCD's [Applicant's Manual](#) for Procurement by Noncompetitive Proposal Approval Procedure).

11. Administrative Requirements:

a. Egrants Agency and User Registration:

Prior to submitting a grant application, both the applicant agency and at least two users from the applicant agency must be registered in Egrants. Applicants are strongly advised to allow adequate time to work on application documents in Egrants prior to the submission deadline. Please go to the [Registering in Egrants](#) page on PCCD's website for further information.

b. Fiscal Accountability:

See the [Fiscal Accountability](#) page on PCCD's website for further information.

- c. Time and Effort Reporting:
See the [Time and Effort Reports](#) page on PCCD’s website for further information.
- d. Grant Payments:
- o Payments will not be released until all applicable special conditions on the grant award have been satisfied.
 - o All grantees are required, at a minimum, to submit quarterly fiscal reports. PCCD will only make payments to reimburse actual expenditures reported on the fiscal reports. An agency experiencing cash flow problems may submit fiscal reports monthly and PCCD will reimburse reported expenditures. Non-submission or late submission of the required reports will result in payment delays.
 - o ACH Payments:
 - All payments to grant recipients will be made through ACH.
 - Either before or at the time an application is submitted to PCCD, the applicant agency must [register as a Non-Procurement Vendor](#) with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- e. Federal Transparency Act Certification:
This section is required for both state and federal funding streams. See the [Federal Application Requirements](#) page on PCCD’s website for further information.
- f. Reporting Requirements:
- o Programmatic reports are due quarterly.
 - o Fiscal reports are due quarterly.
 - o Late submission of programmatic and fiscal reports may delay payments.
 - o All reports must be submitted through the Egrants system.

12. PCCD Contact Information and Resources:

- a. Staff Contacts:
Staff are only able to clarify the funding announcement and are not be able to answer any questions about how a potential applicant should respond to any particular section.

Questions regarding this funding announcement should be directed as follows:

- E-mail your funding announcement questions to ra-pccd-cacac@pa.gov with “Minimal Facts – Tools for First Responders” in the subject line.
- Questions must be received by close of business on June 5, 2024.
- All questions and answers will be posted under this funding announcement title on the [Funding Announcement Q&A](#) page of the PCCD website.

- b. Egrants Funding Announcement:
Log into the Egrants system and search under the “Funding Announcement” tab for Child Abuse Medical Forum.
- c. PCCD Guidelines and Documents:
Applicants should be familiar with the [Applicant’s Manual](#), Standard Subgrant Conditions, and other documents common to PCCD’s grant application process, all of which are available on the [Grant Information](#) page of the PCCD website. Additionally, grant application and administrative guides can be accessed on [PCCD’s website](#) under the Funding link.
- d. Egrants Technical Questions:
For any technical or system questions, contact and ask for the Egrants Help Desk at (717) 787-5887 or (800) 692-7292, or by emailing RA-eGrantsSupport@pa.gov.

e. PCCD Webmaster:

Please address any technical problems you may have with the website or online forms to the [PCCD Web Master](#).

f. Reporting Potential Fraud, Waste and Abuse:

Information about waste, fraud, abuse, conflict of interest, bribery, gratuity, or other similar misconduct, or whistleblower reprisal relating to a PCCD employee, program, contract or grant, may be reported to the PCCD Fraud Hotline at (717) 525-5031. For more information, visit the [Reporting Fraud, Waste and Abuse](#) page on PCCD's website.

13. Submission Information:

The application must be entered into Egrants **no later than Friday, June 7, 2024 by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time.**

The properly executed signature page (page 2 of the application) must be uploaded to the Project Summary page of your application within Egrants. A guide to assist you with this is available on our website at:

<https://www.pccd.pa.gov/Funding/Pages/Applicant-Resources.aspx>