

The Supreme Court of Ohio

Court Improvement Program (CIP) Technology Grant Request for Applications

Open July 1, 2026 to August 5, 2026 at 5:00 PM

Section 1. Overview

The Supreme Court of Ohio (“Court”) is requesting grant applications to support local juvenile and probate court technology projects. Up to ten applicant courts will be competitively selected to receive funding through a federal grant from the Department of Health and Human Services, administered under the Court Improvement Program (CIP) by the Children and Families Section. This funding opportunity is designed to help juvenile and probate courts improve their ability to maintain operations during emergencies, enhance digital communication with families and system partners, increase awareness of the right to legal representation, and strengthen virtual hearing capabilities.

Section 2. Scope of Grant

Grant funds are intended to support continuity of operations during disruptions or emergencies, reduce access-to-justice barriers, promote informed and meaningful participation in juvenile and probate court proceedings, and increase public awareness of the right to counsel. Each juvenile and probate court may apply for up to \$25,000, with awards made on a reimbursement basis. Matching funds are not required.

Section 3. Period of Grant

The project period begins on or about October 1, 2026 and ends September 30, 2027. All purchases must be completed, installed, and operational by that date.

Section 4. Eligibility

Common pleas juvenile and probate courts in Ohio are eligible to apply. Funding will be available only for projects directly related to processing cases for abuse, neglect, dependency (A/N/D) and adoption, and data sharing with child welfare agencies and other partners involved in the child welfare system.

Section 5. Allowable Uses of Funds

Examples of allowable and impactful purchases include technology that strengthens virtual hearing and courtroom capabilities, such as Zoom or similar video conferencing platforms, audio visual (A/V) systems (monitors, microphones, webcams), portable A/V carts, and computers or laptops for judicial officers or staff. Courts may also invest in digital communication tools like document management systems, scanners, secure messaging platforms to be used by families and attorneys, and systems for sending hearing reminders or right-to-counsel notifications via text or email. To enhance access and inclusion, allowable purchases include assistive technology (e.g., captioning tools, hearing devices), loaner hotspots, tablets or laptops, and language translation software. Security and infrastructure improvements such as firewalls, antivirus software, VPNs, cloud backup, and data recovery tools are also eligible. Finally, courts may use funds for IT consulting services to support implementation and for

staff training on new systems.

(A) Applicant Requirements

Applicants must provide a complete and clear submission that includes:

1. **Completed Application Form:** All sections of the CIP Technology Grant Application Form must be filled out. Incomplete applications will not be considered.
2. **Vendor Quotes:** At least one written quote for each major purchase (equipment, software, or service). Courts are encouraged to compare vendors for cost-effectiveness.
3. **Project Summary:** A concise (1–2 page) description of the proposed project, including:
 - Purpose and objectives of the project.
 - Key activities and timeline for implementation.
 - Expected outcomes for the court and participants.
4. **Connection to Grant Goals:** Applicants must indicate which of the following goals are supported by the project
 - Access to justice (improving participation of parents, caregivers, or youth).
 - Virtual hearing functionality (enhancing reliability and efficiency of online hearings).
 - Right to counsel awareness (improving communication and notification systems).
 - Disaster preparedness/continuity of operations (ensuring courts can continue critical functions during emergencies).

(B) Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be reviewed and scored based on the following weighted criteria (maximum 100 points):

1. **Alignment with CIP Goals and Federal Law (30 points)**
 - The project directly advances one or more CIP goal and aligns with the Supporting America's Children and Families Act (Public Law 118-258).
 - Strong preference for projects solely focused on abuse, neglect, dependency, and adoption cases.
 - If the project benefits multiple case types, the court must demonstrate that the primary purpose of the equipment, technology, or service is to enhance child welfare proceedings and improve outcomes for children and families involved in abuse, neglect, and dependency cases.
2. **Need and Clarity of Impact (25 points)**
 - Clear explanation of the problem being addressed and why current resources are insufficient.
 - Demonstrated connection between the proposed purchase and the anticipated improvement in court processes or participant engagement.
3. **Feasibility and Sustainability (25 points)**

- Realistic project timeline and implementation plan.
 - Evidence the court can maintain or continue the technology beyond the grant year (e.g., ongoing licensing costs built into the local budget, IT support identified).
4. **Prior Funding Consideration (20 points)**
- Courts that have not previously received CIP technology grants may receive priority.
 - Previous recipients must demonstrate progress and impact from past awards to be competitive.

(C) Impact Priority Considerations

To strengthen the application, the court should clearly state how project success will be measured. Impact measures should be realistic, measurable, and connected to improved outcomes for children, parents, caregivers, or the court system.

Examples include:

- Fewer continuances due to improved technology or communication.
- Increase in cases reaching disposition within the Court time guidelines.
- Improved data collection (e.g., data on continuances, technology use, or time to permanency).
- Greater awareness of the right to counsel, measured through automated notification systems or survey feedback.
- Reduce barriers to access (e.g., increased participation in hearings by parents, caregivers, or youth).
- Other locally defined measures that are appropriate to the project (e.g., number of families using translation tools, number of remote hearings conducted without disruption).

Applicants should describe both short-term impacts (e.g., improved connectivity during hearings) and long-term impacts (e.g., more consistent parent participation, reduced delays in permanency).

Section 6. Terms and Conditions

(A) Rights of the Court

The Court reserves the right to refuse to fund applicants, to propose different funding amounts from the application in appropriate circumstances, and to decline funding any applicants at the Court's discretion.

Furthermore, the Court shall reserve the right to terminate a grant agreement and recoup any funds that are being misspent by an applicant or not being spent to efficiently complete the applicant's proposal. The Court may conduct site visits or conduct other types of monitoring to observe and evaluate grant programs.

The Court shall reserve the right to audit any recipient court to ensure compliance with the terms set forth in the application or grant agreement.

Lastly, the Court reserves the right to terminate a grant agreement if the Court's CIP funds appropriated for this project expire or fail to continue.

(B) Requirements of Receiving Applicants

Successful applicants must satisfy the following conditions:

1. Execution of a grant agreement between the Court and the receiving court selected for a grant.
2. Submit quarterly reports detailing progress on the project's objective, implementation activities, and impact measurements.
3. The receiving court shall, upon request, provide any and all activity and financial reports related to the purchase under the grant to the Court.
4. The funds will only address one-time costs, with any resulting maintenance or ongoing support costs being the responsibility of the receiving court.
5. Funds may not be used for the replacement of the current case management system with another product nor costs related to evaluation and search for a replacement.
6. Funds may not be used to purchase cellular phones, or other mobile devices.
7. A receiving court shall immediately notify the Court in writing of a decision to decline the grant award.
8. A receiving court shall immediately notify the Court in writing of any changes to the contact information submitted within the application.

(C) Federal Regulations

If awarded, the receiving court shall follow all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations under the grant award. Awarded entities shall be familiar with the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards under the Code of Federal Regulations and the requirements shall be followed through the duration of the grant award period. Federal financial assistance requirements are located under Title 2 Part 200 of the Code of Federal Regulations and requirements specific to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services are located under Title 2 Part 300.

(D) Promotional Materials and News Releases

Successful applicants may be included in future outreach and promotional materials, as determined by the Court. Additionally, news releases and articles released throughout the program period by the Court may include informal updates about the program, as applicable.

Section 7. Submission of Grant Applications and Contact Information

Submit completed applications and vendor quotes no later than **5:00 PM on Wednesday, August 5, 2026** to CFC@sc.ohio.gov.

Late applications will not be accepted. Applicants will be notified of the status of their submission no later than **September 16, 2026**.

Section 8. Reporting Requirements

(A) General

Receiving courts will provide confirmation of all purchases or upgrades made with grant funds to the Court within 120 days after notification of funding award or February 1, 2027, whichever comes first.

Courts will also be required to submit quarterly reports throughout the grant period. Each report must include:

- Project Implementation
- Technology Activity
- Impact Measures
- Challenges & Solutions
- Next Steps/Plans for Next Quarter

A final cumulative report will be due by October 15, 2027, summarizing program impact and sustainability plans.

(B) Failure to Comply

Failure to comply with reporting requirements or other aspects of the grant agreement could result in the termination of the award and reimbursement of grant funds to the Court.

Section 9. Contact Information

For questions regarding this Request for Applications, please contact:

Linda Topping at Linda.Topping@sc.ohio.gov or 614.387.9389.

Section 10. Applicable Policies

Applicant courts seeking grants from the Supreme Court of Ohio are subject to the Court's policies on Equal Employment Opportunity, Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace, Weapons and Violence Free Workplace, and Discrimination and Harassment. The Court's policies are attached as Appendix A.

Section 11. Attachments

- The Court's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
- The Court's Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace Policy
- The Court's Weapons and Violence Free Workplace Policy
- The Courts's Discrimination and Harassment Policy