

**DESCRIPTION OF GRANT PROGRAM
OFFICIAL COMPILATION OF THE RULES AND REGULATIONS
OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

- I. Name of Grant Program: Civil Legal Assistance to Families Victimized by Domestic Violence Project (Short name: Civil Legal Assistance Project).
- II. Legal Authority: O.C.G.A. §15-5-24 and Supreme Court of Georgia Order of January 15, 1981 relating to the duties of the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts.
- III. Definition: This is a statewide project designed to provide civil legal services to all persons, adults and children, victimized by or under the direct threat of domestic violence.
- IV. Scope: Domestic violence is endemic throughout the nation and in Georgia. From 2003 through 2016, nearly 1,700 **Georgia citizens lost their lives** due to domestic violence.¹ Domestic violence shelters refer more than an estimated 10,000 victims of domestic violence to legal service agencies each year. Other legal resources are inadequate to meet the serious needs of these families. This project provides a framework under which Georgia's non-profit legal services programs can serve approximately 6,300 families of domestic violence per year.
- V. Purpose: The purpose of this program is to provide civil legal assistance to persons victimized or threatened by domestic violence. Such legal assistance helps with immediate needs through protective orders or orders for custody and child support, and also includes legal assistance with such issues as access to credit and bank accounts, housing, public benefits, employment and other consumer and financial problems that must be resolved to achieve safety, stability and economic security.

A. Eligible Services

This project focuses on providing direct services to victims in two major areas of need by:

1. Providing legal services related to domestic violence, child custody and family support; and
2. Providing legal services related to the family's economic security and stability, including housing issues, employment-related problems, problems with access to education, and health care.

¹ Georgia Commission on Family Violence annual fact sheet on domestic violence, *available at* https://gcfv.georgia.gov/sites/gcfv.georgia.gov/files/related_files/site_page/2017GCFVFactSheet%20%281%29.pdf

B. Excluded Services

Certain services are specifically excluded from this program. Excluded services are:

1. Class action suits;
2. Criminal defense;
3. Deportation proceedings;
4. Initial Temporary Protective Orders;
5. Juvenile delinquency;
6. Indirect legal services such as attorney training;
7. Matters to be adjudicated in courts outside of Georgia; or
8. Other client-initiated proceedings not related to the safety, stability, or economic security of the victim or the victim's family.

C. Eligible Clients

Victims or persons under the threat of domestic violence who have no reasonable access to resources that may be used for legal services are eligible. Evidence of violence or the threat of violence shall be reasonably demonstrated, but may also be shown by the following:

1. A protective order issued by a court of competent jurisdiction;
2. A referral from a domestic violence program or program for children or the elderly; or
3. A warrant or police report indicating an incident involving domestic violence.

D. Eligible Grantees

1. Eligible grantees for these funds are non-profit corporations registered and in good standing with the State of Georgia with at least two years of experience providing civil legal services in the State.
2. Recipients must also demonstrate they have the personnel and expertise necessary to deliver the services required, that their service delivery structure can adequately provide coverage throughout the geographical area for which the services are proposed, and that they have sufficient administrative recordkeeping capabilities to fulfill reporting requirements necessary for the evaluation of these projects.
3. Community partnerships are critical to achieving success with this program. The applicants must show broad community support and the support and cooperation of local domestic violence programs. Letters of support or other evidence establishing these relationships should accompany applications.

VI. General Terms and Conditions: Grants will be awarded for a one-year term. Each of Georgia's forty-nine circuits will be included. The amount of funds available for distribution to grantees may change each year based on the amount of funds appropriated to the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts and the cost of the administrative oversight of these funds. The grant awards are generally announced in July.

VII. Criteria for the Award of Grants: The total population resident in each county served by the grant recipient will be considered. This number is based on the most current estimates from the U. S. Census Bureau.

In no event shall a grantee provide legal services to a client whose income exceeds 200% of the federal poverty guidelines. Special needs categories (such as homelessness, rural counties with fewer than ten attorneys, or regional areas or counties with a disproportionately high rate of death from domestic violence¹) will also be considered.

Grant funds used for divorces must be directly related to the protection and safeguarding of domestic violence victims. Grant funds used for divorces must not exceed more than 10% of the total amount awarded to the grantee.

VIII. Directions and Deadlines for Application: Applications for grant funds **must be submitted via email** to the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts at grants@georgiacourts.gov.

Comments may be submitted to the Judicial Council/Administrative Office of the Courts at grants@georgiacourts.gov or (404) 656-5171.

¹ GEORGIA COMM'N ON FAMILY VIOLENCE, GEORGIA STATE PLAN FOR ENDING FAMILY VIOLENCE, at iv–v, 61–62 (December 2012), available at <http://www.gcfv.org/>.