

MEMORANDUM

TO: People Interested in Child Support Assurance

FROM: Paula Roberts

DATE: February 24, 1999

RE: Money Available for Feasibility Studies and Demonstration Projects

In the February 19 *Federal Register*, there was an announcement that \$250,000 per year for the next three years is now available from the federal government for CSA feasibility studies as well as implementation of CSA demonstration projects. You can find the full document at 64 Fed. Reg. 8382-8388 or on the Office of Child Support Enforcement (OCSE) web site at www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cse/new/sipp. The money is part of a pool which funds “special improvement projects.” Of note:

- Applications are due by April 20. Only applications submitted by or postmarked on that date will be considered.
- In addition to state IVD agencies, state human services agencies, local public agencies, nonprofit organizations and consortia of state and local public agencies may apply. However, preference will be given to applications from IVD agencies and organizations that have cooperative agreements with IVD agencies.
- Money is available for **feasibility studies** as well as actual implementation of a **demonstration project**. Those who have never looked at the issue might apply for the former while those who have designed but never implemented a program could apply for the latter. Since the funds could be sought for as long as 36 months, it is also possible to package a proposal which includes a feasibility study followed by a demonstration project.
- The review process is governed by Executive Order 12372 (if the state has elected to be part of this process) and 45 CFR Part 100. In states which are part of the Executive Order 12372, the Single Point of Contact (SPOC) needs to be alerted of a possible application and instructions about their process should be obtained.

Since the application process involves more than just submitting a proposal and the deadline for submission is quite firm, those interested in CSA need to act quickly. Advocates should alert the appropriate entities as soon as possible. And interested state or local entities should begin drafting their applications now. Note that non-profits (including academic institutions) can apply as can local governments. So, if a university is interested in designing a CSA program for the

state --or a local IVD or welfare office is interested in running a demonstration project—they could apply for these funds. However, since the state IVD agency will be given an opportunity to comment on the proposals and preference is given to proposals from IVD agencies or those working with them, it would be well for interested academics, non-profit agencies or local government units include IVD representatives as early as possible in their process.

According to the *Federal Register* notice, those wishing to do a feasibility study might want to look at 1) cost and funding issues; 2) whether the program is better suited to some populations than others; 3) how to integrate CSA with other aspects of welfare reform; 4) what legislative and policy changes would be needed; and 5) what kinds of training and administrative support would be required to implement CSA.

Those who have already done some of this ground work and would now like to try out the idea can apply for **demonstration project** funds. In this regard, OCSE is interested in projects with a randomly assigned control group so that the impact of the project can be evaluated. OCSE is particularly interested in 1) optimal benefit levels from a fiscal cost/benefit point of view; 2) the advantages and disadvantages of means-testing CSA payments; 3) whether other eligibility requirements (e.g., work participation, enrollment in parenting classes, progress in a fatherhood program) can/should be incorporated into the CSA program; 4) CSA's effect on TANF rolls and family self-sufficiency; 5) whether CSA provides an incentive to work; and 6) whether or not CSA payments should be included in determining eligibility for other government programs.

For more information on the application procedure, or to obtain an application kit contact Jean Robinson (202) 401-5330 or jrobinson@acf.dhhs.gov.