Child Savings Account Grants Program Council
September 4, 2020 Meeting Summary

The Child Savings Account (CSA) Grants Program Council met on September 4, 2020. The Council members present included: Lande Ajose, Margaret Clancy, Zoe Corwin, Linda English, Marlene Garcia, Hal Geiogue, Mark Kantrowitz, Shira Markoff, Julio Martinez and Kris Perry.

The meeting agenda included the selection of a Chairperson, an overview of the CSA Grants Program, and the input of Council members to the Request For Application (RFA). The public was invited to provide comments.

Selection of Chairperson
Kris Perry was elected as Chair.

CSA Grants Program Overview

The CSA Grants Program was established to support local governments and nonprofit organizations that sponsor or collaborate on one or more comprehensive citywide or regional child savings account programs. The CSA Grants Program Council was established to advise the Commission on topics that include;

- The development of systems and infrastructure to facilitate the successful implementation and operation of local child savings account programs.

- Outreach and coordination with local child savings account programs.

- Incentives to assist in the development of sustainable and expandable local child savings account programs.

- Strategies to minimize grantees' administrative fees and to cap administrative costs to better ensure that local child savings account programs are of low or no cost to participants

Technical Assistance. Council member Clancy recommended including a statewide program at Washington University at St. Louis as a resource for technical assistance on child savings account programs. Commission staff will add this resource to the CSA web page.

Priority. Council members discussed if applications could be prioritized for funding and if there is discretion in prioritizing applications from existing programs if they are determined to be stronger than applications received from new programs. The Commission's Legal Counsel, Julia Blair clarified that the statute states that "up to 74 percent" shall be expended to support new programs and "a minimum of 24 percent" shall be expended to support existing programs, allowing some discretion in spending.

Outcomes. A Council member commented that program outcomes are not required in the RFA. It was suggested that capturing certain measures through the life cycle of the program would show an impact of the CSAs on educational progress. Questions from Council members on outcomes included: a) is CSAC flexible in outcomes for either new or existing programs; b) are there specific goals or outcomes CSAC is looking for; c) is there flexibility in the outcomes if they do not align with local CSA programs; d) can wording in the RFA be clarified to include outcomes and priority for funding the stronger programs.

Council Chair Perry supported the question of including the measure of outcomes if required in the statute. She confirmed that Legal Counsel reviewed the RFA for alignment with the provisions in statute.

Definitions. Terms were discussed as needing either clearer definitions or added to the list of definitions. Legal Counsel Blair stated that the Council may direct staff to make changes to definitions as discussed by the Council.

- The language defining 'planning and development' and its distinction between existing and new programs should be clarified to specify if whether children are or are not enrolled is included in the definition.

- Include "in kind" as a consideration of matching funds

- Specify if "participants with funded accounts" is a consideration for existing programs.

- Clarify the definition of "expand existing programs." It was suggested that "expand" could include any evidence of growth in the program, e.g., adding additional children, increasing incentives for families for participation, increasing the geographic region of service, offering additional services to participant families.

- Clarify "allowable costs."

Role of the CSA Council. Legal Counsel Blair stated that providing technical assistance is an appropriate role for Council members.

Response to the RFA by Council members
Council members suggested edits, requested clarification on statutory language, clarified language in Form E of the RFA, and specified how metrics will be used to leverage funding.

Questions/Comments from the Public

- Use funding to build the capacity of current programs.

- The intent of the program is to serve primarily children ages 0-10; Children over the age of 10 may be served. It is not clear if funds can be used to expand services of existing programs to older youth.

- Provide additional resources for technical assistance.

Action
The Council approved the RFA as adjusted and directed staff to incorporate changes as discussed.

1. **Moved** (Council member Ajose)
2. **Seconded** (Council member English)
3. **Ayes**: 10   **Nays**: 0

Next Steps:
- Commission staff will incorporate the updates recommended by the Council and with the Chair's approval, will provide an updated draft RFA for the Commission's consideration.

- Commission staff will work with the Chair to plan future CSA Grant Council meetings.