

**State of New Mexico
Access and Visitation Services Program**

Introduction

Through Title IV-D, Social Security Act, the Federal Administration for Children and Families provides grant funding for each state to establish and administer programs to support and facilitate access to and visitation of children between custodial and non-custodial parents.

In New Mexico, the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) is designated as the State agency that administers the federal Access and Visitation Program. The Department provides services to children, youth and family members through Child Protective Services, Family Services and Juvenile Justice Services. This wide array of services has been created to protect and enhance the quality of life for children throughout the State.

In New Mexico, the federal Access and Visitation Program is administered by the Program Manager of the Access and Visitation Services Programs in the Family Services Division of the Children, Youth and Families Department.

Agency Grantees

Two agencies have been awarded funds to provide Access and Visitation Services in the State of New Mexico. The agencies and a description of their services are listed below.

Families and Youth Inc.

Executive Director:	Jose Fietze	Agency Contact:	Same
Physical Address:	1320 S. Solano		Las Cruces, NM 88004
Mailing Address:	P.O. Box 1868		Las Cruces, NM 87110
Telephone:	(505) 522-4004	Fax:	(505) 522-9017

Target Population Served: PSD/JJD/TSS; High Risk Families and Children in need of Access and Visitation services.

Geographic Service Area: Las Cruces/Dona Ana, Luna, Grant, Sierra, Hidalgo, Socorro, and Catron Counties.

CYFD Program Manager: Ruthie H. Dearing, MHSA, JD

CYFD Program Type: Children's Behavioral Health Services and Access and Visitation

Service Components: Mental Health Screening, Mental Health Diagnostic Evaluation, Alcohol & Drug Screening, Case Management, Treatment Plan (Develop & Review), Counseling, Skills Training & Development, Crisis Intervention (Basic & 24 Hour), Behavioral Health Respite Care Services and Access and Visitation Programs.

The Neutral Zone

Program Coordinator	Amanda Stoever, MA	Agency Contact: Same
Physical Address:	908 North Hudson Street	Silver City, NM 88061
Mailing Address:	908 North Hudson Street	Silver City, NM 88061
Telephone:	(505) 534-9920	Fax: (505) 534-9681

Target Population Served: PSD/JJD/TSS; High Risk Families and Children in need of Access and Visitation services.

Geographic Service Area: Grant County, and some assistance in Luna and Hidalgo Counties.

CYFD Program Manager: Ruthie H. Dearing, MHSA, JD

CYFD Program Type: Children's Behavioral Health Services and Access and Visitation

Service Components: Access and Visitation Programs, including Neutral Exchange, Supervised Visitation, Therapeutic Visitation, Mediation, Parent Education and Parent Counseling.

Federal Child Access and Visitation Program Survey

Use of a federal Child Access and Visitation Program Survey ensures the collection and accurate reporting of data regarding families using the Access and Visitation Services Program. During the federal fiscal year, the statewide CYFD Program Manager collects and monitors monthly reports submitted by the agencies receiving funds for this program. Monthly Activity Reports are required to track compliance with all issues outlined in the agency contract. The Monthly Activity Reports also provide data to record the numbers of clients receiving services and the types of services provided to clients. The monthly data from each contracted agency is collected, compiled and transferred to Washington DC in September of each year.

Program Monitoring

The Program Manager monitors the agency contracts. The Program Manager also reviews and monitors the services and programs offered by the grantees. On-site visits to the organization (quarterly or more often if needed) are made to evaluate the quality of the programs and delivery of services offered, to assure contract compliance and to provide technical assistance to the agency staff. The agency conducts an educational program about access and visitation services for attorneys, judges and court-related staff in the spring of each year.

The contracted agency provides the programs and services under the Access and Visitation Services Federal Grant Award in the following areas:

- Mediation (both voluntary and mandatory);
- Therapeutic Counseling;
- Parent Education;
- Transportation and Visitation Enforcement (including monitoring, supervision and neutral drop-off and pickup);
- Guideline Development for visitation and alternative custody arrangements.

The contracted agency is required to work with custodial and non-custodial parents to achieve visitation compliance. The agency is also required to supervise and facilitate visits between custodial and non-custodial parents and their child (ren), helping to ensure the safety of the children and their parents.

The CYFD requires specific outcome and measures criteria for the use of funds by awarded grantees. These outcome and measures criteria demonstrate positive tangible results indicating effectiveness of the programs and services offered, timely provision of offered services and completion of data collection as noted in the Statement of Work. A primary goal is that the programs and services provided make a significant difference in the lives of children and family members who are responding to the custodial and visitation arrangements ordered by the courts.

The outcomes and measures criteria are based on an assessment of the indicators that measure effective changes in client behaviors, such as a decreased number of incidents of violation of visitation orders, a decreased number of incidents of non-payment of child support and a decreased number of incidents of negative behavior among children resulting from the trauma of divorce or custodial difficulties. Using the standardized criteria for evaluation and analysis of the outcome and measurement results allows conclusions to be made regarding the positive and/or negative factors and components of the programs and services. These conclusions support and assist with changes that are needed to strengthen and enhance programming and services.

Personal Safeguards

In New Mexico, a high priority is given to the safety of children and their parents receiving services or program support through the Access and Visitation Services Federal Grant-funded Program. The language in contract documents clearly includes specific statements noting the requirements for contracted agencies regarding the provision of a safe environment for visitation and exchanges of children and parents, and as needed, assistance with the provision of these requirements is provided by the CYFD Program Manager.