

NCWWI UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS (UP)



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



Learning, Leading, Changing

NCWWI | National Child Welfare Workforce Institute | December 2013

A service of the Children's Bureau, a member of the T/TA Network



DESCRIPTION

Background

In 2008, the Children's Bureau created the National Child Welfare Workforce Institute (NCWWI), which was re-funded for five additional years in October 2013. NCWWI partners are the University at Albany/SUNY (lead), the University of Denver, Michigan State University, Portland State University, the University of Maryland, and the University of Southern Maine.

The purpose of the next five years of NCWWI is to increase child welfare practice effectiveness through diverse partnerships that focus on workforce systems development, organizational interventions, and change leadership using data-driven capacity building, education, and professional development.

NCWWI includes the following integrated components:

- *University Partnerships (UP);*
- *Leadership Academy for Deans/Directors/Chairs of social work programs and Directors of State/County/Tribal Child Welfare Agencies (LADD);*
- *Leadership Academy for Child Welfare Supervisors (LAS);*
- *Leadership Academy for Child Welfare Middle Managers (LAMM);*
- *Organizational Interventions;*
- *Knowledge Management and Dissemination (LINKD); and,*
- *Comprehensive Evaluation.*

For more information, please visit the Institute's website: www.ncwwi.org

This Request for Proposals (RFP) supports the development of up to 11 University Partnerships between schools (or departments) of social work and state, county, or tribal child welfare agencies who propose to collaborate to address workforce challenges and opportunities through leadership, education, professional development and organizational intervention activities. In keeping with the vision of the Children's Bureau, this proposal calls for a strategic partnership between social work programs and child welfare agencies focused more intensively as a service to the agencies, which is a significant change from traditional traineeship programs that consisted primarily of student stipends and limited curricular work.

Other NCWWI components (Leadership Academy for Supervisors; Leadership Academy for Middle Managers, and the Organizational Intervention initiatives) may be involved to some degree with these University Partnerships, while the Knowledge Management and Dissemination team (LINKD) will provide supportive resources and the NCWWI evaluation team will study the impact of this integrated approach to workforce development. Moreover, the University Partnership program will also foster the Leadership Academy for Deans/Directors/Chairs and State/County/Tribal Child Welfare Directors (LADD).

Schools of Social Work in University Partnerships

Since the University Partnerships program involves strategic initiatives between schools of social work and state/county/tribal child welfare agencies, this section addresses guidelines for participation by schools and departments of social work in partnership proposals.

The goals for schools of social work in the **University Partnerships** include the preparation of the current and future child welfare workforce strengthening child welfare practice through traineeship stipend programs, local agency engagement strategies, and developing a specialized child welfare curriculum. Building on a strong relationship between the social work program and child welfare agency, there are three components that address these goals:

1. **traineeships** to improve child welfare knowledge and practice, including financial support for students, specialized curricula and field placements, and program supports attentive to the transition and retention of funded BSW and MSW trainees to agency employment;
2. **partnership activities** designed collaboratively by the social work program and local child welfare or tribal agency to address workforce challenges and opportunities such as facilitating transition to work, implementing specialized practice, or promoting the retention of child welfare professionals; and,
3. child welfare **curriculum enhancement activities** to develop and deliver child welfare curricula with specialized content on trauma and evidence-based practices in child welfare.

In addition, programs must participate in the national cross-site evaluation of the University Partnerships by tracking student demographic data using a web-based data portal, supporting the administration of questionnaires for traineeship students, supporting the assessment of standardized student competencies, submitting semi-annual progress reports, and participating in qualitative interviews.

As many as eleven CSWE-accredited social work programs (BSW, MSW and/or combined BSW/MSW) will be selected to receive \$147,000 each year for up to five years (contingent on federal funding).

Eligible Social Work Program Applicants

Eligible applicants are CSWE-accredited social work bachelor (BSW) and masters (MSW) programs located in:

- Public and State-controlled institutions of higher education;
- Private institutions of higher education;
- Historically Black Colleges and Universities; or
- Tribally Controlled Colleges and Universities.

BSW and MSW programs that are in candidacy are not eligible for these traineeships.

Social work programs with and without title IV-E funding are eligible.

University Partnerships & LADD

To promote strategic and sustainable change to strengthen the child welfare workforce, social work programs will work intensively with their agency partners. The deans/directors/chairs of the social work programs, in collaboration with county or state or tribal child welfare directors, will constitute the cohort for NCWWI's Leadership Academy for Deans/Directors and Agency Child Welfare Directors (LADD). There will be one social work program leader and one agency leader from each selected University Partnership in this Academy. LADD will support leaders' ability to lead change in their respective organizations that builds a professionally educated and expert workforce. Supported by a partnership with the American Public Human Service Association (APHSA) and its affiliate, the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators (NAPCWA), LADD will promote social work and agency leaders' effective collaboration. This includes the ability to work effectively as partners to enhance child welfare workforce development, with special attention to promising practices and evidence-based interventions, and to address agency practices related to recruitment, retention and support of a strong professional workforce.

LADD will foster change initiatives in the social work program and in the child welfare agency that will address child welfare workforce issues and enhance the success of the traineeship graduates. Leaders of programs (Dean/Director/Chair and State/County/Tribal Child Welfare Director) will propose potential change initiatives in this proposal. They will also work together, with the guidance of the LADD facilitators, to select or refine change initiatives that are appropriate in scope, simultaneous change practices in social work programs and child welfare agencies, and measureable.

LADD will start in spring 2014 with separate orientation meetings for each leadership group (NADD/BPD for social work educators; webinar for agency leaders). After Year One, LADD participants will meet together twice a year for up to one and a half days (typically once in conjunction with the Council on Social Work Education Annual Program Meeting and once at the NAPCWA annual meeting). Technology-assisted capacity building and regular coaching calls with each partnership pair will support ongoing communication and collaboration between meetings. LADD will continue through September 2017.

LADD participants will be responsible for their travel expenses for the two meetings each year (these costs may be included in the University Partnership budget with justification specified). As the orientation meetings are at routinely scheduled events (or a webinar for agency leaders) there are minimal or no travel costs for Year One. Supplemental funds to assist with travel may become available in the future.

The full University Partnership proposal should include a joint commitment letter from the dean/director/chair and agency leader that identifies the context, strengths and challenges for the child welfare workforce in their region or state; rationale for the workforce partnership and potential areas of need; readiness to work together in the University Partnerships and LADD; and identification of potential change initiatives each will undertake. This joint letter will serve as a Memorandum of Understanding to set the foundation for this partnership work. This letter should be in the appendix.

State/County/Tribal Child Welfare Agency Participation in University Partnerships

This proposal includes a number of opportunities and commitments for agency partners:

1. Agency partners will be expected to **work collaboratively** with their university partners to design and implement field placement experiences for traineeship students that enhance knowledge and skills development in relation to child welfare competencies. This includes providing skills-based practice opportunities and mentoring, feedback and skills assessment of students placed in the agency. Applicants should be able to describe specific ways in which student field placements will be supported;
2. Agency leaders will **participate with the dean/director/chair in the LADD** as noted above; and
3. Agency partners will also be expected to **participate in the National cross-site evaluation**. Participation will include participating in interviews and focus groups for the implementation evaluation, tracking and reporting Human Resource and performance data for NCWWI traineeship student graduates working in the agency, and completing traineeship student competency assessments.

Workforce Development Initiatives

In addition to participation in University Partnerships and LADD, there will be other opportunities for agency directors to gain assistance and support in addressing agency-identified workforce challenges and strengthen workforce development and implementation of systems changes. These opportunities for workforce development support, which will be made available after the University Partnership grants are awarded, include **a Leadership Academy for Middle Managers (LAMM), a Leadership Academy for Supervisors (LAS), support for an organizational intervention initiative, and technical assistance to address workforce development issues identified by the agency.**

University Partnership applicants are invited to express an interest in these programs, **but are not required to do so at this time**. This application is for the University Partnerships, which would be the foundation for any other work together. Agency partners who are interested in additional workforce and leadership development support from NCWWI are invited to explain their interest in this optional letter.

This expanded opportunity to address workforce challenges through LAMM, LAS and organizational-focused interventions will include an agency-wide climate/culture assessment, and the convening of an agency-wide design team that identifies and addresses workforce issues. In this optional letter of interest, describe why the agency is interested, what workforce issues they hope to address, the ability to devote adequate resources (e.g., staff time, leadership support, etc.) for a multi-year initiative, identify other key organizational initiatives, and potential contextual /environmental barriers and supports.

Three jurisdictions (such as county, state, or tribal region) will be selected to work with NCWWI in this intensive and integrated model of service delivery that involves multiple NCWWI components described above. This selection process will take place after University

Partnerships are awarded and will be based on further discussion with the jurisdiction, allowing time to gain additional information and make fully informed decisions about whether and how to proceed.

In summary, one joint letter from the Dean/Director/Chair and Agency Leader for the University Partnerships and Leadership Academy (LADD) is required for this application. A second letter from the child welfare jurisdictional leader expressing an interest in additional workforce projects is *invited but not required*. This second letter may warrant “extra credit” in the evaluation of the proposal as an indication of agency attentiveness and readiness to address workforce issues. Both letters should be included in the Appendix.

University Partnerships Application/Proposal Outline

While Schools and Departments of Social Work will be the recipients of awards for traineeships, state/county/tribal child welfare agencies may receive support for participating in LADD and in other workforce development approaches. Either partner—schools/departments of social work or state, county or tribal agencies—can encourage the other partner to participate in the University Partnership Application. Applications/proposals with strong evidence of an agency-university partnership in the preparation of the University Partnership application will be most competitive. Following is a description of the elements of the application/proposal:

Each application/proposal must contain the following items in the order listed:

1. Cover sheet (not part of the page count)
2. Project summary/abstract (one page maximum and not part of the page count)
3. Project description
 - a. Objectives and Need for Assistance
 - b. Approach
 - c. Organizational Profile
 - d. Assurances
 - e. Budget and Budget Justification
4. Appendix (not part of the page count)
 - a. Job descriptions
 - b. Resumes/Bio-sketch
 - c. Letter(s)

APPLICATION/PROPOSAL CONTENTS

1. **COVER SHEET** (see page 14 of this packet)
2. **PROJECT SUMMARY/ABSTRACT**: Provide a summary of the project description and features (*one page, single-spaced* following proposal formatting instructions).
3. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**:
 - a. **Objectives & Need for Assistance** (5 points)

A literature review is not required for this application. Provide a description of the child welfare workforce needs and opportunities in your region. Provide any additional data that will assist the reviewers in understanding your child welfare system and local agency workforce needs. Clearly list all project objectives.
 - b. **Approach** (60 points)

Accounting for all activities, outline a plan of clear action steps that address the following points:

With regard to University Partnership (UP) Traineeships:

- (1) Describe how student trainees will be selected, including from which program the trainees will be selected (BSW or MSW or both), and identify the number of students to be selected and provided awards each year and the five-year total. Current employees of public and tribal child welfare agencies who apply to and/or currently attend BSW/MSW programs are eligible for these traineeships;
- (2) Identify how much funding will be provided to each trainee and the rationale for this amount. Total funds committed to the stipends must equal or be higher than 65% of project funds;
- (3) Describe the plan for child welfare field placements, including specific agencies and the area of child welfare services provided by the placement. Field placements are to be assigned in public child welfare or tribal programs. Field placements may take place in a private agency if your School or Department is located in a geographic area where the public child welfare agency contracts with private agencies for services that are traditionally provided by public state or tribal agencies;
- (4) Describe the academic program for trainees and how this program provides the knowledge and skills for competent child welfare practice and desired outcomes that you have identified;
- (5) Describe the supports for trainees to ensure timely graduation, employment and retention in the child welfare workforce;
- (6) Describe how the program attends to diversity within the workforce in both recruiting and supporting students of color;
- (7) Identify any creative/unique features in the project;
- (8) Identify the activities of any partnering organizations;
- (9) Identify factors that may accelerate or decelerate your project;
- (10) Provide a project timeline.

With regard to the University Partnership Activities designed to address agency workforce issues with state/county or tribal agency partners:

- (1) Identify the relevant child welfare or tribal agency partners;
- (2) Describe the experience and history of the University's partnership with the child welfare agency and the readiness of the social work program and the agency to work together on workforce development activities, including the agency's experience with the social work program, the agency's philosophy and approach to student training and workforce development;
- (3) Identify either a) potential organizational workforce activities that will be undertaken by the social work program with its local agency partners, or b) a plan/process for determining the focus of activities that addresses workforce challenges;
- (4) Provide a project timeline.

With regard to University Partnerships Curriculum Development:

- (1) Describe your current curriculum and content on evidence-based practices and trauma;
- (2) Describe a plan and process for strengthening this content in your child welfare curriculum;
- (3) Provide a project timeline.

With regard to the Leadership Academy for Deans/Directors (LADD):

- (1) Describe the dean/director/chair's interest in and knowledge or support of child welfare;
- (2) Provide a joint letter of commitment and engagement from the dean/director/chair and the child welfare or tribal agency leader's commitment to support the University Partnership program and participate in the LADD including the collaborative process of identifying and addressing change initiatives to improve the workforce and/or work conditions in partnership with the child welfare agency.
- (3) Identify potential change initiatives or a process for identifying simultaneous, collaborative workforce change initiative.
- (4) OPTIONAL: Solicit the County, Regional, State or Tribal Child Welfare Agency Director's goals and interest in addressing workforce challenges in an intensive manner, potentially engaging the Leadership Academies for Middle Managers and Supervisors, Organizational Intervention or other technical assistance (include in the Appendix).

c. Organizational profile (20 points)

Provide the following information:

- (1) Identify key project staff and their qualifications;
- (2) Identify roles and responsibilities;
- (3) Identify and describe partnering organizations (as already noted, a joint letter of commitment from the child welfare or tribal agency director and the Dean/Director's is required);
- (4) Describe the School's current child welfare curricular assets and capacity, including public or tribal child welfare engagement background and history;

- (5) Demonstrate sufficient knowledge, experience, expertise and capacity to successfully administer a traineeship and partnership activities.

[In the Appendix, please include the joint letter of commitment, brief job descriptions and brief bio-sketches/resumes (2-3 pages) for proposed key project staff.]

d. **Assurances** (5 points)

Provide

- (1) A statement assuring that the social work program will fully participate in traineeship activities including: (a) recruiting up to five cohorts of trainees, one each Fall (from fall, 2014 through fall, 2018); (b) requiring student contracts and payback provisions for stipends if a student does not meet program requirements (payback will be to the social work program, not the NCWWI); (c) assuring that the dean/director/chair and agency leader will support the University Partnership program and commit to participation in the LADD (joint letter of commitment); and (c) Principal Investigator's attendance and participation in traineeship meetings, such as the annual program meeting.
- (2) A statement assuring that you will fully participate in the national cross-site evaluation, including following up with your graduates to assure and ascertain relevant employment and post-employment experiences. Agree to administer a signed written contract/agreement with trainees to work in child welfare upon graduation. If trainees accept employment in states that use private agencies (under contract with the public child welfare agency) to provide child welfare services traditionally provided by state or tribal agencies, employment in a private agency, under contract to the public agency, is acceptable.
- (3) A statement committing to provide a written report (based on a provided format/template not to exceed five pages) twice a year (typically at the beginning of the academic year and at the end of the academic year).

e. **Budget and Budget Justification** (10 points)

Budget:

- (1) Provide a budget with line-item detail and detailed calculations for each budget category/class. Budget items should include personnel (identifying key persons, salary, percentage of salary dedicated to this project, project title), fringe benefits, local travel, student stipends (at least 65% of the total budget), supplies and services, other budget items, indirect costs (identify percentage), and total budget amount.
- (2) Provide a breakout for matching contributions (matching contributions are not required).
- (3) Travel funds should include support for at least one, preferably two or more, project leaders to attend an annual University Partnership meeting (in the past, these meetings were in June, in Chicago). Face-to-face meetings with Program leaders may be arranged at regularly scheduled social work conferences, such as the Council on Social Work Education annual meetings. Budget funds may be used to support LADD travel, including two trips per year for two persons (the Dean and the Agency

Director). As noted earlier, LADD travel costs in Year One should be minimal for orientation sessions.

The total award will be for a maximum of \$147,000 for up to five years.

- *Indirect Charges:* An applicant may include up to 8% of project expenses (not including funds dedicated to stipends) for indirect costs. As noted above, an applicant is not required to provide a non-Federal share of the project costs. If a program is providing additional funding, this should be identified in a separate budget line.
- Funding restrictions for federal grants will apply to this grant. These restrictions include non-reimbursement of pre-award costs, organized fund raising, and construction costs.

Awards will be announced in early spring 2014. All traineeship awards must be made in the summer or fall of 2014, for the 2014-2015 academic year:

- The University Partnership programs will fund five cohorts of trainees during the full grant period. Although the federal funding for the NCWWI will end in September 2018, the fifth cohort of trainees will be named for fall 2018 and the social work programs are expected to continue to provide their traineeship program through the 2018-2019 academic year and to cooperate with the project evaluation for additional follow-up.
- All funds are contingent on the availability of continued funding to NCWWI from the federal government. If for any reason funding to NCWWI is reduced or cut, an adjustment to sub-grantees (University Partnership programs) may be implemented. In the event of any adjustment in funding, sub-grantees would be notified as soon as possible.

Budget Justification:

- (1) Detail with regard to the first budget year is particularly important. Please provide a projected budget for each of five year.
- (2) Budget Justification: Provide a brief (one paragraph maximum) narrative description explaining each budget item.

4. APPENDIX

- f. Job descriptions
- g. Resumes/Bio-sketches
- h. Letters of Support/Commitment

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

The proposals will be evaluated based on the clarity of the project description, the reasonableness of the project components and timelines, the soundness and details of the plan, meeting project expectations and requirements, and creativity and potential for contributing to social work education and the advancement of the child welfare workforce including retention in child welfare upon graduation. The proposals will be evaluated on a point system.

Given the need for concurrent participation in the Leadership Academy for Deans/Directors/ Chairs and Agency Directors (with its workforce change initiatives), and the University Partnership traineeships and curriculum offerings, as well as the opportunity for other programming from NCWWI, the strength of the existing relationship between the child welfare agency and the university is an important consideration.

Additional review considerations (some noted earlier in this RFP) include:

1. The social work program will have an established competency-based child welfare curriculum and either a pre-existing child welfare specialization or the capability for developing a specialization in a timely manner.
2. The social work program will have established relationships with public, private (non-profit and contracted by the public agency to provide child welfare services), and/or tribal child welfare agencies such that a high quality, competency-based field education placement can be provided to each traineeship student/scholar.
3. The proposal will identify a dedicated Principal Investigator, and other relevant faculty and staff personnel with expertise to contribute to the program.
4. The program curriculum will have a demonstrated commitment to and understanding of the importance of evidence-based practice and the knowledge and practice skills relevant to trauma.
5. The social work program will demonstrate a strong commitment to and accomplished ability to recruit, educate and support a diverse student cohort in child welfare.
6. The traineeship program will describe resources for providing support for students to promote optimal student learning and timely graduation.
7. The social work program will affirm and describe an existing, positive and strong partnership and relationship with child welfare agencies, particularly in its proximate region. This description will include a knowledge and understanding of critical workforce needs and challenges.
8. The proposal will include a joint letter from the social work program's dean/director/chair and from the child welfare agency director affirming the commitment of these leaders to engagement with and promotion and support of the University Partnership program and Leadership Academy (LADD). This statement of leaders' support and investment in the workforce development partnership is essential for the successful implementation of the traineeship program, workforce development practices, and curricular innovation. This joint letter also should specify potential change initiatives each will undertake.

9. The proposal will provide assurances that each student scholar who receives a stipend will seek and gain (or will continue) employment in a public, private nonprofit or tribal child welfare agency upon graduation, for a period of years equivalent to the period of the traineeship. This agreement, to be signed by the student scholar, will be provided by NCWWI and will be uniform across the traineeship programs (additional conditions unique to the school or setting could be added to this template).
10. The proposal will assure that the traineeship program Principal Investigator will participate in an annual meeting of traineeship programs.
11. The proposal will describe how its traineeship program will recruit and select student scholars, deliver the stipend/financial aid to selected students, evaluate the student experience, and provide a concentrated child welfare curriculum.
12. The proposal will demonstrate the program's awareness of transition issues upon graduation and affirm its commitment and describe a plan to follow its graduates for up to *three years* post-graduation to document, understand and support the scholar's experience in the child welfare system following a traineeship program.
13. The proposed program will address LADD as well as University Partnership components so that the Director/Dean/Chair and County, State or Tribal Agency Director acknowledge their intention to work together collaboratively or simultaneously on change initiatives that address workforce challenges (see #8).
14. Additional priorities and qualifications will be identified in collaboration with other NCWWI initiatives and the Children's Bureau.

As the NCWWI is a cooperative agreement between the Institute and the Children's Bureau, all funding decisions will be reviewed by the Children's Bureau for final approval. There may be special considerations given to applications proposing services of special interest to the federal government and to achieve geographic distributions of grant awards.

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS & PREPARATION

Formatting & Page Limits

The application must be typed, double-spaced, printed on only one side, with at least one inch margins on each side and the top and bottom, using standard 12-Point fonts (such as Times New Roman, Arial or Courier). All pages must be numbered.

All copies of an application must be submitted as a PDF, in a single package. An electronic submission is required. A receipt of arrival should be procured.

The application limit is 40 pages. Pages over this page limit will be removed from the application and will not be reviewed. This page limit does not include the cover sheet, job descriptions, bio-sketches and letters of support.

Due Date

The due date for applications is **Monday, February 3, 2014.**

Applications received after 5:00 PM, Eastern Time, on the due date will be classified as late and will not be considered.

Submission

Electronic submission to: universitypartnerships@ncwwi.org

This RFP will also be posted on the Institute's website at www.NCWWI.org.

Questions

Please direct any UP questions to Dr. Gary Anderson (gary.anderson@ssc.msu.edu) or Cheryl Williams-Hecksel (will1534@msu.edu) at Michigan State University School of Social Work.

Questions with regard to the Leadership Academy for Deans/Directors/Chairs and Agency Directors (LADD) should be addressed to Dr. Katharine Briar Lawson (kbriarlawson@albany.edu) at the University at Albany.

Questions regarding NCWWI may be sent to Co-Principal Investigators, Katharine Briar-Lawson (kbriarlawson@albany.edu) and Mary McCarthy (mmccarthy@albany.edu) at the University at Albany, or NCWWI Project Director, Nancy Dickinson (ndickinson@ssw.umaryland.edu) at the University of Maryland.

NATIONAL CHILD WELFARE WORKFORCE INSTITUTE

University Partnerships Proposal Cover Sheet

1. Social Work Program/Applicant Name:
2. BSW, MSW or Combined Program (please specify):
3. Applicant's Mailing Address:
4. Applicant's Telephone Number:
5. Social Work Principal Investigator (name, e-mail, telephone number):
6. Dean/Director/Chair of Social Work program (name, e-mail, telephone number):
7. County, State, or Tribal Agency Partner & Director (name, address, e-mail, telephone number):
8. Project Title:
9. Number of Traineeships to be Awarded on an Annual Basis (and amount of funding per trainee each year) and Total Number of Trainees after Five Years:
10. Amount of Funding Requested: