For a child welfare agency to achieve its mission, it must attract, develop, and retain a skilled and ready workforce. Toward this aim, a Request for Proposals for Workforce Development Projects will be issued in December 2018. This is an invitation to state, county, and tribal child welfare agencies to join with NCWWI to develop, implement, and evaluate strategies that forward the aims and goals of the jurisdiction/tribe to improve the health of their workforce and improve workforce outcomes. NCWWI provides capacity building and implementation support, as well as curriculum, tools, and resources that support leadership development, focused recruitment, selection and retention of child welfare professionals, and positive organizational culture and climate. The overall goal is to promote effective service delivery and positive client outcomes within each jurisdiction/tribe. Consistent with this goal, NCWWI will work in partnership with the jurisdictional/tribal agency(ies) and local schools of social work for four years (2019–2023) to identify, assess, plan, implement, and evaluate interventions that build and strengthen the child welfare workforce.

Background

NCWWI is a federally funded institute dedicated to increasing child welfare practice effectiveness through diverse partnerships. Using data-driven capacity building, education, and technical assistance approaches (www.ncwwi.org), NCWWI focuses on workforce systems development, organizational interventions, and change leadership. NCWWI is a consortium of universities, including the University at Albany/SUNY, Michigan State University, University of Denver, University of Maryland, and the University of Southern Maine. The institute works with jurisdictions and tribes to build organizational capacity and workforce effectiveness to enhance their ability to recruit, develop, and retain skilled staff, foster adaptive change-oriented leadership, support a positive agency climate, and engage academic partners to educate child welfare professionals.

Selection Criteria

The Request for Proposals will describe NCWWI's implementation model and identify the qualifications and requirements for seeking and gaining an award to support Workforce Excellence projects over the next four years. The criteria for consideration include:

1. Readiness to lead and meaningfully participate in a 4-year project to implement sustainable workforce development advancements.
2. The identification of workforce project(s) relevant to the jurisdiction/tribe (such as the ability to improve recruitment and retention of competent staff or the ability to address bias contributing to a negative workplace).
3. The identification of specific project goals and desired outcomes.
4. The identification of benefits, challenges, and available supports for the project(s).
5. A commitment to participate in an organizational assessment.
6. A commitment to engage in implementation teams and processes.

7. A description of the continuation of or development of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes related to the project(s).

8. A commitment to engage in an evaluation of the process and outcomes associated with the project, including data sharing.

9. The identification of a partner with an accredited social work program that provides BSW and/or MSW education who will join with the jurisdiction to advance child welfare training and identify areas for mutual support. Tribal sites may want to explore partnerships with tribal colleges as well as accredited schools of social work.

10. A commitment to and description of the capacity for integrating the NCWWI Leadership Academy for managers and supervisors into a jurisdiction-wide training program in collaboration with your partner social work program (for Tribal programs, a willingness of ICW leaders to participate in a delivery by NCWWI of the Tribal Child Welfare Leadership Academy developed by the Capacity Building Center for Tribes).

11. The identification of project leaders for the jurisdiction/tribe and written commitment/resolution of senior leadership / tribal council.

12. A commitment to seek buy-in from all levels of the organization.

13. A commitment to devote sufficient resources to the project.

The RFP will include specific details for preparing a proposal that covers the criteria detailed above, including a statement of need related to the workforce, goals and objectives, approach to the project(s), key personnel, and various assurances. After selection, the goals and approach will be refined based on an assessment in year one. NCWWI’s Workforce Development Framework will also be employed to guide the selection and/or development of interventions. Information on the COHA and Workforce Development Framework are available on the NCWWI website (https://ncwwi.org/).

UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM

The jurisdiction/tribe will also be required to select a social work program(s) to be a university partner in conjunction with this project. The social work program(s) will: (1) offer traineeships/stipends to students to improve child welfare knowledge and practice (funding for these stipends will be provided by NCWWI); (2) strengthen their child welfare curriculum with a special emphasis on trauma, ICWA, evidence-based practice, leadership development, and the model of practice being implemented in the jurisdiction (innovative and effective field education models will be a special focus of this curricular work); and (3) function as a partner to the child welfare agency in supporting its workforce development efforts and projects.

LEADERSHIP ACADEMIES

The Director of the child welfare jurisdiction / tribal agency and the Dean/Director/Chair of the social work program will be engaged in a Leadership Academy for Deans and Directors (LADD). LADD will provide coaching, training, and other supports to advance one's leadership of workforce development, organizational leadership, and change management. The jurisdiction/tribe will also work with NCWWI to adapt and deliver the NCWWI Leadership Academy for managers and supervisors, which consists of blended training (both web-based and in-person learning modules) and coaching. Information about NCWWI resources can be gained from the NCWWI website (https://ncwwi.org/).

Request for Proposal

The full Request for Proposal will be available by early December 2018. It will be posted on multiple websites, distributed to Children's Bureau Regional Offices, and sent by email to anyone requesting the RFP. The proposals will be due by late January 2019. After a review process and approval by the US Children's Bureau, programs will be notified by early March 2019. If you have any questions about NCWWI or the Workforce Development Projects before the formal Request for Proposals is issued, please contact Nancy Claiborne (nclaiborne@albany.edu) or Robin Leake (rleake@du.edu).