

# Institutional Challenge Grant

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ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES

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Updated April 2017

Application Opens:  
June 15, 2017

Application Deadline:  
September 12, 2017, 3:00 PM EST

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**To guide potential applicants, we have developed three examples to illustrate the kinds of partnerships, research agendas, fellowship and capacity-building activities, and institutional shifts we expect to see in proposals.**

**These examples are intended as guides. They do not dictate the specific topic or institutional arrangements that we are seeking.**

**We hope you find this resource useful.**

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# Example 1

A juvenile justice research institute at a land-grant university is interested in building a research-practice partnership with a regional network of youth detention facilities. Two researchers from the institute have worked with the network's leadership on two prior research projects, but the investigations were short-term and unrelated. The research institute and the detention facilities now wish to formalize their relationship to improve educational and economic outcomes for economically disadvantaged youth in care.

Two mid-career fellows will participate in the partnership. The university will support an associate professor who has expertise in adolescent and young adult development. This researcher will study the education, employment, and mental health needs of the youth served; synthesize relevant research to inform the selection of an appropriate program; modify training protocols to meet local needs; and conduct an initial evaluation of the program's effectiveness. The second fellow, funded by the grant, has expertise in program implementation and will join the partnership full-time for two years. This fellow will spend most of the time at the detention facilities and work closely with their staff to study and improve implementation. The network leaders are committed to using the study findings to select and implement other evidence-based programs and to reveal other actions that may be necessary to improve youth outcomes. To further support the work of the partnership, the university will create a training program for the fellows and other faculty to develop leadership and management skills to build high-performing partnerships. The Office of Sponsored Programs and the Development Office will dedicate time to assist the partnership with fundraising efforts and grant writing

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## Example 2

A child policy research center at a private university joins forces with a community-based, nonprofit organization that is nationally recognized for its work with youth. The organization consistently receives contracts from the local and state agencies, has a number of satellite sites and administers a statewide crisis hotline. The research center and the nonprofit organization started working together two years ago because the nonprofit was concerned that youth of color were not receiving adequate care. The two organizations want to deepen their relationship and propose a research-practice partnership to improve mental health outcomes for youth of color.

Four mid-career fellows will participate in the partnership. The grant will support three fellows: a mid-career health services researcher from a neighboring institution who will join the center for a year, an associate professor at the center who studies racial and cultural bias in clinical services, and a mid-career administrator at the nonprofit organization who oversees clinical operations. In addition, the Dean will provide two years of half-time support for an associate professor who studies adolescent behavior. The four fellows will conduct joint research to examine the conditions under which youth are most engaged in care and how provider communications contribute to sustained care. The university is demonstrating its commitment to research-practice partnerships in two ways. First, the center will host a monthly brown-bag meeting at the nonprofit organization to share existing research that can inform the organization's high-priority concerns. Second, the university will develop specific plans to assess the impact of the partnership research on policy and to count such impact as research contributions in faculty promotion reviews.

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## Example 3

A civil rights institute at a well-established research organization and a state department of human services established a research-practice partnership three years ago to promote more equal outcomes among children and youth, focusing specifically on better meeting the needs of immigrant youth in need of child welfare services. The partnership had to overcome an initially adversarial relationship, which was caused in part by the research institute's publication of findings showing inequality in access to and delivery of services for immigrants. Recently, however, the research institute's director and the deputy commissioner of the state agency vowed to join forces to pursue a long-term research agenda to provide services that are responsive to the language learning needs of children and their families.

The research activities will be supported by an institute-funded fellow who will work with the state agency to co-design and conduct the research and jointly write up the results. In addition, grant funds will support a mid-career researcher to embed within the state agency for two years. The fellow will analyze state data to examine patterns of benefit receipt and loss for children for whom English is not the primary home language, and assist agency staff in extending and refining their data system to include information about academic outcomes. Together, the agency's leadership and the institute will use what they learn to develop the tools and supports needed for immigrant youth and their families to more successfully navigate available services and requirements. To further support the partnership, the research organization is devising incentives to attract and reward strong investigators to conduct partnership research.