The Institutional Challenge Grant

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@wtgrantfdn
Today’s Webinar

PART I
• Overview of the Institutional Challenge Grant
• Introduction to the first grant recipient
• Questions

PART II
• The award and application process
• Resources
• Questions
Focus Areas

USE OF RESEARCH

• Strategies not barriers to research use
• Understand how to create the conditions that improve the production and use of research evidence in ways that benefit youth

REDUCING INEQUALITY

• Responses not causes/consequences
• Understand how programs, policies, and practices reduce inequality among young people in the United States
Too often policymakers’ and practitioners’ ideas fail to shape research agendas.

Too often the capacity is lacking to bridge these gaps.

Too often researchers lack incentives to undertake research to inform policy and practice.
Institutional Challenge Grant

**PARTNERSHIP**
- Build a sustained institutional partnership with a public agency or nonprofit organization

**RESEARCH**
- Pursue a joint research agenda to reduce inequality in youth outcomes

**INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE**
- Create institutional change to value research-practice partnerships and their work

**CAPACITY**
- Develop the partners’ capacity to collaborate, and to produce and use high-quality relevant research
Research-practice partnerships are long-term, mutually beneficial collaborations that promote the production and use of rigorous and relevant research evidence.

Long-term view
Persist beyond a single project

Relationships between institutions
Benefit both parties
Why Partnerships?

- Researchers
  - understand the local context
  - learn about policymakers’ and practitioners’ needs and questions
  - provide insights that facilitate ground breaking research

- Policymakers and practitioners
  - gain access to existing research
  - contribute to research that is relevant to their context
  - receive assistance with their efforts to use research
• Policies and practices within institutions inadvertently create barriers to the success of partnerships
• Examine ways programs, policies, and practices deter participation in partnerships
• Propose a plan to address barriers to success
Reducing Inequality

- Conduct research on *programs, policies, & practices that reduce inequality in youth outcomes*
  - Inequality by economic, racial/ethnic, and immigrant origins is pervasive
  - Evidence often exists on the nature and sources of inequality
  - Ways to *reduce* inequality are less well understood
First Grantee

Anna Steinkraus, Cornell Cooperative Extension-Tompkins County, co-principal investigator
Rachel Dunifon, Cornell University, principal investigator
Laura Tach, Cornell University, fellow
Protecting Vulnerable Families and Children in the Crosshairs of the Opioid Epidemic: A Research-Practice Partnership

- Project team:
  - Cornell Cooperative Extension of Tompkins County (CCE-Tompkins): Anna Steinkraus
  - Cornell University College of Human Ecology: Rachel Dunifon, Laura Tach, Elizabeth Day
What issue do we address?

• Our research-practice partnership focuses on the opioid epidemic and its influence on disadvantaged rural youth.

• More than 90 Americans die every day from opioid overdoses (Rudd, Seth, David, & Scholl, 2016).

• In New York, the rate of opioid-overdose deaths increased 136% between 2014 and 2015, particularly in low-income, rural communities (New York State Department of Health, 2017; Rudd et al., 2016).

• The percent of child maltreatment victims with a risk factor of parental drug abuse increased from 19.8% in 2012 to 25.5% in 2015 (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2016).

• However, there is limited research that addresses the links between opioid abuse and child maltreatment (Lopez, 2017).
Trends in opioid-related deaths and hospitalizations, child maltreatment

Tompkins County, New York

- Drug Misdemeanor Arrests (# of misdemeanors/10)
- Emergency Department Visits Involving Opioids (rate)
- Child Maltreatment Indicated Cases (rate per 1,000 children)
Negotiating A Research Agenda

• CCE-Tompkins is heavily engaged in working with vulnerable families in the community and saw emerging concerns and a possible connection between opioid use and child maltreatment

• CCE-Tompkins brought this issue to the Cornell faculty, and the two partners began looking into the topic, identifying research questions and possible interventions
An Evolving Partnership

• Rachel and Anna have known each other for many years but had not worked together on a research project

• Previous work together included:
  • Evaluating CCE-Tompkins parenting program
  • Helping recruit families for research study

• Bottom line—these relationships take time to build trust and communication

• This grant gave us the opportunity to take a budding, limited relationship and make it formal
Developing the Proposal—the process

• Rachel and her Cornell colleagues set sights on the Institutional Challenge Grant

• The topic came from Anna and her team at CCE-Tompkins

• We undertook an iterative process of developing a research-practice agenda
  • What is the latest research in this area?
  • What programs currently exist?
  • Where are the gaps?

• Many meetings and phone calls, sharing and commenting on documents
Developing the Proposal—lessons learned

• This is not a typical research proposal
  • More complex, takes more time

• The proposal developed over many months—it is not possible to build this type of partnership at the last minute

• We had additional supports that were very helpful
  • Funds from Cornell to support some of the work
  • Postdoc
Selecting the Cornell Research Fellows

• Mid-career top scholars at Cornell—one per year
• Selected by PIs
  • First one already chosen and was highly involved in the grant writing
• Will be mentored by the PIs on how to carry out field research in collaboration with community partners
  • Via regular meetings and skill-specific training
  • Understanding (and adjusting if needed) the steps necessary to build research partnerships that are respectful, long-lasting and sustaining
Capacity Building: the Cornell Research Fellows

• Skills that will be developed include:
  • Consensus conference model
  • Community Cafes
  • Turning research into products that are relevant beyond academia
  • Carrying out program evaluation in real-world settings

• The skill enhancement of the faculty supported by this grant will spill over to other faculty who are not directly participating in this project
Capacity Building: the CCE-Tompkins Fellow

• Most CCE staff are working on 1-year soft money contracts which provide little or no opportunity to increase research capacity or to delve deep into a pressing issue over a longer period

• Chosen by PIs and team
  • Search commencing soon

• This grant will give the CCE-Tompkins fellow the time, skills and money to develop research skills including:
  • Formal literature review
    • Review of the literature on family-focused substance misuse programs
  • Qualitative study design, implementation, and analysis
    • Focus groups with community members regarding their experiences, supports, and needs regarding substance misuse and its implications for child well-being

• New skills can be shared across the Cooperative Extension Network
Institutional Change at Cornell

• Building a cohort of faculty who develop the skills to engage in research-practice partnerships

• Taking this model across campus:
  • Connecting with leaders of other Cornell entities
  • Forum on research-practice partnerships in the tenure and promotion process
  • Forum using this project as a case study

• Seeking financial support to sustain this model beyond the period of the grant
Questions?
INSTITUTIONAL CHALLENGE GRANT

The Award & Application
Institutional Challenge Grant

- $650K for 3 years
  - with a possible 2-year renewal
  - Up to a 9-month planning period
  - The partnership’s research to reduce inequality
  - Mid-career fellows
  - Capacity-building activities
  - Indirect cost allowance of up to 15% of total direct costs
- In-kind support for one fellow for one year
Who Applied in 2017?

• *Partnerships at different stages of maturity*

• *A variety of youth service areas*
  - Education 37%
  - Community/Out of School 27%
  - Justice 17%
  - Child Welfare/Social Service 10%
  - Mental Health/Health 10%
What’s New for 2018?

- **Eligibility**
  - University-based research institutes, schools, or centers

- **Duration and support for planning period**
  - Up to $50,000 for 6-9 months of joint planning

- **Structured abstract (4 pages)**

- Request for more detail about the research plan

- Bolder institutional changes
Partnership

• Research-Practice Partnerships

✓ The plan for partnering demonstrates mastery of the literature on partnering to promote research use

✓ There is evidence of public agency or nonprofit’s commitment to the partnership and to use the research
Research

• Research Agenda to Reduce Inequality in Youth Outcomes
  ✓ The research questions and findings will significantly advance the public agency or nonprofit organization’s efforts to reduce inequality in youth outcomes
  ✓ The project employs high-quality methods that are consistent with the project’s goals
  ✓ Demonstrate that the research plan is feasible
Institutional Change

• Changing Institutional Policies and Practices
  ✓ A thoughtful discussion of potential obstacles that may limit participation in research-practice partnerships
  ✓ A plan for overcoming these obstacles
  ✓ Assurances that the research institution will alter policies or enact new practices to attract and reward experienced investigators to conduct partnership research
Capacity

- Developing the Capacity of Fellows and Partners
  - The criteria ensure fellows will have the requisite skills to carry out the proposed work
  - A feasible plan for increasing the capacity of the public agency or private nonprofit organization to use research in decision making to improve outcomes for youth
  - All fellows must be mid-career
At the end of five-years,

- Established set of strategies that facilitate sustained research collaborations with public agencies or nonprofits
- The public agency or nonprofit has increased its capacity to use research evidence
- Researchers have improved their partnership skills
- The research generated has been used in decision making and is likely to lead to improved outcomes for youth
RESOURCES

wtgrantfoundation.org/grants/institutional-challenge-grant
SELECTION COMMITTEE

Elaine Allensworth
Lewis-Sebring Director of the
Consortium on School Research
University of Chicago

Marc Atkins
Professor of Psychiatry and Psychology and Director of the Institute for Juvenile Research
University of Illinois at Chicago

Allison Blake
Former Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Children and Families

Adam Gamoran
President
William T. Grant Foundation

Michael Gottfredson
Professor, Criminology, Law & Society
University of California Irvine

Ritu Khanna
Chief of Research, Planning, and Assessment
San Francisco Unified School District

Sumio Okazaki
Professor of Counseling Psychology
New York University

Pedro Reyes
Ashbel Smith Professor of Education Policy
University of Texas at Austin

Estelle Richman
Former Chief Operating Officer
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Robert Sellers
Vice Provost for Equity and Inclusion, Chief Diversity Officer, and Charles D. Moody Collegiate Professor of Psychology and Education
University of Michigan

Standing, L to R: Allison Blake, Mark Atkins, Michael Gottfredson, Estelle Richman, Sumio Okazaki.
Seated, L to R: Elaine Allensworth, Maria Cancion, Adam, Pedro Reyes, Ritu Khanna
Not pictured: Robert Sellers
Examples to illustrate different kinds of partnerships, research agendas, fellows, capacity-building activities, and institutional shifts.

wtgrantfoundation.org/grants/institutional-challenge-grant

Illustrative Examples
• Structuring a partnership
• Developing a joint research agenda
• Developing data sharing agreements
• Communicating research and engaging stakeholders
• Using research
• Staffing
• Funding
• Evaluating partnerships for improvement and impact
On Our Website

- Institutional Challenge Grant Application Guide
- Information about the selection committee
- Illustrative examples
- Research-practice partnership website
- FAQs
- Webinar recording and slides
Important Notes

- Applications are due September 7, 2018
- Full proposals only; no letter of inquiry
- We encourage proposals from teams with African-American, Latino, Native American, and Asian American members in leadership roles
Questions?
THANK YOU!