

April 28, 2022

Ms. Denise Swartz and Dr. Nalo Johnson
Mid-Iowa Health Foundation
3900 Ingersoll Ave.
Des Moines, IA 50312

Dear Ms. Swartz and Dr. Johnson:

Below is the detailed LOI you requested regarding our Community Leaders Project. To highlight the specific information you had requested, we are including the list of items you asked us to address and linked each one to the related section of the LOI. Those items are:

1. [The selection process](#);
2. [The evaluation process](#);
3. [The fiscal agent](#);
4. [The financial formula \(ALICE + taxes\) used to calculate the practicum payment support amount](#); and,
5. [The role and responsibilities of the NASW IA practicum student](#).

We hope this document thoroughly answers your questions and provides clarity on our project's methods and goals. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Denise Rathman (exec.naswia@socialworkers.org) and Nicole Baumgartner (NBaumgartner.naswia@socialworkers.org) with any additional questions or feedback.

Thank you again for your interest and support. We look forward to continuing this conversation and potentially partnering with Mid-Iowa Health Foundation on this project.

Sincerely,

Joseph Wernau

The Community Leaders Project

Our Organization

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is a membership organization that works to enhance the professional growth and development of our members, to create and maintain professional standards for social workers, and to advance sound social policies.

The goals of the Iowa Chapter (NASW IA) are to:

- enhance the visibility and impact through membership;
- build cohesion with members;
- establish future leaders;
- demonstrate commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in everything we do; and,
- enhance access to comprehensive person-centered therapy and services.

Fiscal Agent

We are partnering with the NASW Foundation, NASW's 501(c)(3) organization, which administers charitable gifts and grants for specific social work objectives, and supports the educational and charitable activities of NASW's 55 chapters and their affiliates. When a grant is awarded, the NASW Foundation assumes fiscal responsibility for the charitable contribution on behalf of NASW IA. The proposed initiative will be specifically for the Iowa Chapter located in Des Moines.

Founded in 2001, the Foundation's goals are to: identify, develop and respond to social work policy and practice issues; assist with rapid response to social crises; support practice-based research, so that practice and research are directly linked; raise the visibility of social work and enhance public esteem for the profession; support the development of cutting edge continuing education that addresses critical issues; and promote the appropriate application of new technology to the practice of social work.

Why Social Work?

When people hear “social worker” they tend to think of child welfare or therapy, however, the field of social work is far broader. While the majority of social workers do work in direct services, there are also many social workers engaged in policy, advocacy, program development, research, and other systemic efforts to address the issues and inequalities facing our society. This branch of the social work profession is referred to as “macro social work” and these professionals often take on leadership roles at nonprofit, government, and social welfare agencies working for the public good. This is reflected in the NASW Code of Ethics, which states:

Social workers pursue social change, particularly with, and on behalf of, vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people. Social workers' social change efforts are focused primarily on issues of poverty, unemployment, discrimination, and other forms of social injustice. These activities seek to promote sensitivity to and knowledge about oppression and cultural and ethnic diversity. Social workers strive to ensure access to needed information, services, and resources; equality of opportunity; and meaningful participation in decision making for all people.

This is reflected in the social work programs available in the Des Moines community, as both the University of Iowa School of Social Work (UISSW) and Grand View University's (GVU) Master's of

Social Work (MSW) programs offer an administration/leadership track. UISSW elaborates on the roles their graduates have taken in the field, stating:

“Far beyond the classic notion of a social worker, our graduates are also elected officials, journalists, department heads, and CEOs. They lead nonprofit organizations, schools, and task forces. They organize within their communities to address inequities, collaborating across disciplines and organizations to build coalitions and create systemic solutions that make life better for everyone...”

MSW Practicums

In order to receive an MSW degree, students must complete an advanced practicum in their final year of study. This advanced practicum entails up to a 750-hour internship taking place over two semesters. Students are overseen at their practicum by a “practicum supervisor”, which is a master’s level social worker tasked with weekly supervision of the student.

The social work profession places great value on student practicum experiences. This experience offers students the opportunity to take the knowledge and skills they have learned and apply it to real world situations while working alongside skilled professionals in the field. The Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) requires students to be assessed by their practicum supervisor on an extensive list of “core competencies” and related “practice behaviors.”

Unfortunately, practicums for social work students are almost always unpaid. Students must spend approximately eight months, working 20-25 hours per week, without compensation. This can create a significant, or even insurmountable, barrier for students, especially those with additional barriers to educational attainment and success.

We believe that the barrier created by unpaid MSW practicums can prevent individuals from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds from pursuing or obtaining their degree and, ultimately, from being able to address the needs of their community through a career in macro social work. Their voices should play a vital role in developing and coordinating solutions to the critical issues plaguing our society today.

Our Plan

The goal of this project is to amplify the voices of underrepresented and marginalized individuals in our community. For far too long, individuals from these groups have been left out of key policy making decisions that affect them and their loved ones. By eliminating barriers between these individuals and a career in macro social work, we hope to help develop the next generation of public service leadership and create a more just, equitable and inclusive community.

To address this issue, NASW IA plans to initiate a three-year pilot program that would pay MSW students a living hourly wage while completing their graduate level practicum at various partner organizations in the public service sector of Des Moines. The program would be specifically geared toward students who are passionate about policy, advocacy, program development, research, and other systemic efforts to address critical community needs. The program aims to create a total of 25 paid student practicums throughout the three-year project, with six, eight and eleven practicums in years one, two and three respectively.

We believe the Des Moines community is the best location for the pilot program for several reasons, including the wealth of social service organizations based in the metro, access to the state legislature and

two existing leadership focused MSW programs. We hope that demonstrated success will help secure additional funding and expand the program to other communities in Iowa.

Selection Process

The primary source of student participants will be the leadership track of GVI and UISSW's MSW program. In selecting participants for this program, priority will be given to:

1. students who are passionate and dedicated to affecting systemic change through a career in macro social work;
2. students from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds; and,
3. students with the greatest financial need.

GVI and UISSW have agreed to assist in identifying students based on financial need, as the schools have access to student FAFSA data. Students who meet the first two priorities will be asked to complete a short application form and essay.

NASW IA will form a diverse committee of social work professionals to assess student applications. A scoring rubric will be used to ensure uniformity and fairness in the evaluation process.

Evaluation Process

To assess the success and impact of the program, surveys will be administered throughout the student practicums. Students participating in the program and their field supervisors will each be required to complete three surveys, administered at the beginning, middle, and end of the practicum. The university staff overseeing field practicums will also be asked to complete a single survey for each student.

These surveys will assess factors such as financial stress, need for an external paid job during the practicum, perceived success at the practicum, ability to focus/learn, quality of student's work, etc. Additionally, both GVI and UISSW programs have agreed to assist in administering these surveys to students and field supervisors who are not involved in the program. This will provide control data for traditional MSW practicum experiences with which to compare program participant responses.

We hypothesize the data will show students with paid practicums have decreased financial stress levels, hours worked in external employment, and other distractions. We anticipate the data could demonstrate improved focus, perceived success in placement, mastery of skills, knowledge, career readiness, and positive practicum experiences. Ultimately, these students should be better prepared to take on leadership roles in our community and more successful in their efforts to address systemic issues.

We hypothesize data collected from practicum supervisors to demonstrate benefits from the organization's perspective. Organizations who have previously hosted unpaid MSW student practicums may note improved focus, initiative, mastery of skills, and effort in paid students. We also anticipate organizations will see benefits from the contributions and perspectives of students from underrepresented and marginalized backgrounds. Ultimately, we hope that organizations who participate in this program will be more likely to host and pay future MSW student practicums, as well as to consider MSWs as excellent candidates for paid leadership positions. We also hope that this program demonstrates the value of including the voice and perspectives of underrepresented and marginalized groups in the organizations' decision-making process.

Program Budget

Below is a budget summary broken down by program year:

			Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Total Project	
Direct Expenses										
Project Manager - Denise Rathman	Description	Hourly Rate	Hours	Cost	Hours	Cost	Hours	Cost	Hours	Cost
Salary	5 hours per week	\$35.90	260	\$ 9,333.33	260	\$ 9,333.33	260	\$ 9,333.33	780	\$ 28,000.00
MSW Students	Description	Total Stipend	Quantity	Cost	Quantity	Cost	Quantity	Cost	Quantity	Cost
Practicum/internship at partner agency	675 hours @ \$15.60	\$10,530.00	5	\$ 52,650.00	7	\$ 73,710.00	10	\$ 105,300.00	22	\$ 231,660.00
NASW IA project related intern	675 hours @ \$15.60	\$10,530.00	1	\$ 10,530.00	1	\$ 10,530.00	1	\$ 10,530.00	3	\$ 31,590.00
Total Direct Expenses:			\$ 72,513.33		\$ 93,573.33		\$ 125,163.33		\$ 291,250.00	
Indirect Expenses										
Expense	Description		Cost		Cost		Cost		Cost	
Admin Fee @ 5%	SurveyMonkey, rent, telephone, ISP, Dropbox, copies, computers, etc.		\$ 3,625.67		\$ 4,678.67		\$ 6,258.17		\$ 14,562.50	
Fiscal Agent Fee @10%	NASW Foundation		\$ 7,613.90		\$ 9,825.20		\$ 13,142.15		\$ 30,581.25	
Total Indirect Expenses			\$ 11,239.57		\$ 14,503.87		\$ 19,400.32		\$ 45,143.75	

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total Project
Direct Project Costs	\$ 72,513.33	\$ 93,573.33	\$ 125,163.33	\$ 291,250.00
Indirect Project Costs	\$ 11,239.57	\$ 14,503.87	\$ 19,400.32	\$ 45,143.75
Total Cost	\$ 83,752.90	\$ 108,077.20	\$ 144,563.65	\$ 336,393.75

Living Wage

This program aims to pay practicum students a “living wage.” According to data collected in the 2018 ALICE report, a single individual living in Polk County would need to make \$13.26/hour at a full-time job to afford basic necessities. Factoring an additional 15% for self-employment taxes ($\text{wage} = 13.26 / 0.85$) brings the rate up to \$15.60/hour. It is important to note that the ALICE data for minimum living wage reflects a full-time position, whereas these internships will only average 20-25 hours per week.

NASW IA Student Practicum

To reduce the costs to administer the project and to ensure as much funding as possible directly benefits MSW students, one paid practicum at NASW IA will be offered to MSW students each year. This student will serve as the project manager and complete data collection and analysis, continue cultivation of partnerships with local organizations and regional funders, further develop the plan for program sustainability, and other project related tasks.

Our Partners

In addition to partnering with the two Des Moines based MSW programs, we continue to cultivate an extensive list of partner organizations across a broad range of policy issues. Community buy in has been strong, with many local organizations expressing interest and excitement in partnering with NASW IA on this program. Some work still needs to be done to ensure each partner organization fits the overall goals of the program and can offer students a systemic or “macro” field experience. The following is the list of potential partner agencies that have expressed interest in hosting the program’s MSW student practicums so far:

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Policy Area</u>
EMBARC	Immigration and refugees
Prevent Child Abuse Iowa	child abuse/neglect prevention
ACES 360	childhood trauma
Latinos/Latinas Al Exito	racial equity and education
The Director's Council	racial equity
NASW	social work profession
AMOS	community organizing
Disability Rights Iowa	disabled individuals and mental health
Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault	sexual harassment, abuse and assault
Project Iowa	workforce development
United Way of Central Iowa	education, housing, food security and healthcare
Iowa Center for Children's Justice	legal justice for children and families
Ellipsis	child/family mental health
Iowa Balance of State Continuum of Care	housing
Unity Point/Blank Children's Hospital	healthcare
NAMI	mental health
Iowa College Aid	education
Iowa Department of Human Rights	rights of underrepresented groups, access to services, improving criminal and juvenile justice systems
Community Youth Concepts	youth education and development

Connections to MIHF

Mid-Iowa Health Foundation (MIHF) has repeatedly demonstrated its commitment to addressing the systemic roots of health disparities in the Des Moines area. This is abundantly apparent in the foundation's funding history.

One of the most significant contributions MIHF has made toward positive systemic change in our community is the HealthConnect Fellowship Program. By selecting passionate leaders in our community and providing the resources and connections they need to begin addressing the systemic roots of health disparities, the program has created a ripple effect of positive change that will continue to build for many years to come. Systems cannot be changed overnight, however, this network of dedicated leaders can influence policy and practice changes, incrementally shifting systems and reducing the health disparities in our community.

Our Community Leaders Project aims to create similar ripple effects in the systems that perpetuate health disparities for the people of Des Moines. We are very excited to have several HealthConnect Fellows interested in participating in this project. We believe working alongside individuals like Lisa Cushatt, Dawn Martinez Oropeza and Greg Bellville is an incredible opportunity for MSW students who are passionate about pursuing systemic change through a career in macro social work. Through this program, we can help shape the next generation of public service leadership and continue moving toward a just and equitable future for all.