

# BOSTON COLLEGE

## SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

### **Seeking Pre or Post-doctoral Diversity Supplement Candidates**

**Sponsor:** U.S. National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)

**Project:** Youth Forward U19

**Principal Investigator:** Theresa S. Betancourt, Sc.D., M.A.

The Research Program on Children and Adversity is seeking a Diversity Fellow applicant whose interests and career goals for training align with the activities of our recently-funded NIMH U19 in Sierra Leone to establish an implementation science hub in West Africa with a dual mission: (a) to accelerate scaling up innovative and sustainable delivery of evidence-based mental health interventions for youth exposed to violence and other forms of adversity across a range of delivery settings; and (b) to serve as a global hub for capacity building in mental health services research on children, youth and families facing adversity and to conduct implementation science on the delivery of evidence-based mental health services via alternate delivery systems such as youth employment programs in West Africa.

Interested potential applicants with a background in quantitative research skills (field based survey data collection, early childhood assessment, psychometric and multivariate analyses of child and family mental health outcomes) as well as qualitative research skills are encouraged to be in touch with the research team whose contact information is below. Candidates should also have a background and keen interest in implementation science and developing mechanisms for fidelity monitoring and quality improvement in mental health services as delivered by lay workers. The RPCA and the potential fellow will then work together to co-construct a proposal for funding to NIMH comprising a one to two-year training and mentored research plan aligned with their career goals and project activities.. Willingness to travel for field work as well as prior field based research in Africa or other low-resource settings is preferred.

**Soliciting:** Candidates who might be interested in applying as a Diversity Fellow (must be US citizen or Green-card holder) to join. Particularly interested in people with a background in global mental health, clinical psychology, public health, social work, and/or implementation science in relation to interagency collaboration, and prior experience with large scale capacity building, in particular, in working with national and international institutions and government leadership. Must have solid quantitative skills; experience with qualitative data collection and analyses preferred. The program includes a mixed-methods approach, uses digital data collection platforms, and emphasizes translational research. Candidates should have a background and keen interest in implementation science and developing mechanisms for fidelity monitoring and quality improvement in mental health services as delivered by lay workers. The ideal candidate must be a self-starter and able to work independently.

**Location:** The position would be based 100% of the time in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

**Eligibility:** Applicants must be US citizens or permanent residents.

NIH encourages institutions to diversify their student and faculty populations to enhance the participation of individuals from groups identified as underrepresented in the biomedical, clinical, behavioral and social sciences, such as:

- A. Individuals from racial and ethnic groups that have been shown by the National Science Foundation to be underrepresented in health-related sciences;
- B. Individuals with disabilities, who are defined as those with a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities;
- C. Individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, defined as:

1. Individuals who come from a family with an annual income below established low-income thresholds. These thresholds are based on family size, published by the U.S. Bureau of the Census; adjusted annually for changes in the Consumer Price Index; and adjusted by the Secretary for use in all health professions programs.
2. Individuals who come from an educational environment such as that found in certain rural or inner-city environments that has demonstrably and directly inhibited the individual from obtaining the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to develop and participate in a research career. The disadvantaged background category (C1 and C2) refers to the financial and educational status of individuals while residing in the United States, and is only applicable to programs focused on high school and undergraduate candidates.

#### **Preferred qualifications:**

- Doctoral degree (preferred), preferably in Public Health, Implementation Science, Social Work, Developmental Psychology, Mental Health, or other related field required. Strong pre-doctoral candidates at the master's level with strong quantitative analysis skills will also be considered
- The Pre/Postdoctoral Fellow will need to be a self-driven, creative thinker with strong qualitative and statistical skills to help develop methods which investigate intervention effectiveness in terms of child development and parenting outcomes. Coursework/training in psychometrics and implementation science is a plus.
- Strong ability in use of advanced statistical and computational programming
- Training in implementation science to include hybrid design, cluster randomized control trials, longitudinal studies, and quality improvement approaches to fidelity and supervision that relate to long-term sustainability and scalability
- Some background related to conducting research in culturally diverse contexts, preferably in Low and Middle Income Countries (LMICs)
- Publication record that demonstrates candidate's capacities is also desirable
- Proficiency in utilizing computer applications including Microsoft Office, STATA, R, MAXQDA, and other applicable quantitative and qualitative data analysis platforms
- Expert knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies including implementation science in LMICs, fidelity monitoring and mixed methodology
- Understanding of the application of technology both for data collection as well as routine symptom monitoring, fidelity monitoring and quality improvement efforts in global mental health and child development

#### **Application Process:**

Qualified applicants will be asked to submit an application to NIH with mentorship and guidance from the Principal Investigator. The application process is competitive and funding is not guaranteed. Diversity supplements generally run 12 to 24 months at the discretion of the sponsor. The awards do not include funding for conducting original research outside the scope of the U19 project. The review process for the application can take up to six months. Doctoral candidates with an expected graduation date within the next six months are welcome to apply with the expectation that an awarded supplement would begin immediately after graduation.

To express interest, please submit your CV and cover letter to the email address linked to [rpcalab\\_ssw@bc.edu](mailto:rpcalab_ssw@bc.edu)

**Details on putting together an application for a diversity supplement to the RPCA U19 grant (Diversity Supplement funding is determined following NIMH internal review):**

**What kinds of plans are required with the application?**

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**The application requires three specific plans:**

## **Research Plan**

The Research Plan should present evidence that the proposed experience is appropriate for the stage of the individual's career, and that it will significantly enhance the individual's research potential, while furthering the individual's ability to pursue a research career.

Pre or post-doctoral and investigator level candidates are expected to have defined research projects.

Note: projects or specific aims deleted during the initial peer review of the parent grant may not be proposed as the research basis for research supplement support.

## **Career Development Plan**

Prepare a detailed Career Development Plan that will include objectives, benchmarks, and associated timelines.

Describe how the research experience will foster the research capabilities of the candidate and explain how the research experience is related to the research goals and objectives of the parent grant.

The Career Development Plan should also include plans for transition to the next stage of the candidate's career level. For pre or post-doctoral, and investigator level candidates, a projected timeline delineating specific research milestones and other activities that will be made in an attempt to secure independent research funding (i.e., anticipated publications, grantsmanship workshops, timeframe for grant submissions and type of independent research support the candidate seeks).

## **Mentorship Plan**

The Mentorship Plan should include:

- Guidance on preparation of oral scientific presentations
- Instructions on how to critically evaluate the literature and experimental design
- Training in scientific writing (including grant proposal preparation), such as manuscripts, abstracts;
- Instruction in responsible conduct of research and how to design experiments
- Guidance in the ethical conduct of research (including training in animal and human subjects' protection, if applicable)

**Interested Candidates are welcome contact our team with questions:**

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