



## Stoneleigh Fellowship: Request for Letters of Interest

Release Date: August 10, 2011

Deadline to Submit a Letter of Interest: September 7, 2011, 5:00 pm (EST)

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### Introduction

At Stoneleigh Foundation, we believe that all children and youth deserve a chance to become healthy, productive adults. Yet in even the best circumstances, young people face many challenges growing up. We focus our work to help meet the challenges faced by children and youth growing up *in difficult* circumstances: those in the juvenile justice and child welfare systems and those at risk of involvement in those systems. There are many reasons why children become involved, and our goal is to ensure that if they do, these systems effectively meet their needs and advance their well-being.

Our Stoneleigh Fellowship program is designed to identify and support the work of accomplished practitioners, researchers, policymakers and advocates who are interested in developing and testing new approaches that have the potential to improve outcomes for young people with the greatest needs. Please visit our new web site to learn more about the program and about the work of our current and former fellows [www.stoneleighfoundation.org](http://www.stoneleighfoundation.org).

### Opportunity

We welcome your ideas for: 1) cross-system efforts to improve services; 2) research that leads to improved practice or policy and which fills information gaps; and 3) policy changes needed to bridge gaps between systems or eliminate obstacles to efficient, effective and coordinated service delivery. In this particular opportunity, we seek to impact and link the major public systems serving disadvantaged youth (i.e. child welfare and juvenile justice, and allied systems such as behavioral health and education) with communities.

We invite you to share ideas on three particular areas in need of attention.

#### 1. *Violence and Trauma*

Children and youth are exposed to violence in their homes, schools and communities at alarming rates. Although the CDC's *Adverse Childhood Experiences Study* of the mid-1990s began to quantify what many practitioners and service providers already knew about violence, a recent U.S. Department of Justice survey added new urgency to the disturbing scope of this exposure.<sup>1</sup> The survey revealed that 60 percent of American children were *exposed* to violence,

crime or abuse. Almost 40 percent were *direct victims* of two or more violent acts, and one in 10 was a victim of violence five or more times.

Violence is pervasive and the consequences of the associated trauma are significant. Children exposed to violence—as witnesses or victims—are more likely to suffer from substance abuse and behavioral health problems such as depression, anxiety and post-traumatic stress disorder; they are more likely to struggle in school; and they are at greater risk of committing acts of violence. Recent advances in brain imaging technology have demonstrated that children’s exposure to violence and trauma leaves lasting marks on the developing brains of these young people, reducing their long-term health and well-being. Additionally, increasing violence in schools is preventing children from learning.

We need solutions. We invite you to share your ideas for cross-system efforts to prevent exposure to and victimization of violence, improve intervention efforts for young people who are exposed or victimized, and break the cycles of violence prevalent in our communities, schools and families.

## 2. *Behavioral Health*

Depression, conduct disorders, substance abuse and the need for special education are at the root of many of the problems faced by troubled children and youth. Studies estimate that more than two-thirds of young people in juvenile detention centers meet the criteria for having a mental disorder.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, nearly half of all foster children have a clinical level of mental and behavioral health problems.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, 40-50 percent of homeless youth report problems with drugs. Experts agree that the lack of early mental health assessment and treatment is a major impediment to serving these youth. In fact, according to a Surgeon General’s report, the majority of children with serious behavioral and mental health needs do not receive services.<sup>4</sup>

The consequences of untreated behavioral health problems are significant. Children and youth who go untreated have impaired cognitive function, have difficulty making and keeping healthy relationships with adults and peers, and are at risk for homelessness, delinquency and school failure. Violence, as illustrated above, contributes to these behavioral health needs but there are other causes as well, such as family and genetic risk factors, biological factors, and cognitive factors. Yet children and youth go untreated for many reasons including lack of access to providers, the stigma associated with mental and behavioral health problems, policy obstacles, cost, reluctance to seek treatment and cultural differences.

We need solutions. We invite you to share your ideas for cross-system efforts to better meet the behavioral health needs of children and youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems—and those at risk of involvement.

### 3. *Family and Community*

Any effort to improve the well-being of children must consider the role of families and communities in the lives of children. In many communities, the social fabric has been eroded by the impact of illicit drugs, years of disinvestment, and general economic decline. Generations of families have lost the skills to parent, the presence of long-standing institutions such as religious institutions and civic organizations are weak, and social ties are tenuous. These communities have also been hardest hit by the great recession, experiencing record job loss, unprecedented declines in wealth and a reversal of the gains achieved by some in recent decades.<sup>5</sup> Government resources are simply inadequate to meet the needs of the unemployed, the uninsured, and the uneducated.

However, community resources and assets still exist in every neighborhood. Federal initiatives such as the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships and the Fatherhood and Mentoring Initiative are evidence of a growing commitment to engage community institutions and actors in tackling the toughest problems. As leaders in government understand the need to effectively coordinate services and collaborate to better support children, they must look for more ways to strengthen families and partner with communities.

Yet few models exist for how to do this effectively and sustainably, particularly with child serving systems at the state, county and local levels. A tight budget environment and weakened social safety nets require more creative partnerships that can go beyond service delivery to incorporate community input in improving child welfare and juvenile justice policy and practice.

We need solutions. We invite you to share your ideas for cross-system efforts to effectively involve family and community in efforts to improve the well-being of children and youth in the child welfare and juvenile justice systems—and to prevent involvement in these systems.



We hope our discussion of these issues serves to stimulate you to think about these or similar issues and to submit proposals that address them. These examples are not meant to be exhaustive but rather to give you a better understanding of the areas that fit our funding interests.

## Application and Selection Process

There are two steps to the application process: Letter of Interest (LOI) and Full Proposal. We anticipate that this highly selective process will result in 2-3 fellowships to begin between January 1, 2012 and June 30, 2012.

**Before beginning your letter of interest, please review our website [www.stoneleighfoundation.org/fellows/programs/stoneleigh-fellowship/details](http://www.stoneleighfoundation.org/fellows/programs/stoneleigh-fellowship/details) for detailed fellowship guidelines, priorities, funding restrictions, selection criteria and more.**

- Applicants should submit a LOI no later than **September 7, 5:00 pm (EST)**
- Staff will evaluate the LOI and invite a group of finalists to an interview **September 23.**
- Finalists selected to submit a full proposal will be notified by **September 30.**
- Full proposals are due **October 28, no later than 5:00 pm (EST)**
- Internal review, candidate interviews, interviews with partner organizations and critical system partners, and reference checks will be conducted prior to fellowship awards.

### Letter of Interest Guidelines: Letters are due September 7, 2011, 5:00 pm (EST)

1. Please *limit your letter to two pages* and include the following information:
  - Statement of problem or need: clearly describe the problem and why it is significant.
  - Your proposed solution: clearly describe your solution, how long it will take to implement, and how it will contribute to knowledge or directly lead to policy and/or practice changes that improve the life outcomes of vulnerable children.
  - Describe why you are the best person to do this project.
  - Provide a short description of where your work will be conducted, who your partner organization will be and why.
  - Provide an estimated annual budget for your fellowship proposal.
  - Tell us how you heard about the Stoneleigh Fellowship.
2. Include a resume or CV.
3. Send all materials together via hard copy or electronic copy to:  
Cathy M. Weiss, Executive Director  
Stoneleigh Foundation  
123 S. Broad Street, Suite 1130  
Philadelphia, PA 19109

The electronic copy should be sent by email to: [applications@stoneleighfoundation.org](mailto:applications@stoneleighfoundation.org)  
Subject line: LOI from [applicant]

4. If you have any questions, please contact Julia Boerth, Program Officer, at 215-735-7080 or [jboerth@stoneleighfoundation.org](mailto:jboerth@stoneleighfoundation.org).
5. Sign up to get updates from us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Finkelhor, David, Heather Turner, Richard Ormrod, Sherry Hamby, and Kristen Kracke. *Children's Exposure to Violence: A Comprehensive National Survey*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2008. Available at <http://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/ojdp/227744.pdf>. Other important sources include <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/childmaltreatment/consequences.html> and the Adverse Childhood Experiences Study: Major Findings <http://www.cdc.gov/ace/index.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Holman, Barry and Jason Ziedenberg. *The Dangers of Detention: The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities*. Washington DC: Justice Policy Institute. Available at [http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/06-11\\_REP\\_DangersOfDetention\\_JJ.pdf](http://www.justicepolicy.org/images/upload/06-11_REP_DangersOfDetention_JJ.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Vandivere, Sharon, Rosemary Chalk, and Kristin Anderson Moore. *Research Brief: Children in Foster Homes: How Are They Faring?* Washington DC: Child Trends, 2003. Available at: [http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child\\_Trends-2003\\_12\\_01\\_RB\\_FosterHomes.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2003_12_01_RB_FosterHomes.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Public Health Service. *Report of the Surgeon General's Conference on Children's Mental Health: A National Action Agenda*. Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services, 2000. Available at <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/topics/cmh/cmhreport.pdf>; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1999. *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Mental Health Services, National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Mental Health. Available at <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/mentalhealth/pdfs/c3.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Taylor, Paul, Rakesh Kochhar, Richard Fry, Gabriel Velasco, and Seth Motel. *Twenty-to-One: Wealth Gaps Rise to Record Highs Between Whites, Blacks and Hispanics*. Pew Research Center, 2011. Available at <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/2069/housing-bubble-subprime-mortgages-hispanics-blacks-household-wealth-disparity>; and The State of American Children 2011. Washington DC: Children's Defense Fund. Available at <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/state-of-americas-2011.pdf>