Field Instruction Initiative

**Program-in-Brief**

# December 31, 2012

**Pilot Site / Name of Project:**

**CSU Dominguez Hills**

**Collaborative Field Instruction and Training Program (CFIT)**

**Problem Statement (What issue(s) is the project trying to address?):**

Title IV-E CalSWEC MSW interns participate in 2 years of field placement with the goal of providing experience and preparation for a career in public child welfare upon graduation. Due to a variety of factors, first year placements within non-public child welfare agencies have provided sporadic quality internship experiences and not consistently prepared the interns for their second year placement in a public child welfare agency nor adequately provided a strong foundation in child welfare competencies and practice behaviors. In addition, in researching possible solutions regarding appropriate first year placements that would provide a stronger experience, a need was also identified as it relates to foster youth transitioning into higher education. The CFIT Program has been designed to meet both the internship needs of the Title IV-E MSW student as well as provide a needed service to foster and former foster youth entering higher education. (Please see Description of Project/Intervention for more specific information.)

**Hypotheses/Operating Theory:**

It is believed that by placing an MSW CalSWEC intern on college/university campuses to “receive” the students who are referred and providing them with the non-academic support services, that retention of foster youth towards goal attainment will increase. This placement will provide interns with the opportunities to develop their skills of engagement, assessment, planning, implementation, follow-up and evaluation. They will be provided with opportunities to utilize these skills from the micro through the macro level and their educational experience will be supported by the identified preceptors, individual field instructors, collaborative meetings, seminars and trainings as well as exposure and interaction with multiple community partners.

**Description of Project / Intervention:**

The Collaborative Field Instruction and Training (CFIT) Model was created to provide interns with the opportunity to practice a wide range of skills with a specific focus on foster youth within higher education settings. Research has demonstrated that of foster youth who enter higher education, a small percentage remain to the point of certificate or degree attainment (Day, et.al., 2011; Unrau, et. al., 2011). To address this need and also create a quality placement for social work students, an innovative partnership was formed for the 2011-2012 academic year, between the CSUDH social work program and four different community colleges; Cerritos City College, Long Beach City College, Los Angeles City College and Pasadena City College. A foundation level MSW intern is placed on each community college campus to work specifically with foster youth. The interns provided educational, case management, counseling and referral services to foster youth as well as developing relationships with public child welfare social workers and other community agencies.

Another aspect of the model included meetings coordinated and facilitated by the MSW Program CalSWEC Project Coordinator during the academic year involving the participating community colleges, county and community partners and selected foster youth to identify resources, challenges and potential solutions. In addition, the MSW interns participated in a specialized monthly seminar to increase their knowledge of child welfare competencies and to further develop their practice skills.

**Implementation Start Date:**

July 2011

**Current Project Status:**

CSUDH is currently working with 3 community college sites, involving a total of 5 CalSWEC MSW interns. 2 interns have been placed at 2 sites to assist with the volume of foster youth services being provided. In addition, all 8 CalSWEC interns participate in the ongoing specialized seminar that provide specific training related to child welfare competencies and practice behaviors.

**Project Goals / Achieved Outcomes:**

GOALS:

1. To provide a quality first year field placement for MSW Title IV-E interns where learning activities are more consistent with foundation level child welfare competencies and practice behaviors.
2. Improve field instruction at foundation field sites
3. Increase services to foster and former foster youth transitioning to higher education
4. Increase collaboration between participating community college field placement sites, CBO’s, PCW agencies and other community partners in serving foster and former foster youth in higher education.

OUTCOMES:

1. Through placements at the participating community colleges, MSW Title IV-E interns are actively involved in serving foster and former foster youth transition into higher education, as well as providing ongoing supportive services to assist this population towards their educational goals. Such services have included providing educational, case management, counseling and referral services to foster youth as well as developing relationships with public child welfare social workers and other community agencies.

All foundation year MSW Title IV-E interns participate in an ongoing specialized seminar that is designed to provide specific learning experiences to enhance their understanding of CW competencies and practice behaviors.

1. Field instructors and Preceptors were provided with initial and ongoing training and support re: intern learning needs and possible learning activities consistent with agency goals and services that would be appropriate in the development of child welfare competencies and practice behaviors.
2. Each intern is actively involved in providing ongoing services as described in Outcome #1 specifically to foster or foster youth currently attending their respective community college field placement.
3. Meetings and/or activities facilitated by the CalSWEC Project Coordinator, in conjunction with Field Instructors and Preceptors for participating sites, provided opportunities for the Community Colleges and their community partners to work together to address barriers, challenges, resources and possible solutions in serving clients in common.

**Barriers to Implementation:**

The lack of MSW staff at community college sites has resulted in a need to provide external field instructors for those sites. While the access to strong Preceptors on site assists in providing a quality foundation and support for the intern, there are other issues that arise when using an external field instructor (FI). In addition to the fiscal cost of paying for the FI and their duties associated with providing supervision, there is also a need for the FI to become familiar with the field site and the mission, goals, and services being provided by the program where the intern is placed. Due to the related fiscal impact of funding the field instruction, this becomes a resource issue.

**Future Directions:**

Future Directions would include a possible expansion of foundation year sites within higher education. This would also require ongoing expansion of possible resources to support the needed field instruction. Other goals would include strengthening collaborative county and community partnerships.

**Participants**

*You may refer to the Levels of Partnership document*

* **Students**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year of initiative (if pilot has been operating for more than 1 year) | Number of foundation year students | Number of concentration year students |
| 2011-2012 | 4\* | 0 |
|  | 8\*\* |  |
| 2012-2013 | 5\* | 0 |
|  | 8\*\* |  |
|  | \*=students participating in field placement site  \*\*=students participating in ongoing seminar series |  |

* **County Agency Affiliates (county agency staff stakeholders/collaborators)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year of initiative (if pilot has been operating for more than 1 year) | Position in Agency | Number of participants at this level |
| 2011-2013 | DCFS Supervisors | 2 |
|  | Chair, Court Scholars Comm (Court Commissioner) | 1 |
|  | DCFS, ILP Social Workers | 4-6 |
|  |  |  |

* **University Affiliates (university faculty and staff stakeholders/collaborators**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year of initiative (if pilot has been operating for more than 1 year) | Position in University | Number of participants at this level |
| 2011-2013 | CalSWEC Project Coordinator | 1 |
|  | Director of MSW Program | 1 |
|  | Director of Field Education | 1 |
|  | Field Liaisons\* | 2 |
|  | \*=Title IV-E MSW interns are divided into 2 different field seminars and therefore work with 2 different field liaisons. |  |

* **Community Collaborators (community member stakeholders / collaborators)**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year of initiative (if pilot has been operating for more than 1 year) | Name of collaborating agency | Position in collaborating agency | Number of participants at this level |
| 2011-13 | Calif Youth Connection | Staff | 3 |
|  | United Friends | Staff | 2 |
|  | Alliance for Children’s Rights | Staff | 2 |
|  | Public Counsel | Child Attorney | 2 |
|  | LA Unif School Dist | Staff | 2 |
|  | Foundation for CA Community Colleges | Staff | 2 |

## Other Stakeholders/Collaborators

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year of initiative (if pilot has been operating for more than 1 year) | Who | How many |
| e.g., 2011-2012 |  |  |
|  |  |  |