



Invitation to Propose Research 2018-2019

The Florida Institute for Child Welfare (Institute) is pleased to invite proposals for research examining biases that result in disparity within the child welfare system (CWS) in Florida or among dually-served or crossover youth (youth arrested from the general population and those with current Department of Children and Families 'out-of-home' placements). The Institute seeks to understand disparity and its effects on vulnerable families.

BACKGROUND

According to the Department of Children and Families (DCF), approximately 24,000 children were placed in out-of-home care statewide in May 2018.¹ Of these children, 30 percent were identified as Black, 60 percent were identified as White, and 10 percent were identified as other/ multi-racial. These statistics show a disproportionate number of Black children currently placed in out-of-home care compared to the total number of Black children in Florida (20%).² The 2018 KIDS COUNT Databook argues that racial inequities have remained persistent, with minority children faring worse than their peers on nearly all index measures of the Count.³

In addition, minority children have an increased risk of contact with the justice system. According to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), there were approximately 65,000 juvenile youth (age 10-17) statewide who were arrested in the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Of these youth, 51.6 percent were identified as Black, 33.1 percent were identified as White, and 15 percent were identified as Hispanic.⁴ Given that Black youth in Florida represent approximately 21 percent of the total population of youth age 10-17,⁴ the disproportionate arrest rates of Black juvenile youth suggest racial disparities also exist within DJJ. Examining disparity within Florida's CWS and DJJ, will aid in the development of translational practices that diminish disparity in services among minority children.

¹ Department of Children and Families. (2018). *Children in out-of-home care – statewide*. Retrieved from <http://www.dcf.state.fl.us/programs/childwelfare/dashboard/c-in-ooH.shtml>

² KIDS COUNT Data Center. (2018). *Child population by race*. Retrieved from <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/103-child-population-by-race?loc=11&loct=2#detailed/2/11/false/871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133,38,35/68,69,67,12,70,66,71,72/423,424>

³ The Annie E. Casey Foundation (2018). *2018 KIDS COUNT data book: State trends in child well-being*. Retrieved from <https://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/aecf-2018kidscountdatabook-2018.pdf>

⁴ Disproportionate Minority Contact/ Racial Ethnic Disparity: Benchmark Report FY 2016-17. (n.d.). *Statewide FY 2016-17*. Retrieved from <http://www.djj.state.fl.us/research/reports/reports-and-data/interactive-data-reports/disproportionate-minority-contact-reports/dmc-red-profile-fy-2016-17>

AREAS OF RESEARCH

Research on racial disparity in the child welfare system has garnered much attention over the last decade. A possible explanation for disparity in the child welfare system is the disproportionate and disparate need of minority children and their families due to environmental factors like poverty, racial biases of individuals such as child welfare professionals and mandated or other reporters, and a lack of resources for minority families or limited resources in certain geographical areas.⁵ For the juvenile justice system, racial disparity explanations are similar to that of the child welfare system. Minority children are more likely to live in areas of high crime or live in low-income neighborhoods; individuals who interact with these youth may have biases; and organizational practices may lead to disparity among minority populations.^{6,7}

Theories on intersectionality, which provide a framework for understanding how multiple identities of the person (factors) contribute simultaneously to shape experiences,⁸ may provide a lens for understanding the complexity of this disparity. Factors such as family characteristics (e.g., income-level⁹ and family structure¹⁰) and geographical characteristics⁵ have been linked to an increased risk of child maltreatment and poorer childhood outcomes, like contact with the justice system. Therefore, research examining disparity using a broad focus has the potential to explore the differences in outcomes across subgroups.¹¹

Current research has moved away from acknowledging that disparity exists to implementing and evaluating solutions to address the disparity.^{12,13} The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse for Child Welfare (CEBC), for example, has reviewed several strategies aimed at reducing disparity, assigning scientific ratings based on the research evidence supporting the strategies. See the

⁵ Fluke, J., Harden, B. J., Jenkins, M., & Ruehrdanz, A. (2011). *A research synthesis on child welfare disproportionality and disparities*. Retrieved from <https://www.cssp.org/publications/child-welfare/alliance/Disparities-and-Disproportionality-in-Child-Welfare-An-Analysis-of-the-Research-December-2011.pdf>

⁶ National Conference of State Legislatures. (2018). *Racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system*. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsl.org/research/civil-and-criminal-justice/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-the-juvenile-justice-system.aspx>

⁷ Lacey, C. (2016). *Racial disparities and the juvenile justice system: A legacy of trauma*. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Retrieved from <http://www.ncsl.org/research/civil-and-criminal-justice/racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-the-juvenile-justice-system.aspx>

⁸ Nadan, Y., Spilsbury, J. C., & Korbin, J. E. (2015). Culture and context in understanding child maltreatment: Contributions of intersectionality and neighborhood-based research. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *41*, 40-48.

⁹ Berger, L. M., Paxon, C., & Waldfogel, J. (2009). Income and child development. *Children and Youth Services Review*, *31*, 978-989. doi: 10.1016/j.chilyouth.2009.04.013

¹⁰ Oliver, W. J., Kuhns, L. R., & Pomeranz, E. S. (2006). Family structure and child abuse. *Clinical Pediatrics*, *45*, 111-118. doi: [10.1177/000992280604500201](https://doi.org/10.1177/000992280604500201)

¹¹ Bowleg, L. (2012). The problem with the phrase women and minorities: Intersectionality—An important theoretical framework for public health. *American Journal of Public Health*, *102*, 1267–1273.

¹² Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2016). *Racial disproportionality and disparity in child welfare*. Retrieved from https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/racial_disproportionality.pdf

¹³ National Juvenile Justice Network. (2014). *Reducing racial and ethnic disparities in juvenile justice systems: Promising practices*. Retrieved from <http://www.njjn.org/our-work/reducing-racial-and-ethnic-disparities-in-juvenile-justice-systems-promising-practices>

CEBC’s [Reducing Racial Disparity and Disproportionality in Child Welfare](#) page for more information. Additionally, Florida’s Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) highlights initiatives for examining juvenile justice. [The Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative](#), for example, partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation “to support the vision that all [youth] will have opportunities to develop into healthy, productive adults.”

Translational research that highlights promising practices to address the disproportionality within Florida are needed.¹⁴ Proposals that address disparity within the child welfare system or among crossover youth through strategic action changes are encouraged. This can include primary data analyses, secondary data analyses, or meta-analyses.

REVIEW OF PROPOSALS

Time Frame

September 12, 2018:	Call for proposals
January 15, 2019:	Deadline for proposals
March 1, 2019:	Decision by the Review Committee
July 1, 2019:	Project Start Date

Funding Details

The Institute will provide two grants of \$50,000 each. Proposals must include a clear breakdown of salary and benefit costs for research team members working on the project, costs associated with completing the project such as data collection, incentives for participants, and software needs, and indirect costs of no more than 10 percent of direct costs.

In addition to providing a financial award, the Institute’s Graduate Research Assistants and the Post-Doctoral Research Fellow can be utilized as part of the accepted proposal’s research team to offset additional costs.

Research Proposal Requirements

The research proposal should focus on some aspect of disparity within Florida’s child welfare system or Department of Juvenile Justice, and include a concise, single-spaced interest statement, no more than 5 pages, that includes:

- 1) The Research Project Title**
- 2) The Research Objectives**
- 3) A Detailed Methodological Plan**
 - a. This should include a description of the proposed data collection plan, how and where secondary data will be obtained, or a method for collecting sources for a meta-analysis.
- 4) The Budget**

¹⁴ Hill, R. B. (2011). Gaps in research and public policy. In D. K. Green, K. Belanger, R. G. McRoy, & L. Bullard (Eds.), *Challenging racial disproportionality in child welfare: Research, policy, and practice* (pp. 101-108). Washington, DC: CWLA Press.

- a. This should include the total cost of the project along with the specific costs associated with completing the project (see Funding Details section).

A CV, separate from the research statement, should also be included that highlights the principal investigator's previous publications in child welfare, juvenile justice, any disparity research, or other closely related topics.

Please contact Marianna Tutwiler, Program Director, if there are any questions:
mtutwiler@fsu.edu

Selection Criteria

Proposals will be selected based on the alignment of the proposed research to the Institute's goals of examining disparity, the clarity and relevance of the research methodology, and the qualifications and experience of the researcher.

How to Apply

Research proposals should be submitted no later than January 15, 2019 by 5:00PM (EST), using the following link: ficw.fsu.edu/contact/proposals

Note, only one submission per researcher or team of researchers may be submitted, only online submissions will be accepted, and ALL documents should be emailed as a single Word or .pdf file.

ABOUT THE FLORIDA INSTITUTE FOR CHILD WELFARE

The Florida Institute for Child Welfare seeks to promote safety, permanency, and well-being among the children and families of Florida that are involved with the child welfare system. To accomplish this mission, the Institute sponsors and supports interdisciplinary research projects and program evaluation initiatives that contribute to a dynamic knowledge base relevant for enhancing Florida's child welfare outcomes. The Institute collaborates with community agencies across all sectors and other important organizations in order to translate relevant knowledge generated through ecologically-valid research, policy analysis, and program evaluation. This is best achieved through the design and implementation of developmentally-targeted and trauma-informed strategies for children and families involved in the child welfare system.

For more information about the Institute please visit our website: ficw.fsu.edu