

The mentor is expected to work closely with the student to ensure that this general goal is met. The student is expected to gain significant experience and expertise in theories and methods related to child care, child development, early childhood education, child care program administration, the economics of child care, or child care policy.

To ensure that scholars have sufficient support and mentoring, each scholar works under the direct supervision of a faculty mentor who, as Principal Investigator of the project, ensures that the completed study will address important questions with a high level of technical quality. In addition, scholars whose projects involve community-based research are encouraged to work with a mentor from the field in order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of child care policies, practices, populations, and effects. Students whose work involves secondary analysis of large data sets are encouraged to work closely with one or more senior investigators on the original project. Within such nurturing and supportive relationships, students will be empowered to become autonomous researchers who are also connected to other professionals with diverse backgrounds in a variety of child care roles. These types of mentoring relationships model the principle of collaboration and foster skills needed for a research career that builds on successful partnerships and solid contributions to the scientific community.

B. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include universities or colleges (including faith-based institutions) acting on behalf of graduate students who are pursuing a doctorate and who anticipate completing a child care-related dissertation. The institution must be fully accredited by one of the regional accrediting commissions recognized by the Department of Education and the Council of Post-Secondary Accreditation.

C. Type and Number of Awards

Approximately four scholarship grants will be awarded. No individual educational institution will be funded for more than one candidate unless applications from different universities or colleges do not qualify for support.

D. Project Duration and Budget Periods

Scholarship grants will be funded for a period of up to 24 months (9/30/2003–9/29/2005). The first 12-month budget period will be funded through this competition. Second year awards will

be considered on a non-competitive basis, subject to the availability of funds from future appropriations, satisfactory progress of the scholar, and a determination that continued funding is in the best interest of the government.

E. Funding Levels and Maximum Federal Share

Scholarship grants of up to \$30,000 will be awarded for the first 12-month budget period and up to \$20,000 for a second year, for a total not exceeding \$50,000. All monies must be used for the student's dissertation planning or research, including required personnel costs, travel, and other expenses directly related to the research. The maximum Federal share is 100 percent of total project costs.

F. Matching Requirements

There are no matching requirements. However, because of the small size of these grants and their value to institutions of higher learning as well as to the student scholars, applicants are strongly urged to forgo any allowable indirect costs.

G. Transferability

Grants awarded as a result of this competition are not transferable to another student or to another institution.

H. Additional Requirements

The student must be a doctoral student who expects to have an approved dissertation proposal before the beginning of the grant period. A copy of the student's curriculum vita and a transcript of graduate level coursework must be included.

The student must be the author of the grant proposal and must carry primary responsibility for the research being proposed. The project must have the potential to contribute significantly to the student's career development. Research projects may include independent studies conducted by the doctoral candidate or well-defined portions of a larger study being conducted by a Principal Investigator holding a faculty position or senior research position. Research projects must use sound quantitative or qualitative research methodologies or some combination of the two.

A faculty mentor, acting on behalf of the grantee (the institution) will be listed as the Principal Investigator and is responsible for ensuring that all requirements are met and that a high quality dissertation study is completed. The application must include a letter from the faculty mentor stating that he or she approves the application and

verifies the student's status in the doctoral program. The faculty member must also verify that the grant will be used to fund the student's dissertation research and include a description of how he or she will regularly monitor the student's work. A copy of the mentor's curriculum vita must be included.

The student must attend the Annual Child Care Research Consortium Meeting and present a poster describing the scholarship research. Faculty mentors are strongly encouraged to participate as well. This conference is typically scheduled during the spring of each year and is held in Washington, DC. The budget may include travel costs for both the student and the faculty mentor.

I. Evaluation Criteria

Eligible applications will be scored competitively against the published evaluation criteria described below. These criteria will be used in conjunction with the other expectations, priorities and requirements in this announcement to evaluate how well each proposal addresses the Child Care Bureau's research agenda and goals. The point values indicate the maximum numerical weight for each criterion (100 total points).

Criterion 1. Approach—Research Design and Methodology (Maximum of 40 Points)

The extent to which the applicant's proposed research design and methodology:

Appropriately links critical research issues, questions, variables, data sources, samples, and analyses.

Employs technically sound and appropriate approaches, design elements and procedures; Reflects sensitivity to technical, logistical, cultural and ethical issues that may arise and includes realistic strategies for the resolution of difficulties; Adequately protects human subjects, confidentiality of data, and consent procedures, as appropriate; Includes an effective plan for the dissemination and utilization of information by researchers, policy-makers, and practitioners in the field; and Effectively utilizes collaborative strategies, as appropriate to the project goals and design.

Criterion 2. Objectives and Need for Assistance (Maximum of 20 Points)

The extent to which the application reflects a solid understanding of critical issues, information needs, and research goals;

The extent to which the conceptual model, research issues, objectives and hypotheses are significant, well