

W.K. Kellogg Foundation - Online Grant Application

*What amount are you requesting from the Kellogg Foundation? \$942,000

*What is the total budget for this project? \$1,242,000

*Project Start Date July 2011

*Project End Date June 2014

Provide an overview of your project

The Power of We Consortium (PWC) and Michigan State University (MSU) developed Birth to Work (BTW), a framework for transforming community systems to ensure that vulnerable children in Lansing receive the supports needed to be successful in life and work. It emphasizes creating/transforming systems of support known from research and practice to promote positive transitions through 3 key periods of development: early childhood, youth, and young adulthood. Although the supports needed are well known, disparities in access to supports and in developmental outcomes based on racial/ethnic and class inequities persist. This proposal focuses action on early childhood (ages 0-8) and aims to reduce risk factors by confronting the effects of racism and poverty through a process of identifying and addressing, from the perspective of residents, specific factors that create disparities in opportunities and outcomes.

The framework calls for actions on multiple levels that reach beyond traditional system providers. Ownership on multiple levels (family, neighborhood, organization, system, sector, etc) is critical to reducing the risk factors identified by the framework. This proposal calls for an engagement process grounded in bi-directional sharing of power, decision-making, and open dialog. We will bring together Great Start Collaborative parent community liaisons and cultural brokers (those viewed as formal and informal leaders) to develop inclusive resident and system engagement processes.

Once engaged the project team will use Strategic Doing to create more inclusive 0-8 resident-driven BTW actions/outcomes and corresponding system BTW actions/outcomes. Strategic Doing is a set of principles, practices, and disciplines for implementing strategy in networks. Action from this process may include: increasing access to supportive factors* that mitigate risk; increasing the bi-directionality of the relationship between systems and residents, and examination and recommendation of policy change to aid system reform. We anticipate that this process will uncover areas where individual and system capacity need to be built. Using MSU and community knowledge resources, capacity building training modules will be developed. We will employ a dialogue/negotiation process to promote the sharing of power, ownership, and decision-making between systems and residents for the end goal of mitigating the effects of structural racism that exists in support service systems.

*BTW supportive factors for young children include ongoing nurturing relationships; physical protection and safety; experiences responsive to individual differences; developmentally appropriate practices; discipline and structure; positive expectations; stable supportive communities; and connectedness to culture.

