

Midwest Consortium for Service Learning in Higher Education

The **Midwest Consortium for Service Learning in Higher Education** is a coalition of colleges and universities established to foster service-learning efforts in institutions across the area. Participating institutions, united in strengthening their academic programs, communities, states and the nation, through service learning, will be encouraged and supported in their efforts through grants, training and consultations. Member institutions, as of August 25, 2005, include the following:

Central Community College
Chadron State College
Clarkson College
College of Saint Mary
Creighton University
Dana College
Doane College
Hastings College
Metropolitan Community College
Midland Lutheran College

Mount Marty College
Nebraska Methodist College
Nebraska Wesleyan University
Peru State College
South Dakota State University
University of Nebraska-Kearney
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
University of Nebraska-Omaha
University of South Dakota
Wayne State College

Funding of the Consortium is provided through a Federal grant from the **Corporation for National Service**, which was established in 1993 to engage Americans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service. Learn and Serve America is an arm of the Corporation, which supports the integration of service into the academic life of over 800 thousand students in all fifty states.

Definitions of Service Learning:

Academic Service Learning is a pedagogy that integrates service in the community with academic study (theory/curriculum). Faculty, in partnership with representatives of non-profit, community organizations, design service learning projects based on two main objectives.

- Meeting identified community needs, which helps strengthen the community
- Advancing the students' understanding of course content

Strong reflective components are built into the course to help students consider relationships between their service, the course curriculum, and its impact on their personal values and professional goals.

Co-curricular Service Learning differs only with regard to a link to course content. It maintains the service to meet a community need and includes strong reflection and evaluation components. Generally these service activities are directed under the leadership of student organizations and groups.

Research Sub-grant Proposal Guidelines

Introduction and General Information:

The Midwest Consortium for Service-Learning in Higher Education announces the availability of funds for conducting research in the area of service-learning in an effort to contribute to the literature both nationally and locally. These funds are made available through the Corporation for National Service under the Learn and Serve America: Higher Education grant program. The Midwest Consortium and the National Corporation share the following goals:

- Support goals that significantly promote service-learning as an approach to teaching and learning.

- Support efforts to build capacity and strengthen infrastructure for service-learning within or across institutions of higher education.

- Support high quality service-learning programs that engage students in meeting community needs, with demonstrable results, while enhancing students' academic and civic learning.

- Support higher education involvement in services to help meet community needs, which address community issues specifically related to poverty, immigration and refugee resettlement.

See the MCSLHE Website for more information about Learn and Serve America, the Consortium, and service-learning in general.

Research Topics/Questions:

Any and all research topics related to service-learning are eligible for consideration. The Consortium did specify in its Learn and Serve grant that its research focus intends to be on three areas: the investigation of partnerships with faith-based agencies and organizations, the identification of emerging community needs and issues, and the evaluation of program elements at institutions. Research sub grant proposals are encouraged to directly or indirectly relate to one of these areas.

The Consortium has also identified some potential research questions that may be of particular interest for research sub grant proposals.

- 1) What is the impact of service-learning on community outcomes?
- 2) How do community partners perceive service-learning?
- 3) What impact does the service-learning experience have on the retention of students?
- 4) How do institutional experiences with service-learning in a variety of settings (e.g. faith-based vs. public, rural vs. urban) compare?
- 5) What are the barriers to increasing male involvement in service-learning?

Eligible Applications:

The Consortium plans to award research sub grants totaling \$6000. Eligible applicants for these sub grants will be faculty from recognized Consortium member institutions. Individual faculty submitting research sub grants may qualify for awards up to \$2000. Collaborative research is encouraged. Research teams from different institutions may apply for grants up to \$4000.

Proposal Content Guidelines:

Each Proposal should include a Title Page, abstract, proposal narrative, timeline, budget form and budget narrative.

Title Page (form attached)

Abstract: One page, double-spaced. Provide a brief summary describing the research to be conducted.

Proposal Narrative:

(Follow the outline below.)

- a. Introduction
- b. Research Focus/Question
- c. Brief Literature Review
- d. Hypothesis (if applicable)
- e. Methodology
- f. Dissemination Plan

All sub grant recipients will be expected to present their findings to the MCSLHE.

Attach relevant research documents: Instruments, surveys, maps, etc.

Timeline for the Research Project: No specific time frame is required but project completion within a reasonable time is expected.

Budget Narrative, Matching Funds, and Form: Complete the required budget form (attached) and provide narrative explaining each cost clearly. Grant funds may be used for faculty/student travel, conference fees, lodging, supplies, materials, or student worker and/or researcher salaries.

Each grant requested must have at least a 100% in-kind or cash match from the applicant's institution. In-kind match may include time and effort of the faculty member, i.e. salary and benefits, expenses incurred in developing the project, any costs incurred by the institution in assisting the faculty member. Indirect costs (which include administrative costs, office space, equipment use, etc.) are also allowable toward the match as defined by the federally negotiated indirect cost rate for the institution. A brief (no more than one-half page) explanation of the sources of matching funds should be included in the budget narrative.

Letter of Acknowledgement and Support: If possible, include a letter(s) of support from your campus president, chancellor, academic dean or department chair. Letters from participating community partners described in the narrative are also welcome.

Awards and Administration:

Grants that do not follow the guidelines will not be reviewed. Questions may be addressed to your Consortium representative or to the staff at the Midwest Consortium for Service-Learning at 402/472-9638 or email gheusel@unlnotes.unl.edu

Compliance with institutional HSIRB (human subjects internal review board) policies and procedures are expected. Sub grant research recipients will be required to submit HSIRB research approval before final award letters will be issued.

All proposals must be coordinated through the Consortium representative of the institution. Sub grant review panels will fully consider all applications and recommend proposals for funding based on the criteria identified in these guidelines. Written notification will be made to each applicant.

Sub grant awards, administered by the Consortium member institution, include financial accounting and records, maintained on behalf of the faculty member receiving the award. Member institutions will be held accountable for the recipient's compliance with the grant applications.

A **final report** must be submitted by the closing date specified in the award letter and must include a summary of the research project and an explanation of how the grant funds were expended.

Submission Deadline: November 1, 2005.

Notification: no later than Dec. 31, 2005.

Submission Procedures:

Submit the proposal by email and send the original of the application in hard copy, along with a disk of the proposal, created in a generic word processing document postmarked by the deadline. Ensure that personally identifiable information appears on the title page only. Use a code or brief name to identify each page of the proposal.

Email: gheusel@unlnotes.unl.edu

Following a review by the Consortium representative on your campus, proposals are to be submitted through the appropriate campus procedures/office and mailed to:

**Midwest Consortium for Service-Learning in Higher Education
Research Sub Grants, Attn: Gary Heusel, Consortium Director
200 Nebraska Union, Lincoln, NE 68588-0457.**

Research Committee: Jean Karlen, Chair, Sarah Wittmuss, & Jennifer Reed-Bouley