**Partners for Inclusive Communities:**

**Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service**

**Name of the College, School, Department, or Unit in which the Center will be housed.**

* College of Education and Health Professions

**Name and title of the person(s) proposing creation of the Center**

* Michael S. Hevel, Interim Associate Dean for Research, Strategy and Outreach, COEHP
* Karan Burnette, Director, Partners for Inclusive Communities (Partners), COEHP

**The Center type (research, service, or instructional) that is requested**

* Service

**The unique value of the program to the University, and the distinction to any similar programs in Arkansas**

* This center will provide statewide outreach to a historically underserved population of people with developmental disabilities across the lifespan, their families, and the agencies who support them within their local communities in Arkansas. This outreach will assist the University in meeting its mission as a land-grant institution and will increase the level of external funding.

**Information on the Director position and the organizational structure**

* The Director is the point of contact to interface with the University of Arkansas administration, other institutions, and federal/state agencies. The individual develops grant proposals and other funding requests and oversees funded projects of the Center. The individual also coordinates and manages all activities of the Center including programs, personnel and budget.
  + Knowledge, Skills & Abilities
    - Knowledge of federal statutes including the DD Act, the ADA, and the IDEA
    - Knowledge of the AUCD system including NIRS data entry
    - Skill in writing and managing federal/state grants and contracts
    - Skill in personnel supervision
    - Ability to network effectively with individuals, agencies and policy makers
* Karan Burnette, the current Director, will serve as the center director initially with future plans for the addition of another faculty member (doctoral level) who will serve as Associate Director
* Organizational structure
  + College of Education and Health Professions Dean
    - College of Education and Health Professions Associate Dean for Research, Strategy, and Outreach
      * Partners for Inclusive Communities: Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities Education, Research, and Service
        + Director

Business Manager (3 employees)

Director of Autism Services (5 employees)

Director of Health and Disabilities Project (2 employees)

Director of Early Childhood Inclusion Projects (1 employee)

Director of Access and Justice Project (5 employees)

Director of Outreach

**Identification of faculty (or qualifications of type of faculty), other personnel, and academic units that will be involved with the Center.**

* Faculty from the College of Education and Health Professions will be involved with the Center, including:
  + Suzanne Kucharczyk- Associate Professor, EDUC/CIED
  + Elizabeth Lorah, Associate Professor, EDUC/CIED
  + Renee Speight, Teaching Assistant Professor of Special Education, EDUC/CIED
  + Deniece Honeycutt, Early Care & Education Project, EDUC
* Partners plans to expand in the near future to collaborations that include faculty from nursing, speech-language pathology, and psychology.
* In addition, Partners employs over 20 professionals who advance its mission, including its Director, Karan Burnette.

**Student involvement, if any.**

* Graduate students from the University of Arkansas, University of Central Arkansas (UCA), University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS), and University of Southern Mississippi (USM) will be involved through the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities (LEND) grant. This grant provides interdisciplinary training, practicum activities, and research/leadership projects totally 300 hours annually for each long-term trainee. Masters and post-doc students represent the following disciplines: audiology, genetic counseling, health administration, public health, nutrition, pediatric psychology, child psychiatry, developmental-behavioral pediatrics, applied behavior analysis, occupational therapy, physical therapy, pediatric or clinical psychology, social work, special education, speech-language pathology, family advocacy, and self-advocacy.

**Annual budget for the Unit or the estimated expenditures per year.**

* Annual operating budget from Partner’s CORE grant is:

Graphical user interface, application, table, Excel

Description automatically generated

**Estimated fiscal resources and potential sources of funding (e.g., state, private, endowment, grant, contract, or other).**

* Annual funding and diversification of types of funds are highlighted in this chart:

Chart, pie chart

Description automatically generated

**Space and equipment needs of the Center and a description of how they will be met.**

* Space and equipment needs are already addressed. Additional needs will be addressed through new grants/contracts. No commitment from the University is requested.

**Description of administrative control and lines of authority for the Center.**

* The Director of the center will report to the Associate Dean for Research, Strategy, Outreach in the College of Education and Health Professions.

**Description of the advisory board including its size, the method of its selection, and length of terms.**

* Partners is required by federal statute to establish a Consumer Advisory Council (CAC), a Board that provides input and direction for the center. Membership of the council and specific roles and responsibilities are set forth in the DD Act. Partners has an existing 18 member CAC that meets quarterly and is active in fulfilling this requirement. The current membership of the council includes five (5) parents of children with disabilities, three (3) family advocates, three (3) individuals with intellectual/developmental disabilities, and sic (6) agency representatives. Agencies represented include: Title V Children With Special Health Care Needs, Disability Rights Arkansas, Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Center for Exceptional Families, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, and Early Intervention Part C. Bylaws have been developed and approved by the group that specify membership, terms, the process for adding/removing members, and rules governing the role of the council. An application for participation is included on Partners’ website at https://uofapartners.uark.edu/advisory-committee/. Individuals who are interested in participation may apply online. All applications are forwarded to the Nominating and Membership Committee who will bring a recommendation for action to the full committee. Terms are 3 years in length. Decisions by the CAC are subject to approval by Partners’ Director to ensure compliance with federal regulations.

**The metrics to be used to evaluate the Center’s feasibility at its five-year review.**

* Partners’ activities are guided by a 5-year plan that is submitted to the Administration on Community Living specifying measurable goals and objectives across four required core functions of:
  + interdisciplinary pre-service preparation and continuing education;
  + research, including basic or applied research, evaluation, and public policy analysis;
  + information dissemination; and
  + community services, including direct services, training, technical assistance, and model demonstrations.
* Data is collected on all activities in the National Information & Retrieval System (NIRS), a web-based data system established for the national network of UCEDDs to manage data on training programs, projects, activities, and products, for compliance with Federal reporting requirements. These metrics will be used for the center’s feasibility study completed during its five-year review.

**Appendix:**

**Partners for Inclusive Communities Annual Report Executive Summary 2023**



**Partners for Inclusive Communities (Partners)**

**Arkansas’ University Center for Excellence**

**in Developmental Disabilities**

**Education, Research & Service**

**Annual Report**

**January 15, 2023**

**Karan Burnette, Director**

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**College of Education and Health Professions**

**Executive Summary**

**Description of Partners**

The national network of University Centers on Disabilities (UCEDD) are one of four programs created by the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (the DD Act), the purpose of which is to assure that individuals with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of, and have access to, needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life, through culturally competent programs authorized under the law.

Partners, Arkansas’ UCEDD and one of 67 centers across the United States, has as its core mission *the promotion of inclusion of people with disabilities*. This mission is accomplished through activities including:

* Information Dissemination
* Advocacy
* Education & Training
* Model Projects
* Technical Assistance
* Research

With a Core Administrative Grant of $577,735 for infrastructure, Partners has leveraged

millions of dollars over the years through a variety of state and federal grants and contracts.

**Community Outreach/Stakeholder Engagement**

Partners has a wide variety of projects that impact children and adults with disabilities and their families, as well as the communities in which they live, through prevention, intervention, advocacy and research. Each project includes numerous individuals and organizations throughout Arkansas’ communities. These projects engage community partners in advisory roles, as employees, as co-advocates, and as implementation partners.

**Partners Satellite Sites**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Little Rock\*** | Hot Springs Village | Harriet | Greenbrier | Rogers | Hot Springs | Quitman |
| **N**. Little Rock | Sherwood | Springdale | Farmington | Little Rock | Roland | England |

\* Corporate Office

Since Partners’ staff work from home offices across the state, individuals are active members of those communities, which places them closer to the needs and priorities of each area of the state.

**Current Project Topics**

Projects at Partners vary from year to year depending on successful competition for grants and contracts that provide 100% of the funding for its operation. These grants and contracts vary widely in scope/mission. The chart below reflects current focus areas:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| autism research | health promotion for people with disabilities | violence prevention/intervention/advocacy |
| dual language training for educational interpreters | pre-service interdisciplinary training of graduate students across 16 disciplines | technical assistance for early childhood programs to support English language learners |
| nutrition education | positive behavior supports training | identification and intervention for young children in the Delta |
| safety and sexual assault prevention | ADA training and technical assistance | cultural sensitivity training |
| fetal alcohol spectrum disorder education/advocacy | preschool inclusion training | technical assistance to improve quality of childcare programs |
| COVID 19 activities to disseminate information/increase vaccination rates | activities to address the workforce crisis in human services | intensive early intervention for children with autism spectrum disorders |
| increasing digital access | parent training/service coordination/advocacy for families living with ASD | development of self-advocacy and self-determination skills to support individuals with I/DD |

**Community Organizations Engaged in Partners’ Activities**

Partners collaborates with state and local agencies, schools and universities, first responders, faith-based organizations, and others to reach families, professionals, and community members to accomplish its mission throughout the state of Arkansas.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| community-based non-profit disability organizations | UAMS Regional Programs | DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education | Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care | Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families | Arkansas State Hospital |
| local health department units | Arkansas Department of Education | head start/early head start agencies | early childhood programs | child advocacy centers | law enforcement agencies |
| criminal justice organizations | rape crisis centers | prosecutor coordinators | victim service agencies | independent living centers | local school districts |
| local pediatric groups | Arkansas Rehabilitation Services | DHS Division of Services for the Blind | local DHS offices | Arkansas Children’s Hospital | DHS Division of Developmental Disabilities Services |
| Arkansas State Building Authority | Arkansas State Parks | Arkansas Autism Resource & Outreach Center | Legislative Task Force on Autism | Arkansas Center for Health Improvement | Services for the Deaf |
| DHS Division of Medical Services | Arkansas Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities | Disability Rights Arkansas | Arkansas Department of Health | DHS Division of Children and Family Services | Arkansas Baptist State Convention Office |
| Arkansas Chapter of American Academy of Pediatrics | Arkansas Commission on Child Abuse, Rape and Domestic Violence | Marshallese Educational Initiative | Arkansas DFA | SeSo, Inc., Georgia | Southwest ADA Center, Houston, TX |