

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
**AIHEC NARCH**  
***TCU BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RESEARCH NETWORK***

The American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) is soliciting proposals from **Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs)** that have made or are prepared to make an institutional commitment to establish a community-based behavioral health research and education program. Up to four awards of \$35,000-\$50,000 per year will be made for two-year projects pending NIH funding approval for 2018. Application deadline is September 8, 2017.

**I. PROJECT OVERVIEW**

The TCU Behavioral Health Research Network project has been establishing a network of TCUs with behavioral health research and education programs. The purpose of this network is to develop and support a distributed tribal community-based research program that will identify, develop, pilot and evaluate intervention strategies and models addressing significant behavioral health issues in the communities served by the TCUs. TCU staff and students provide the core of this network.

The specific aims of the project are to: 1) Coordinate a behavioral health needs assessment at each participating tribal college; 2) Establish a base level behavioral health research infrastructure at participating TCUs that will focus on the specific needs identified at each community, with a special emphasis on historical trauma; 3) Initiate a community-based research program at each participating TCU. There have been two cohorts involving eleven TCUs to date and our goal is to expand the network to include all TCUs committed to helping address local behavioral health issues in future years.

**II. BACKGROUND**

Mental illness and alcohol and other substance-related harm is a major concern for American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) populations, and is associated with numerous AIAN health disparities such as: unintentional injuries (149% higher than the general population), homicide (92% higher) and suicide (72% higher). A strong network of highly trained and productive AIAN scholars and students dedicated to evidence based and culture-centered behavioral health research and practice would significantly contribute to ameliorating these disparities.

AIHEC's faculty and student development project is intended to advance the behavioral health treatment, prevention, education, and research careers of TCU faculty and students, and should ultimately help address funding disparities that contribute to the



lack of ownership that AIANs experience with regard to research. An important added goal of the project is to improve the quality of TCU substance abuse and mental health treatment and prevention by helping to bridge the gap between NIH funded research and practice of Indian Health Service/Tribal/Urban Indian (I/T/U) health services through dissemination of tribally-centered adaptation of evidence-based practices.

### **III. GOALS of the TCU Behavioral Health Research Network Project**

This project is funded through the National Institutes of Health Native American Research Centers in Health (NARCH) program. The project is designed with the following goals:

- Plan and conduct community-based participatory research projects that will provide a foundation for further behavioral health research at each community served by awarded TCUs.
- Support professional development of TCU faculty and staff who are local providers and educators in behavioral health-relevant disciplines.
- Conduct an annual AIHEC TCU Behavioral Health Institute for faculty and students.
- Develop an online behavioral health research course series for TCU students that will be offered to all TCU students.
- Provide behavioral health research experience opportunities for TCU students.
- Sponsor TCU students and faculty to attend behavioral health conferences and meetings.

### **IV. PROGRAM STRATEGY AND DESIGN**

This initiative is designed to help TCUs establish and institutionalize behavioral health research programs that will make a significant contribution to Tribal, as well as national, behavioral health research. Faculty and staff from the initial cohort of TCUs will participate in planning and implementing local community-based participatory research projects, working with research mentors from the national behavioral health research community. They will also participate in identifying a set of behavioral health courses that will provide students a strong introduction to behavioral health concepts, research methods, and intervention strategies.

Participating faculty and staff will be provided funding to allow them to devote a significant portion of their time (approximately .3 FTE) to the project. This cohort of project directors is fortunate to have the guidance of the Indigenous Research Methodology Graduate Certificate Program offered by AIHEC's NARCH Project through Sitting Bull College. The project will also fund team members to participate in research training and education activities associated with the projects. Participation in the annual Behavioral Health Research Institute will be required for all TCU staff and students involved in the project. Research mentors will be available to work with participating staff, faculty and students. Mentors may provide technical and training assistance via site visits, webinars, conference calls and telephone consulting.

PLEASE NOTE: AIHEC is currently in year 4 of this project. We are soliciting a third cohort for years 5 and 6 pending NIH funding approval of year 6. Staff and faculty from all the TCUs may apply to AIHEC for funding to participate in other professional development opportunities related to behavioral health, for which separate announcements will be released.

## **V. COMPETITIVE SELECTION FOR AWARD**

### **1. Applicant Eligibility**

- Applicant must be a Regular AIHEC member in good standing.

### **2. Criteria for Evaluating the Proposal**

- The extent to which the proposal matches the goals and intent of the project.
- The extent to which the proposal answers the request for information of the criteria in the program narrative.

## **VI. REQUIRED PROPOSAL FORMAT**

Applicants are asked to follow the outline below when submitting a proposal for consideration. Proposals should not exceed 10 pages. (We expect that 6-8 pages will be adequate to meet application information requirements.)

### **A. Section I: Applicant Information Sheet** (see attached)

### **B. Section II: The Program Narrative**

1. Description of current or planned research activities relevant to behavioral health. Please include institutional and education program research (e.g. student retention and completion data collection and analysis) to demonstrate current research infrastructure/readiness. (20 points)
2. Description of current or planned human services academic programs relevant to behavioral health. (15 points)
3. Description of any intervention services currently being offered that address behavioral health issues on campus. (15 points)

This section affords the applicant the opportunity to highlight programmatic, planning, and strategic efforts focusing on behavioral health on campus and in the community. Your description may include:

- Examples of campus-wide planning and implementation to address the issues;
  - Documentation of allocation of resources (e.g., counselor expenditures).
4. Statement of applicant's commitment to participate and support the project, and to collaborate with the other project institutions. (20 points)

Identify and describe the role of the faculty and staff who will:

- Make a time commitment to the project;
- Develop and commit to carrying out a personal professional development plan;

- Coordinate campus-based activities associated with the project;
- Participate in multi-campus project activities, including the annual Behavioral Health Research Institute.

Include the vita describing relevant professional preparation and experience of each faculty/staff member to be involved in the project.

5. Description of a plan for recruiting student researchers to the project. For example, you may describe existing degree programs through which students may earn credits for their work. (10 points)
6. Additional supporting materials:  
Include any additional relevant information that demonstrate your institution's readiness and/or commitment to participate in the AIHEC-TCU Behavioral Health Research Network. **This must include a letter of commitment from an authorized representative of the institution**, and may also include board resolutions, letters of support from local behavioral health service providers, Tribal health agencies and other stakeholders. (10 points)

### C. Section III: Budget (15 points)

Each institution selected will receive up to \$15,000 per staff member per year to cover salary costs. Up to two staff members may be funded to work on the project. \$7,000 per year for each of up to three student researchers is also available.

1. Please specify the number of staff/faculty recruited to participate in the project, and the time commitment to be made by each in terms of percentage of FTE and the amount of salary to be funded through the project.
2. Specify the number of student researchers to be recruited to participate.
3. The institutional indirect rate has been set at 8 percent.
4. Other project costs will be determined post-award, based on an implementation plan developed by each awardee, and will include travel to the Behavioral Health Research Institute for all participants.

## VII. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

1. Applicants will identify one or more faculty or staff, including a project lead, who will work with the AIHEC team to implement project work. Participants may include faculty members, counselors, and other staff.
2. Approval by the President, Dean of Student Affairs and Academic Dean (as relevant) supporting release time for staff and faculty members involved in the project.
3. Awardees will receive funding to support staff and student involvement for two years, based on a submitted budget and pending NIH funding approval. Disbursement of Year 1 funds to Awardees will be initiated upon signing of a contract with AIHEC.
4. Awardees will submit regular progress and financial reports as requested.
5. Awardee project staff will be expected to participate in *all* project activities.

6. Dr. Deborah His Horse is Thunder is serving as the TCU Behavioral Health Research Network Program Director. She will provide services and support as a liaison between AIHEC, NARCH and the TCU Awardees.

### **VIII. CONTRACT DELIVERABLES**

1. Awardees are expected to commit to this project up to two years.
2. Awardees are expected to demonstrate a commitment to establishing a behavioral health research and education program and to coordinate program activities with the other TCUs participating in the project.
3. Awardees will be expected to attend and participate in the annual Behavioral Health Research Institute.
4. Awardees are required to submit written progress and final reports (financial and narrative) according to a schedule specified in the contract with AIHEC.

### **IX. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION**

**Application Deadline:** Applications must be submitted to AIHEC by September 8, 2017, 5:00 p.m. local time (place of submission).

1. Applicants are required to submit an electronic copy of the completed application and accompanying materials.
2. Application packages electronically submitted after the deadline date and time will not be considered.
3. Submit proposals (and questions) to:

**Deborah His Horse is Thunder**

Program Director

American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC)

**Email:** [dhishorseisthunder@aihec.org](mailto:dhishorseisthunder@aihec.org); **Phone:** (701)527-3913

### **X. PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS**

1. A proposal review committee will evaluate applications and will make recommendations to AIHEC Program Director.
2. AIHEC will make the final selection. AIHEC's decision is final.

**Award Notification: September 15, 2017.**

***AIHEC-TCU***  
***Behavioral Health Research Network***

**Applicant Information Sheet**

**Name of Institution:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Person and Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Email:** \_\_\_\_\_