

KELLY WELLS

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Present Position

Technical Assistance Specialist, American Institute for Research (AIR), Washington DC

Provide technical assistance to nine Safe Schools/Healthy Student grantee communities located throughout the United States related to safe schools, developing, implementing, and sustaining school-based mental health, early childhood, and substance abuse programs, identifying social and emotional learning opportunities, building capacity, and facilitating systems change. Facilitate and conduct multiple state affinity groups that include networking among state SS/HS project directors to share ideas, challenges, and successes as well as collaborating with state-level agency directors to educate them on the work done through this initiative within the communities. Co-lead the Mental Health Affinity Group to disseminate information and resources on school-based mental programs through webinars and presentations at bi-annual SS/HS conferences. Co-facilitate the Anti-Bullying Affinity Group and assist with developing webinars and other training opportunities on many different aspects of bullying prevention and intervention. Presented at national and SS/HS conferences on topics such as: networking with state agencies, integrating SS/HS programs through strategic plans, project director trainings, and hosting World Cafes for project directors to network among one another. Authored two briefs for the National Center for Mental Health Promotion and Youth Violence Prevention: *The Role of Schools in Supporting Children in Foster Care* and *Transitioning from High School into Adulthood: Schools Helping Foster Care Youth Achieve Success*.

Professional Experience

Grant Writer, Lexington School District Two, West Columbia, SC (2008)

Researched and wrote state, federal, and foundation grants for the school district as well as provided technical assistance, workshops, and training opportunities to school staff, district level staff, and parent-teacher organizations on researching, writing, and submitting grant applications. Collaborated and coordinated with multiple systems, including social service, governmental, faith-based, civic organizations, and other local school districts to develop a school-community partnership and stream-line funding opportunities. Assisted all program staff, once funding was received, to ensure grant compliance through budgets, federal reports, program implementation, and evaluation.

Project Director, Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative, Chester County School District, Chester, SC (2006-2008)

Developed and monitored the \$3 million operating budget to include oversight of contracts, grant staff, program implementation, evaluation, federal reports, and community partnerships to ensure grant compliance with the Federal Project Officer and Federal Government EDGAR Guidelines. Facilitated monthly partnership meetings and collaborated with all systems, community non-profit agencies, faith-based, and civic organizations to

bring everyone to the table to continuously assess needs, gaps, resources, and ways in which to improve the delivery of services for children and families in Chester County. Organized a state-wide summit that included participation from legislators, SCDOE, SCDMH, and SCDJJ with other active SS/HS project directors to discuss the SS/HS initiative and the work we were doing within our communities on school-based mental health programs, early childhood programs, community partnerships, and systems change at the local level. Recognized by the SC Department of Education for an exemplary truancy program and presented our model to many other school districts in the state. Wrote over \$4 million in state, federal, and foundation grant opportunities to help with sustaining SS/HS programs and create new programs for students and families in the county.

Attendance Advocate, Mt. Vernon Township High School, Mt. Vernon, IL (2002-2006)

Monitored daily student attendance and met with students who were identified as truant or in need of academic assistance. Counseled with students and families, at the school building or in the homes, of truant youth or youth who were at-risk of dropping out to assess needs, connect them with social and emotional services, and provide resources that will help them succeed in the school and community setting. Assisted in writing state, federal, and local grants as well as helped to develop and implement the School within A School Academy for at-risk ninth graders. Monitored and evaluated the Academy bi-annually through data analysis of attendance patterns, discipline violations, outside referrals, and semester grades to continuously improve the program. Presented this information to numerous state and national No Child Left Behind Conferences and other school districts within the state.

Parents Resource Information Development Education (PRIDE) and Educational Advocacy Trainer, Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (ILDCFS) - contracted through Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL (2000-2005)

Certified trainer through the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services to train prospective foster and adoptive parents pre-service on licensing requirements and provided technical assistance for foster and adoptive parents as they were obtaining state licensure.

Licensing Specialist, Catholic Social Services of Southern Illinois, Mt. Vernon, IL (2000—2002)

Developed and implemented a marketing and recruitment plan for foster and adoptive parents that increased licensed homes from 10 to 40 the first year of implementation. Monitored all licensed homes to ensure compliance with ILDCFS standards and codes. As a POS agency, placed children and youth in homes when they were taken into protective custody by ILDCFS and assisted licensed foster homes with respite care. Networked and collaborated with other agencies and the LAN to continuously obtain resources for children and youth in foster care and to support the work of the foster families.

Education

Master of Public Administration

Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL
Awarded July 2005

Bachelor of Arts

Eastern Illinois University, Charleston, IL
Awarded December 2000

Professional Affiliations/Community Involvement

- CASA Volunteer (2010 – Present)
- Chester County Partnership for Youth (Director 2006-2008; Board Member 2008 – Present)
- Student Improvement Council Member, Richland School District Two (2010 – Present)
- Licensed Child Welfare Worker – ILDCFS (2000 – 2008)
- US Department of Education Grant Reviewer (2006-2008)
- Youth Net Advisory Council Member – Systems of Care (2006 – 2008)
- Kids At Risk Educationally Foundation Co-Founder and President (2000 – 2006) – Recognized by the IL Governors Office and the IL Department of Education as an exemplary foundation serving the needs of at-risk youth
- Catholic Social Services of Southern Illinois Regional Advisory Council Chair (2001 – 2006)
- ILDCFS Wrap Services Committee Member (2000 – 2006)