

Diversity and Health Equity in the Maternal and Child Health Workforce

A Resource Guide to Key Strategies and Actions for MCH Training Programs

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Diversity and Health Equity in the Maternal and Child Health Workforce: A Resource Guide to Key Strategies and Actions for MCH Training Programs was developed by the MCH Workforce Performance Center at Altarum Institute, in consultation with the Georgetown University National Center for Cultural Competence at the Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development. The MCH Workforce Performance Center is supported by funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) under grant number HSH250201500041G.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Division Approaches	1
Integration of diversity and cultural competence into DMCHWD strategic goals and strategies	2
Inclusion of diversity in program measurement, monitoring, and reporting requirements	2
Funding programs aimed at encouraging more diverse students to consider MCH professions.....	2
Resource development and dissemination through partners in the field	3
Support of Innovative and Collaborative Cross-Program Diversity Efforts.....	3
How To Use This Document	4
Theme 1: Recruitment and Retention of Faculty, Trainees, and Program Staff from Racially and Ethnically Diverse and Under-Represented Backgrounds	5
Theme 2: Raising Awareness of Disparities and Inequities Through Curricula, Research, Learning, Practice, and Service Environments.....	9
Theme 3: Integrating Cultural and Linguistic Competence in All Aspects of Training, Learning, Practice, and Service	12
Conclusion.....	15
Vignette Index	16
General References	16

Introduction

The Division of Maternal and Child Health Workforce Development (DMCHWD) is part of the Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB). The Division works collaboratively with Title V and other maternal and child health (MCH) programs to provide national leadership in educating and training the nation's future MCH leaders. Special emphasis is placed on the development and implementation of inter-professional, family-centered, community-based and culturally competent systems of care across the entire life course.

DMCHWD seeks to ensure excellent health services for families through workforce preparation. One of the Division's key strategic goals is to prepare and empower MCH leaders to promote health equity, wellness, and reduce disparities in health and healthcare. DMCHWD frames its diversity goals in terms of increasing the percent of trainees and faculty who are from under-represented groups, specifically racial/ethnic minorities. Low-income and racial-/ethnic-minority women and children consistently face disparities in access to healthcare, quality healthcare, and health outcomes. The diversity and cultural and linguistic competence of the MCH workforce is an integral strategy for addressing those inequities and improving health outcomes. By focusing on the diversity of faculty and trainees within MCHB-funded training programs, supporting programs that address disparities and inequities, and ensuring cultural and linguistic competence in all programs, the Division is committed to ensuring that MCH populations are served by a culturally competent and diverse workforce that is equipped to address issues affecting health disparities.

DMCHWD's Vision for the 21st Century

All children, youth, and families will live and thrive in healthy communities served by a quality workforce that helps assure their health and well-being.

To achieve this vision, the Division is guided by its [2012-2020 Strategic Plan](#), which includes the following goals:

- **Goal 1:** Address current and emerging MCH workforce needs by engaging and providing training for and support to MCH leaders in practice, academics, and policy.
- **Goal 2:** Prepare and empower MCH leaders to promote health equity and wellness and reduce disparities in health and healthcare.
- **Goal 3:** Promote interdisciplinary/inter-professional training, practice and inter-organizational collaboration to improve the quality of care by enhancing systems integration for MCH populations.
- **Goal 4:** Generate and translate new knowledge for the MCH field in order to advance science-based practice, innovation, and quality improvement in MCH training, policies, and programs.

Division Approaches

In recent years, the Division has invested in promoting health equity and wellness and reducing health disparities through a variety of approaches and strategies that have included but are not limited to:

- Integration of diversity and cultural competence into DMCHWD strategic goals and strategies;
- Inclusion of diversity in program measurement, monitoring, and reporting requirements;
- Funding programs aimed at encouraging more diverse students to consider MCH professions;
- Resource development and dissemination through partners in the field; and
- Support of innovative and collaborative cross-program diversity efforts.

The following examples highlight these approaches.



Integration of diversity and cultural competence into DMCHWD strategic goals and strategies

The Division's Strategic Goal 2 addresses this topic with a workforce-specific focus. Learn more about the Division's strategies for improving diversity, cultural and linguistic competence, and health equity at: <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/training/about-national-goals-G2.asp>

The Division's efforts also serve to support the broader HRSA strategic plan goal to improve health equity. More information on HRSA's strategic plan can be found at: <http://www.hrsa.gov/about/strategicplan/goal4.html>.



Inclusion of diversity in program measurement, monitoring, and reporting requirements

Annual Grant Reporting requirements include three elements related to diversity and cultural competence collected through the Discretionary Grant Information System (DGIS):

- *Trainee Diversity:* MCHB collects data on the percentage of participants in MCHB long-term training programs who are from underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.
- *Cultural and Linguistic Competence:* MCHB collects data on how MCHB-funded programs have addressed cultural and linguistic competence within their programs.
- *Faculty Diversity:* The Division also collects race and ethnicity data for all faculty and staff that contribute to MCH Training Program grants.

More information on the DGIS can be found at: <https://mchdata.hrsa.gov/dgisreports/>.



Funding programs aimed at encouraging more diverse students to consider MCH professions

The Division provides funding to support two grant programs targeting students who are underrepresented in the MCH field.

- **Maternal and Child Health Pipeline Training Program (MCHPTP)** promotes the development of a culturally diverse and representative healthcare workforce by recruiting diverse applicants (including racial and ethnic minorities), and students from disadvantaged backgrounds into MCH professions. MCHPTP focuses on recruiting undergraduate students enrolled at institutions with a record of training individuals who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and who are underrepresented in the MCH field. The program educates, mentors, guides, and provides enriching experiences to increase students' interests in MCH public health professions. Learn more at: <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/training/projects.asp?program=22>.
- **MCH Public Health Catalyst Training Program** provides MCH exposure to graduate students who are also underrepresented in the MCH field, including individuals from underrepresented backgrounds, and racial and ethnic minority groups. The Catalyst Program provides an increased focus on fundamental MCH content and competencies within schools of public

How To Use This Document

This Resource Guide is intended to share strategies and activities to support training programs' efforts to increase diversity and integrate cultural and linguistic competence into training efforts. Each section includes resources and short vignettes highlighting strategies used by MCH Training Programs. The resources and vignettes are organized by three key themes:

Theme 1

Recruitment and retention of faculty, trainees, and program staff from racially and ethnically diverse and under-represented backgrounds

Theme 2

Raising awareness of disparities and inequities through curricula, research, learning, practice, and service environments

Theme 3

Integration of cultural and linguistic competence in all aspects of training, learning, practice, and service

Theme 1: Recruitment and Retention of Faculty, Trainees, and Program Staff from Racially and Ethnically Diverse and Under-Represented Backgrounds

Intentional and informed recruitment of faculty, trainees, and program staff is essential to ensuring the availability of a well-trained, culturally competent MCH workforce that reflects the nation's growing diversity. Retaining diverse staff and faculty is equally vital to ensuring continuity and creating a positive climate. Additionally, mentoring has been shown as an effective approach for retaining trainees and faculty. The following strategies and actions can be used to strengthen the training program's recruitment and retention practices and policies.

Key Strategies

- ✓ *Integrate hiring and recruitment practices that will increase diversity of faculty and trainees.*
- ✓ *Create a pipeline of under-represented minorities for MCH public health professions.*
- ✓ *Create mentoring programs and opportunities for trainees to learn from other trainees to share efforts that ensure diversity in their programs.*
- ✓ *Develop partnerships that allow diverse students to learn more about the field.*

Recruitment and Retention Strategies in Action

Integrate recruitment practices that will increase diversity of faculty and trainees.

- Ensure that marketing materials, such as brochures and videos, include a diverse array of people. Adopt language in those materials that emphasizes the importance of diversity among trainees.
- Establish recruiting practices that attract and grow a diverse pool of top candidates for each open position.
- Engage students as recruitment ambassadors.

University of South Florida College of Public Health

Center of Excellence in MCH Education, Science, and Practice (COE)

This program hired two student recruitment coordinators to visit colleges/universities with a faculty member to recruit MCH student scholars and postdoctoral scholars. They offer a presentation about the MCH program and facilitate a question/answer session for all interested applicants. These recruiters serve as student ambassadors for the program.

University of New Hampshire

Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND)

Partnering with the Office of Faculty Development and Inclusive Excellence at the University, the LEND program uses a Comprehensive Diversity Plan to guide the recruitment of highly qualified applicants from under-represented and minority populations.

Create a pipeline of under-represented minorities for MCH public health professions.

- Increase the pool of diverse applicants for trainee positions by increasing awareness among under-represented and minority individuals who have been accepted into a professional program.
- Develop an undergraduate certificate program for specialized MCH training, creating a career entry pathway for students who are unable to or not ready to enroll in graduate programs.
- Develop and implement leadership and training opportunities that offer college credit for nontraditional students.
- Strengthen the academic profile of trainees through partnerships for the purpose of developing a pipeline for professional program admissions.

Johns Hopkins University

Center of Excellence in MCH Education, Science and Practice (COE)

The University recognizes that financial debt from student loans often discourages consideration of advanced subspecialty training. This has a disproportionate effect on minority health professionals. The school pursues National Institutes of Health loan repayment programs for clinical investigators considering research-oriented careers and sponsors the Brown Scholarship Program to provide full funding support to doctoral students whose research focus is urban communities.

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Leadership Education in Adolescent Health (LEAH)

The University's Office for Equity and Diversity provides summer internships for undergraduate scholars from Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other minority programs. LEAH faculty serve as mentors for these scholars and are also actively involved in the Pipeline Programs at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and partnering institutions like Alabama State University.

Create mentoring programs and opportunities for trainees to learn from other trainees to share efforts that ensure diversity in their program.

- Engage faculty from other MCHB-funded training programs to serve as mentors to meet specific trainee needs or areas of interest.
- Work with the university or college Office of Faculty Development and/or Office for Diversity to establish mentoring relationships for trainees.

Harvard University

Center of Excellence in MCH Education, Science and Practice (COE)

This COE offers a mentoring program for students. Recently, the program began a new focus on awareness of how unconscious biases affect the mentor-mentee relationship from both perspectives and practical solutions for dealing with those biases. The format consists of a keynote presentation, interactive exercise, and panel discussion, followed by a networking lunch.

Arizona State University**MCH Public Health Nutrition**

At Arizona State University, an undergraduate club—the Multicultural Leaders in Nutrition, has been created to support undergraduate students of underserved backgrounds in their pursuit of becoming registered dietitians. Built from a successful model developed by a local registered dietitian, the club integrates peer mentorship from recent graduates, hands-on experience, leadership opportunities, and skill building in an inclusive environment for students. Meetings are held monthly for students, faculty and community members come together to address public health/community nutrition. In addition, ASU faculty are working with community sites to develop a new dietetic internship with a strong MCH public health research foundation targeted to Spanish-speaking students living in the community in which the internship will take place.

Develop partnerships that allow diverse students to learn more about the field.

- Work with minority-serving institutions to recruit summer interns and fellows as well as provide other opportunities for students to gain exposure to the field and interact with current trainees.
- Collaborate with diverse campus organizations and sororities and fraternities on college campuses to provide activities where college minority students can learn more about the field.

University of Iowa**Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND)**

This LEND program works with the Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP) and the Upward Bound program to recruit diverse and under-represented students with an interest in healthcare and developmental disabilities into the LEND program. (Upward Bound is a program designed to support students in completing their secondary education and enrolling postsecondary education.) SROP provides promising under-represented undergraduate students with in-depth research experiences.

University of Colorado Denver**Reaching Practicing MCH Professionals in Underserved Areas**

This program supported and mentored a faculty member from the University of Colorado School of Public Health, and Centers for American Indian (AI) and Alaska Native (AN) Health to develop and teach a course on AI and AN child health and development. The course was offered during a national research conference supported by the Tribal Early Childhood Research Center and held at the university. Through targeted outreach and marketing to tribal stakeholders, the program was able to recruit rural and tribal students to attend and also allowed current MPH students to enroll.

University of Tennessee**MCH Nutrition**

This program partnered with the Knoxville Urban League, the Great Schools Partnership, and African American Appalachian Arts, Inc. to provide nutrition education to diverse, middle school students with opportunities to learn about nutrition, public health nutrition, and MCH nutrition. In addition, MCH faculty partner with the McNair Scholars Program at the University of Tennessee to provide research training for diverse undergraduate students. The program director and/or MCH trainees serve on the University's Educational Advancement Program career panel to discuss opportunities in public health nutrition and MCH nutrition.

Recruitment and Retention Resources

- [Documenting the Implementation of Cultural and Linguistic Competence: A Guide for Maternal and Child Health Bureau Funded Training Programs](#)
- [Climate of the Learning Environment: Cultural and Linguistic Competence Checklist for MCH Training Program](#)
- [Mentoring--an Evidence-based Strategy to Increase the Number of Students and Faculty from Racial and Ethnic Groups Underrepresented in Maternal and Child Health Training Programs](#)
- [Promising Practices for the Recruitment and Retention of Culturally Diverse Students and Faculty into Maternal and Child Health Training Programs: Updated Literature Review](#)
- [Diversity in MCH Training Peer Learning Collaborative Fall 2009/Winter 2010 Activities \(PDF - 81 KB\)](#)

Theme 2: Raising Awareness of Disparities and Inequities Through Curricula, Research, Learning, Practice, and Service Environments

It is critical that the MCH workforce be equipped to support the health and well-being of minority and underserved populations. Beyond ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to work with diverse populations, it is vital that faculty and trainees understand underlying causes of health disparities, including racism and other forms of marginalization due to socioeconomic status, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, disability status, geographic location, or a combination of these. These strategies and actions are designed to help training programs identify ways to integrate this information into curricula, research, learning, and service environments.

Key Strategies

- ✓ *Create a safe environment for faculty to share challenges and discuss issues related to disparities and inequities.*
- ✓ *Ensure understanding of issues and challenges associated with research in diverse communities, such as historical experience, power differentials, and ways to prevent stigmatizing communities when reporting research results.*
- ✓ *Include curricula content related to health disparities, health equity, and underlying causes.*

Addressing Disparities and Inequities: Strategies and Actions

Create a safe environment for faculty to share challenges and discuss issues related to disparities and inequities.

- Engage in reflective discussions about diversity and institutional racism to add depth to the partnership and change how training programs interact and work with one another.
- Convene forums to share insight, research, and experiences, incorporating content on disparities and inequities across the training program curriculum.
- Ensure that faculty have the skills and resources to address interpersonal conflict that may arise in the discussions of culture, diversity, cultural and linguistic competence, and other topics, such as health and healthcare disparities and inequities, the concept of privilege, and oppressive -isms (e.g., racism, sexism, classism)

Tulane University

Center of Excellence in MCH Education, Science and Practice (COE)

*This program partners with the Tulane Prevention Research Center to offer a seminar series on issues focusing on social justice, equity, and racism. It also uses reading and discussion groups to increase awareness of health equity and cultural competence. Two examples include the books 1) *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration*, which explains more about the geographical movements that have shaped the country and its people, particularly Black Americans, and 2) *Hope Against Hope: Three Schools, One City, and the Struggle to Educate America's Children*, which offers a glimpse into the challenges facing many children and families and provides opportunities to discuss the potential effects on health.*

University of Washington**Pediatric Pulmonary Centers (PPC)**

In 2015, the university passed a resolution requiring that all faculty search committees participate in some form of Equity, Access, and Inclusion training based on best practices regarding faculty candidate outreach, assessment, recruitment, and retention with the goal of increasing faculty diversity. The program has worked with the University of Washington School of Medicine (UWSOM) Center for Health Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for the past year to develop training in best practices for all UWSOM search committees. The training is also available online along with a toolkit of best practices.

Ensure understanding of issues and challenges associated with research in diverse communities, such as historical experience, power differentials, and ways to prevent stigmatizing communities when reporting research results.

- Encourage and support student research in areas related to health disparities, health equity, health literacy, and bias/discrimination in health.
- Offer trainings on issues associated with inequities, such as unconscious bias, power differentials, and stigma. Develop plans to gather feedback and conduct continuous improvement.

The University of California, Berkeley**Center of Excellence in MCH Education, Science and Practice (COE)**

The university created a strategic plan, which identifies its primary mission “to improve population health, especially for the most vulnerable.” Two primary strategies woven throughout the education, research, and community are diversity and collaboration. Its stated values include health as a right and strength through diversity, ensuring that the concepts of health equity and health disparities are integrated throughout the program curriculum and learning experiences.

Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC)**Development-Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP)**

This program uses a learning platform that is infused throughout its curriculum. MUSC faculty, from the Office of Diversity, gives lectures and engages participants in interactive case-based discussion during MUSC’s collaborative office rounds. These goals and coursework are consistent with MUSC’s Strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion that provides a framework for addressing diversity and inclusion across specific domains: 1) recruitment and pipeline development; 2) education and training; 3) engagement and inclusion; 4) communication, community relations, and outreach; and, 5) performance outcomes and metrics.

Include curricula content related to health disparities, health equity, and underlying causes.

- Develop processes to address faculty or student experiences or observations of bias, prejudice, discrimination, stereotyping, and oppressive -isms.
- Examine and develop curricula that address at diversity and inclusion in the context of other complex developmental issues and disease/wellness conditions.

The Johns Hopkins University

Center of Excellence in MCH Education, Science and Practice (COE)

The program has integrated health equity into the Life Course Perspective on Health taken by MPH-affiliated students. The course includes specific discussion about race and racism, and weaves the concepts of diversity and health disparities throughout lectures and discussions. All required MCH courses have at least one class devoted to disparities in health and development, and some courses, such as Women’s Health and Women’s Health Policy, are electives for the Diversity Certificate.

Children’s Hospital of Boston

Leadership Education in Adolescent Health (LEAH)

Staff has written and piloted new curricula, including six learner-centered cases that integrate principles of cultural and linguistic competence, inclusion, and diversity into the formats. The cases focus on the complexities of caring for adolescents and young adults: topics include teen pregnancy, eating disorders, LGBT issues, HIV, substance use, and transition to adult healthcare.

Health Disparity/Health Equity Resources

- [The Provider’s Guide to Quality and Culture—Health Disparities](#)
- [Climate of the Learning Environment: Cultural and Linguistic Competence Checklist for MCH Training Program](#)
- [Georgetown University’s Maternal and Child Health Navigator](#)
- [Curricula Enhancement Module Series](#)

Theme 3: Integrating Cultural and Linguistic Competence in All Aspects of Training, Learning, Practice, and Service

In order to ensure the success of programs in preparing students to work with culturally and linguistically diverse populations, two things are needed: 1) faculty with the knowledge, skills, and capacity to prepare students and 2) a program that fully integrates culturally and linguistically competent approaches to engage and support diverse students.

Key Strategies

- ✓ *Ensure that curricula content related to cultural and linguistic competence is integrated throughout the curricula and is not limited to a stand-alone or separate module or topic*
- ✓ *Build staff capacity to prepare students on integrating cultural and linguistic competence into coursework*
- ✓ *Create learning and clinical experiences that prepare trainees to engage, provide services and supports, and conduct research in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.*

Integrating Cultural Competence: Strategies and Actions

Ensure that curricula content related to cultural and linguistic competence is integrated throughout the curricula and is not limited to a standalone or separate module or topic.

- Establish a process to review curricula content for opportunities to increase content on cultural and linguistic competence.
- Involve racially and ethnically diverse individuals to assist in planning and developing a curriculum.
- Build a process in which curricula are evaluated to assess trainees' perceptions of how courses and the program enhanced their knowledge and skills related to cultural and linguistic competence.

University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Pediatric Pulmonary Centers (PPC)

This PPC provides a class on culturally competent healthcare. Trainees complete the UAB online Diversity Awareness Education Program and are also required to complete the PPC Cross Cultural Health Care Case Studies before the didactic class on cultural competence. Cultural competence is woven through many other classes, and a seminal trainee activity is the Family Case Study/System of Care Project, in which trainees must select a family from a race or ethnicity other than their own and incorporate the family's cultural values and worldview into the presentations.

Build staff capacity to prepare students and to integrate cultural and linguistic competence into coursework.

- Establish a process to determine faculty development needs.
- Include student assessment of faculty effectiveness in cultural and linguistic competence in course evaluations.
- Include cultural and linguistic competence, knowledge, skills, and awareness in student evaluations and grading.
- Provide fiscal support for faculty to participate in professional development opportunities addressing cultural and linguistic competence.

University of Utah

Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND)

The five states comprising the Utah Regional LEND program (Utah, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming) are primarily rural with large areas that are unserved or underserved by healthcare professions. The program identified and engaged a faculty member to serve as the cultural diversity coordinator. The cultural diversity coordinator was charged with developing relationships with healthcare providers serving largely diverse populations, connecting with and assisting support groups for families; providing general advising and mentoring to diverse trainees; recruiting diverse graduate students; meeting with diversity campus clubs, etc. The program also identified a Federally Funded Health Center serving primarily Latino *families and* worked with the lead pediatrician and the promotoras to engage a family support group.

University of California at San Diego (UCSD)

Development-Behavioral Pediatrics (DBP)

UCSD Pediatrics has a long-standing residency curriculum on cultural competence structured around the Cultural Enhancement Series developed by the National Center for Cultural Competence at Georgetown University. This series covers four key content areas: cultural awareness, cultural self-assessment, process of Inquiry—communicating in a multicultural environment, and public health in a multicultural environment. In addition, fellows are required to attend at least one Cultural Immersion Training during the three years of fellowship. Cultural immersion days are an innovative component of UCSD's Community Pediatrics Rotation. These are days of planned learning designed to provide opportunities for trainees and faculty to explore and learn about culture through structured activities in communities where culturally diverse people reside. One such activity—BaFa BaFa—focuses on communicating across cultures. BaFa BaFa is a diversity training exercise that was developed by the United States Department of Defense to prepare government and military personnel for living and/or working overseas. BaFa BaFa is now widely used to promote cultural awareness.

Create learning and clinical experiences that prepare trainees to engage, provide services and supports, and conduct research in culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

- Offer clinical experiences that give trainees opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills with diverse populations and in diverse settings.
- Ensure that training programs incorporate course work and interactive activities that support cultural and linguistic competence and serve as resources for program faculty and trainees.

University of California, Los Angeles

Center of Excellence in MCH Education, Science and Practice (COE)

This program focuses on developing the leaders of tomorrow who are able to interact with diverse populations and engage in quality research development and translation to address issues of diversity and inequity in the United States healthcare system. A primary focus of their core courses and research activities is patterns and etiologies of disparities in MCH with a focus on methods of reducing those disparities through more culturally appropriate interventions and policies. This focus is emphasized to trainees and new applicants. Students are mentored on the critical nature of cultural diversity in the determinants of health and inequities in the United States healthcare system. Through the Community Leadership Seminar, trainees are placed into community positions that necessitate a culturally competent approach, and these experiences have proven to be valuable in learning to translate cultural competence theory into practice.

Cultural and Linguistic Competence Resources

- [Rationale for Cultural and Linguistic Competence in Maternal and Child Health Bureau–Funded Training Programs](#)
- [Curricula Enhancement Module Series](#)
- [Cultural and Linguistic Competence Checklists for MCH Training Programs](#)
- [Documenting the Implementation of Cultural and Linguistic Competence: A Guide for Maternal and Child Health Bureau Funded Training Programs](#)
- [A Guide to Choosing and Adapting Culturally and Linguistically Competent Health Promotion Materials | En Español](#)
- [Infusing Cultural and Linguistic Competence in to Health Promotion](#)
- [Helping Families Support Their Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender \(LGBT\) Children](#)
- [National Center for Cultural Competence Data Vignettes](#)
- [Think Cultural Health](#)
- [Commonly Asked Questions and Answers Regarding Limited English Proficient \(LEP\) Individuals](#)

Conclusion

DMCHWD is committed to preparing and empowering MCH leaders to promote health equity and wellness and reduce disparities in health and healthcare. This is an evolving document aimed at sharing ideas to spur action. In the coming months, DMCHWD plans to launch a concentrated effort to disseminate the Resource Guide through the following mechanisms: an orientation webinar, facilitated discussions at grantee meetings, and technical assistance office hours for grantees to receive one-on-one and group technical assistance. DMCHWD also plans to collect information through future annual Non-Competing Continuation progress reports regarding the successes and challenges of implementing the strategies highlighted in the Resource Guide and any new strategies that programs have developed and/or implemented. The Division welcomes innovative ideas, promising practices, and lessons learned that will keep this resource current and more useful for grantees. For additional information, please contact the project officer listed for specific grant programs below.

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Vignette Index

Topic (page)	Organization	MCH Training Program
Theme 1: Recruitment and retention		
Student coordinator (5)	University of South Florida	COE
Diversity plan (5)	University of New Hampshire	LEND
Financing (6)	Johns Hopkins University	COE
Internship and mentoring (6)	University of Alabama at Birmingham	LEAH
Pipeline-mentoring (6)	Harvard University	COE
Partnerships/Mentoring (7)	Arizona State University	Nutrition
Partnerships (7)	University of Colorado Denver	Reaching Practicing MCH Professionals
Summer research (7)	University of Iowa	LEND
Pipeline-partnerships (7)	University of Tennessee	Nutrition
Theme 2: Raising awareness of disparities and inequities		
Seminar series (9)	Tulane University	COE
Faculty training (10)	University of Washington	PPC
Strategic plan (10)	University of California, Berkeley	COE
Interactive learning (10)	Medical University of South Carolina	DBP
Course (11)	Johns Hopkins University	COE
Curricula (11)	Boston	LEAH
Theme 3: cultural and linguistic competence		
Online Interactive course (12)	University of Alabama at Birmingham	PPC
Diversity coordinator (13)	University of Utah/Utah Regional	LEND
Cultural enhancement Series (13)	University of California at San Diego	DBP
Community seminar (14)	University of California, Los Angeles	COE

General References

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