Status of the Use of Title IV-E Funding in BSW and MSW Programs

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Social work education programs collaborate with child welfare agencies in efforts to promote the recruitment and retention of competent and professional child welfare workers. Title IV-E training funds have been a major source of support of these efforts by facilitating the social work education of child welfare workers, as well as supporting currently employed workers who return to school. This study describes the current status of Title IV-E funds in BSW and MSW programs. There were 65 respondents representing 31 states and 94 social work education programs. These recent data identify current trends and practices that could strengthen future efforts.

KEYWORDS child welfare, social work education, Title IV-E funding

The inability to maintain a stable child welfare workforce is problematic for the well-being of children and families served by the child welfare system (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003; Flower, McDonald & Sumski, 2005). Ameliorating this workforce crisis has been the focus of several research papers and projects (Rycraft, 1994; Mor Barak, Nissly, & Levin, 2001; Zlotnik et al., 2005; Westbrook, Ellis, & Ellett, 2006; Scannapieco & Connell-Carrick, 2007; Zlotnik et al., 2009; Strolin-Goltzman et al., 2009; Steen, 2011; Hopkins
et al., 2010). Among the varied themes on employee retention that have emerged from the literature are the impact of burnout, lack of supervisory support, and lack of autonomy. There have also been reports on specific initiatives that focus on staff recruitment and retention, including the hiring of professional social workers to enhance worker competency and preparation to carry out child welfare practice tasks more effectively (Gansle & Ellett, 2002; Zlotnik, 2003; Strolin, McCarthy, & Caringi, 2007; Ellett et al., 2009; O’Donnell & Kirkner, 2009).

Funding from Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, created by the Child Welfare and Adoption Assistance Act of 1980 (PL 96-272), has become an important source of support for educating social workers for child welfare practice (Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2003; Pierce, 2003; Zlotnik & Cornelius, 2000; Zlotnik, 2003). Title IV-E funds provide a 75% federal match “for the training (including both short-term training and long-term training at educational institutions, through state grants to the institutions or by direct financial assistance to students enrolled in such institutions) of personnel employed or preparing for employment by the state agency or by the local agency administering the state Title IV-E state plan” (Children’s Bureau, 2013).

Short-term training includes pre-service, in-service and specialized staff training. Long-term training can include education toward acquiring a bachelor’s or master’s degree. It can provide stipends for students to incentivize their interest in pursuing child welfare practice after acquiring a BSW and/or MSW degree, since students who receive such stipends must work in child welfare as a payback for the stipend. The consensus has been that increased professional education and training in child welfare has a linkage with job readiness and effectiveness (Lewandowski, 1998; Gansle & Ellett, 2002; Zlotnik, 2002; Scannapieco & Connell-Corrick, 2003; Zlotnik et al., 2005) and that a social work degree is the most relevant and appropriate preparation for child welfare practice (Rittner & Wodarski, 1999; Booz, Allen, & Hamilton, 1987).

In the early 1990s, targeted efforts were established to encourage social work education programs and public child welfare agencies to collaborate to expand the use of Title IV-E funding (Briar, Harris, & Hansen, 1992; Chavkin & Sallee, 2012; Zlotnik, 1993, 1997, 2002). Such collaborations could address recruitment and retention efforts and were also intended to enhance the qualifications and competencies of the child welfare workforce. Efforts included creating specialized initiatives in BSW and MSW programs to provide enhanced child welfare curricula, public child welfare field placements, and student stipends that had a payback requirement to attract and encourage students toward child welfare careers (Zlotnik, 2013).

A source of foundational data on Title IV-E educational partnerships was gathered in 1996 when the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE, 1996) surveyed all 500 social work education programs in the United States.
This was done to ascertain their participation in accessing Title IV-E funds to support social work education for persons preparing for child welfare work (Zlotnik & Cornelius, 2000). The survey found that between 1980 and 1990 only six universities indicated that they were accessing these funds for social work education; however, by 1996 the number had increased to Title IV-E stipend programs at 68 universities in 29 states (Zlotnik & Cornelius, 2000). More recently, according to the CSWE annual report of statistics on social work education, 147 (34.1%) BSW programs (in 31 states) and 94 (50.3%) MSW programs in 35 states and the District Columbia were using Title IV-E to prepare students to pursue careers in child welfare (CSWE, 2011).

Despite these data that the use of Title IV-E funding continued to increase among some states and universities, there are also indications that some Title IV-E programs at universities are being eliminated or reduced in size. This information came from postings on the Title IV-E Listserv maintained through the University Of Georgia School Of Social Work, via communications among deans and directors of social work education programs, and in communications from leaders of National Association of Social Workers’ (NASW) state chapters. In addition, despite 20 years of collaborations between universities and public child welfare agencies to access Title IV-E funding, there continue to be issues related to confusing and inconsistent interpretations of the federal policies regarding Title IV-E training (CSWE, 1996; US DHHS, 1996; Zlotnik, 2003).

To better understand the current status of the use of Title IV-E funding to support BSW and MSW students, a national social work advocacy organization sought to build upon and update the information from the 1996 study. With no national study conducted since 1996, the 2012 study intends to provide information for administrators, educators, deans and directors, policy makers and practitioners about the current implementation of Title IV-E educational partnerships to support BSW and MSW degree acquisition. The study also intends to identify impediments and supports to implementation that can foster the successful continuation of the Title IV-E stipend efforts. The CSWE now gathers annual statistics on Title IV-E educational partnerships and there now exist several regular opportunities for communication among these partnership programs. Consequently, this current study did not seek to survey all social work education programs. Rather, it specifically sought to ask universities with Title IV-E partnerships about the current status of such educational partnerships. The on-going communication mechanisms among Title IV-E partnerships occur through the IV-E listserv, mentioned above; via the annual meeting hosted by the Child Welfare Symposium at the CSWE Annual Program Meeting (APM); through the National Title IV-E Roundtable that grew out of a regional roundtable begun in Texas in 1997 (Chavkin & Sallee, 2012), and through state level exchanges that occur through collaborations such as the long-standing California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) coordinated through the University of California, Berkeley.
METHODS

In December of 2011, a national social work organization launched an online survey in order to gather data on the current use of Title IV-E funding in BSW and MSW programs. Unlike the 1996 survey that was sent to all social work education programs, this survey only sought responses from those social work education programs that were currently, or recently (within the past 3 years) receiving Title IV-E funds to support BSW and MSW education. The rationale for this decision was that CSWE had already attempted to gather overall data; therefore, the researchers were most interested in current status and changes in the size and scope of programs. The researchers did not examine university-based efforts to use Title IV-E funds to provide short-term training to child welfare workers.

The survey was distributed via the Title IV-E listserv (IV-EPARTNERS@LISTSERV.UGA.EDU) and through the listservs of the social work deans and directors of BSW and MSW programs (to encourage responses from programs that might not subscribe to the IV-E listserv, and to ensure that deans and directors were aware of the survey). An announcement about participating in the survey was made at the 2011 Child Welfare Symposium at the CSWE APM and the Child Welfare Special Interest Group meeting at the 2012 Society for Social Work and Research Conference, and announced via the website of the organization that undertook the survey. In total, there were 65 respondents, which resulted in 56 usable surveys. The utility of the 56 surveys was determined by merging surveys when universities submitted duplicates, excluding surveys that were completed by individual students, and excluding non-relevant responses, e.g., from universities that were not in the United States. If a school submitted two surveys that contained response discrepancies, researchers contacted respondents for clarity, and then merged surveys reflecting the accurate information. The 56 surveys represent 31 states and the data include a total of 94 social work education programs because several respondents reported on behalf of multi-university consortia that are administered together to offer Title IV-E supported specialized education programs. Results show that 73 of the 94 schools (76%) report that they are a part of a consortium; however, in only four instances did the administrative director of a multi-school consortium respond to the survey on behalf of all of the universities in their consortium. In other instances, the respondent noted that their university was part of a consortium, but the responses across universities were not coordinated. The largest of the consortia included responses on behalf of Title IV-E stipend efforts at 21 universities in one state.

The 1996 CSWE survey served as a guide for the new instrument. The previous survey was altered for this study, because it was a more comprehensive study covering educational, training, and research partnerships between universities and child welfare agencies. The researchers selected
questions specific to stipend programs that were still applicable. Questions regarding recent issues (within the past 3 years) were included in this new questionnaire as researchers were especially seeking information on recent status and if there were any changes in the size and scope of the Title IV-E stipend efforts. Several experts involved in Title IV-E educational partnerships reviewed the new survey.

The survey included several questions related to the overall Title IV-E educational program addressing the number of students, dollar amount of stipends provided, number of students who are working in child welfare while earning their degree, and number of graduates who are paying back their requirement, changes in partnerships and the evolution of the program. The survey also contained questions relative to the impact that the presence or absence of the Title IV-E program has, and the circumstances surrounding terminating Title IV-E educational partnerships, where applicable. Respondents were also asked about their perception of the clarity of Title IV-E policies and procedures and their knowledge of their key contact person from the state office. The researchers also explored what factors supported or impeded the successful implementation of the respondents’ Title IV-E partnership programs.

The survey data were transferred to an Excel spreadsheet for analysis. In some instances, there were surveys submitted via e-mail because they were completed by hand. Researchers imputed those surveys manually into Excel. In the Excel program, the researchers were able to create total sums, which resulted in information on number of students, number of graduates, and number of BSW/MSW programs, for example. Therefore, the ability to utilize Excel was very beneficial for the observation and analysis of the closed-ended items. Coding was the method of analysis for the open-ended questions. The open-ended answers were also transferred to Excel after which researchers read through each response, documenting trends and similar patterns. Among the terminated programs, there were many similar circumstances that were documented by the researchers. After coding was complete, researchers grouped similar responses in order to see the type and breadth of information collected.

RESULTS

Number of Students and Recent Graduates

Results indicate that there are at least 1,853 current students receiving Title IV-E funds during the 2011–2012 academic year. Two university respondents did not report their current number of students and four terminated education partnerships had no current Title IV-E students; therefore, the total number (1,853) is based on a total of 88 schools, which include
the consortia. There were 1,144 reported graduates from the past 2 years who were currently working in child welfare in fulfillment of their payback requirement; 45 schools use surveys and questionnaires to follow up with their graduates. Others use informal contact. Seventeen of the respondents provided reports or a link to information on their Title IV-E graduates.

Respondents provided information about their Title IV-E students with regard to the students' child welfare experience and employment. It was reported that 803 students in 81 universities (43% of the current Title IV-E students) were currently working in child welfare while earning their degree; and approximately 395 students in 55 universities (21% of current Title IV-E students) had entered the program without child welfare experience (Figure 1). Since all social work education programs receiving Title IV-E funding to support students did not respond to the survey, the number of students and the number of universities involved with Title IV-E stipend programs are undercounted.

### BSW and MSW Students/Financial Support for Students

Results indicate that 15 individual university respondents report that they offer funding for MSW students only, 12 individual university respondents report that they offer BSW funding only and 22 respondents (including the who responded on behalf of all the schools in their consortia) offer both MSW and BSW funding. Four respondents provided information on behalf of the 47 schools within their consortia, indicating that both BSW and MSW students are involved. However, it should be noted that within these consortia, each individual university does not necessarily offer both a BSW and MSW degree.

There were also results regarding the amount of funding provided to students. The majority of programs reported that Title IV-E funds include stipends and full tuition. Stipends cover a broad range from $1,600 to $9,500.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Number of Title IV-E Students</th>
<th># of students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current IV-E Students (88 schools)</td>
<td>1,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CW Workers earning degree (81 schools)</td>
<td>803 (43%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV-E students w/o CW experience (55 schools)</td>
<td>395 (21%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 1** Current number of IV-E students.

*Note. All respondents did not indicate how many current students are receiving IV-E funding. For the respondents who did provide the number of students, they did not all provide the number of current students who are workers returning to school or students without previous child welfare experience. There is an undercount of the number of students who benefit from this funding. This figure is based on data available from survey responses.*
per semester depending on the university, its location and the overall budget of the educational partnership program. For example, there are some programs that are quite large in comparison to others and have a larger budget which provide much higher stipend amounts for their students. Furthermore, some programs’ reimbursement formulas have changed due to Title IV-E cost allocation methods, funds available based on the state’s Title IV-E eligibility rate (referred to as the penetration rate) and due to the current economic downturn experienced in many states. These factors have caused financial strain and difficulty in identifying match funding. These factors then impact the Title IV-E expenditures, affecting both the amount of stipends and the number of stipends that the university can provide for their students.

Lengths of Time Universities Have Received Title IV-E Funding

Researchers asked about the length of time that the social work education programs had been receiving Title IV-E funding. Results show that three Title IV-E partnership programs have had funding for less than five years, 13 of the programs have had funding for 6 to 10 years, and 11 of the programs have had funding for 11 to 15 years. There are 63 universities, which are part of 25 Title IV-E partnership programs that have had Title IV-E funding for more than 15 years.

Changes in Title IV-E Educational Partnership Programs in the Last Three Years

The survey sought to gather information on the evolution of the Title IV-E programs. Researchers found that 16 of the respondents reported that their programs had grown in the last three years; 17 stated that their program had remained the same; 18 stated that their program had become smaller; and five stated that their programs were terminated. These data indicate that about 71% of the Title IV-E educational partnerships remained the same, shrunk or were terminated in the past three years. In terms of the responses received from consortia on behalf of several programs, two of the consortia had grown, one had remained the same and one had become smaller.

Factors Supporting and Impeding Implementation

The survey asked respondents to identify the factors that impede or support the successful implementation of Title IV-E programs. The survey included five factors:

- Federal Regulations (Child and Family Services Review, inflexibility)
- Adequacy of Resources (available match/penetration rate)
• Organizational Structure (effective communication between each level)
• Political Issues (changes in agency heads and bureaucrat involvement)
• Lawsuits (class action suits)

Nominally, researchers investigated how each factor impacted the Title IV-E partnership. The survey item asked respondents to indicate if factors impeded or supported implementation of the Title IV-E Partnership.

• The factor, federal regulations, sought to ascertain whether the implementation of Child and Family Service Reviews (CFSR), which began in 2001, or other federal regulations including those related to Title IV-E served as an impediment or support to implementation of a Title IV-E partnership. The CFSR was specified because many states included staff training and workforce recruitment and retention as part of their Program Improvement Plan to address the deficiencies cited in their CFSR, and use of Title IV-E to support an educational partnership might be one outcome (Children’s Defense Fund and Children’s Rights, 2006). Federal Regulations were supportive for 28 programs but served as an impediment to 12 programs.

• Adequacy of Resources is a factor that varies from program to program depending on state budgets and allocations. Researchers were interested in understanding the role resources played in the success of each partnership. Adequacy of resources was supportive for 13 programs but served as an impediment to 33 programs.

• Organizational Structure of the Title IV E partnerships included the effective communication between the state and federal regional administrators as well as between the state and regional administrators and the university partners. Organizational Structure was supportive for 25 programs but served as an impediment to 20 programs.

• The factor, Political Issues, was intended to gather from respondents how agency leadership turnover or media or legislative attention to child welfare service delivery might impact the IV-E stipend efforts. Changes in child welfare agency administrators frequently occur after elections since they are often political appointees or when there has been high media attention to problems in the child welfare agency, which has resulted in turnover of the agency head. Political Issues were supportive for 14 programs but served as an impediment to 26 programs.

• Finally, researchers asked information about Lawsuits, specifically the effect that class action lawsuits might have on the IV-E educational partnership programs. Farber and Munson (2010) found that class action litigation led to substantially increased training and the establishment of both educational requirements and opportunities for staff. When courts mandate workforce improvement, they are legally enforceable and subject to ongoing monitoring (Farber & Munson, 2010). The survey did not
ask respondents to include information on their particular class action lawsuits; rather, they were requested to state whether this factor served as an impediment or support to their IV-E program. *Lawsuits were supportive for 10 programs but they served as an impediment to 11 programs.*

**Clarity of policy**

In addition to gathering information regarding how the factors described above served as supports and/or impediments to the Title IV-E partnership, the researchers also investigated perceptions of the knowledge of the policies, and cost allocation method and funding formula related to the Title IV-E training partnership. The researchers wanted information about the extent to which the respondents understood the policies behind the program that they were implementing. Results show that the majority of respondents (approximately 81 programs) understood the Title IV-E policies and procedures and were also aware of the cost allocation method. Within those 81 schools, three consortia leaders responded on behalf of 41 of the schools, or about 50% of the respondents.

After appraising the responses that were received, researchers found that not all respondents answered the question regarding clarity of policy. From those who responded, two key concerns emerged. The first common concern was the lack of written description of the process of reimbursing expenses and calculation of match. The second concern was the absence of correspondence regarding modifications in policies between the regional office and state agency or between the state agency and the university. It should be noted that states vary in regard to the source of the 25% non-federal match to the 75% federal funding for Title IV-E training. The main responses provided were that the match came from the state agency or that the university provided the match. For 20 Title IV-E partnership programs, representing 48 universities in the consortia, the match to the federal funding comes from the state university.

The survey instrument asked two open ended questions: 1) What are three positive outcomes resulting from your Title IV-E program? 2) How do you think the absence of Title IV-E funding for BSW and MSW social work programs will affect the public child welfare workforce in your state or local area? In addition, programs that lost funding were asked to report on the circumstances surrounding termination.

**Positives of Title IV-E Educational Partnerships**

Researchers asked respondents to give three positive outcomes resulting from their Title IV-E program. Themes were drawn from all responses. The most frequent positive outcome reported was the professionalization of the child welfare field by the increase in degreed social workers. It was
also reported that Title IV-E graduates were generally retained in Child Welfare longer and showed more commitment to the field. Another recurring theme was positive relationship building and collaborations with agencies and stakeholders. One respondent stated, “Our collaboration with the state child welfare agencies has been helpful as we are kept informed and attuned to their needs.” One social work program discussed how a large percentage of their BSW graduates are a part of the MSW program and this professional development ladder is facilitated by Title IV-E funding. Another highlight from the responses was the large number of Title IV-E graduates who ultimately were promoted to leadership positions. This then results in a child welfare administration with social work knowledge and expertise. Also, a positive outcome is that students who complete their social work degrees with Title IV-E support generally have employment upon graduation.

From an academic standpoint, Title IV-E has created positive shifts toward child welfare curriculum and students also have access to quality training that is offered locally and nationally. Many schools also reported that the mere opportunity to have funding for social work education is a positive outcome of this program. Title IV-E makes it possible for child welfare staff to obtain graduate education and this factor results in professionalization of the agency staff. Social work education programs have also been able to recruit more ethnically diverse students. This has occurred because the aims of the university/agency Title IV-E educational partnership have included attracting and recruiting bi-lingual students and students with diverse backgrounds to more fully reflect the community’s demographics and need.

Impact of No Title IV-E Program

The researchers created an item on the instrument that explored the potential consequences of having no Title IV-E stipend partnership program. The most reported consequence was the lack of future child welfare workers with an MSW. Respondents posited that the child welfare workforce would be devastated with the continued attenuation of Title IV-E programs. One respondent stated, “Workers will be less prepared and the quality of service to children and families will be in jeopardy.” Another respondent poignantly stated that, “Child Welfare is undergoing reform with more professionals entering and the continued influx of MSWs is essential to sustaining the reform.” Another respondent said that without Title IV-E, many state agencies would have to provide and pay for in-service training for their new hires since many social work education programs through Title IV-E provide in-service training while students are still earning their degree. Additionally, many universities attest to the Title IV-E program being a great incentive to enter the child welfare field. Without this funding stream as an incentive, workforce recruitment could suffer.
TERMINATED PROGRAMS

Five schools (representing four states) reported their Title IV-E programs had been terminated and each shared information related to varying circumstances. Table 5 displays information from the universities with terminated Title IV-E funding. Each program provided its own unique perspective and experience. Each of the five universities stated that they lost their Title IV-E funding due to lack of resources/budget cuts and administrative changes. In addition, three out of five reported that hiring freezes in the child welfare agencies have also contributed to their termination. Additionally, three out of the five programs added that policy interpretation played a role in the ending of their IV-E funding. Since the survey was completed, several additional universities have reported elimination or shrinking programs for the 2012/2013 program year.

DISCUSSION

This research study was conducted to gather data on the current use of Title IV-E funding in BSW and MSW programs. The researchers specifically sought responses from social work education programs that had been receiving Title IV-E funds within the past three years. Active and inactive Title IV-E educational partnership programs provided insights. Most of these programs reported a longstanding Title IV-E partnership of more than 15 years while some had been active for less than five. Due to the varying differences in longevity of these partnerships, the findings from this survey can be useful to social work programs, child welfare administrators and policy makers in several ways. The results present positive impacts of this funding program on social work education as well as the child welfare workforce and provide useful information across states and nationally. This study specifically provides information on factors that support and/or impede the implementation of active Title IV-E programs, especially in this time of tightened budgets. The results offer the unique perspective of those programs that have lost Title IV-E funding and their perception of the cause of termination. These findings also provide updated information and clarity to the existing anecdotal communication that is shared among professionals in the field.

Looking at the perspectives of those respondents who had recently lost Title IV-E funding is important as these educational partnerships continue to evolve. The parallel perspectives from the respondents that relate to both budget cuts and administrative changes suggest that Title IV-E partnerships should look to development of institutional strategies and outcome data that can help to transcend the administrative changes in the child welfare agencies, which are an expected occurrence.

An examination of the survey findings collectively shows the importance of well-organized and effective partnerships for continued success in imple-
menting Title IV-E educational partnership programs. It should also be noted that inconsistent policy interpretations, abrupt changes in state administrators, and changes in the program’s size and scope also have implications for the school’s curricula, as well as students’ expectations of stipends, along with worker recruitment and retention. These concerns have been further highlighted by the fact that since the survey was administered, researchers have received anecdotal information regarding the pending termination or shrinkage of several programs that currently have active Title IV-E funding.

As mentioned previously, some states were not represented in this research study and not every social work education program was surveyed. However, with the information gathered, it is reasonable to assert that Title IV-E programs experience many of the same challenges and triumphs. The economy, administrative changes, and nebulous policy interpretations are recurring themes. However, in many schools the Title IV-E educational partnerships have been in place for many years, contributing to enhanced child welfare services and decreases in recruitment and retention problems.

**LIMITATIONS**

Within this research study, there was meaningful information obtained but there are limitations because not all programs who receive Title IV-E funding responded. Therefore, it is not a complete picture of current Title IV-E implementation, the number of students involved, or of the benefits and obstacles faced. Based on a recent unpublished listing of schools receiving Title IV-E funding compiled by the University of Maryland, there are six states for which no survey responses were received. Also, based on the CSWE annual statistics report (CSWE, 2011), as previously mentioned, this study did not receive a complete response. In addition, this study only draws on the perspective of the social work education programs and does not gather information from the agencies that partner with the social work education programs to implement the IV-E support for BSW and MSW students; thus, the agencies’ viewpoints are absent as are the viewpoints of the individual students who participated in these specialized child welfare social work education efforts.

Although experts in the field assessed face validity of the survey instrument, there was no other testing. As stated in the discussion section, since the administering of this survey some of the programs have lost (or will soon lose) Title IV-E funding, which means that the results are cross-sectional and only reflect the point in time when the survey was completed. There was also some confusion on the surveys regarding consortia membership. Researchers did not provide an explicit definition of consortium, which could have alleviated some of the ambiguity.
Finally, researchers only asked about the number of graduates in the past two years who were paying back their requirement, but did not ask the total number of graduates, which limits the ability to gauge success of each program. The 1,144 graduates only include those who are working in the field in the past two years, and do not reflect the potential impact of such stipend programs over the course of the past 20 years.

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The Title IV-E entitlement has certainly made its mark on social work education and the child welfare workforce. One of the main impacts, as echoed from the social work educator respondents, is the increase in master’s level social workers in the child welfare system. This development has reportedly enhanced child welfare practice and continued the progression toward a more professionalized child welfare workforce. Researchers are aware that some child welfare workers whose educations were supported through Title IV-E funding have departed the agency shortly after their required payback commitment. However, over the years, evidence reveals an increase of professional social workers in child welfare (Barth et al., 2008; Lieberman, Hornby, & Russell, 1988; Zlotnik, 2013). With the increase in social work programs accessing Title IV-E funds (Zlotnik & Cornelius, 2000), and a larger prevalence of social workers in child welfare, it is feasible to assert that Title IV-E funding has contributed to the increase of professional social workers in the public child welfare system. Additionally, the influence of Title IV-E support on the future of child welfare was noted because many graduates take on leadership positions as supervisors and administrators.

Some surveyed universities are not currently receiving Title IV-E funding for their social work students; however, their experiences are useful in understanding the reasons for termination. The retrospective insights offered are valuable to the continued implementation and future sustainability of Title IV-E programs. It appears that the mission of Title IV-E funding within social work education is widely understood; however, many programs experience challenges that distract from the ease and consistency of program implementation.

The survey findings, as well as the continued information that is forthcoming about changes in the status of the Title IV-E BSW and MSW university/agency partnerships, suggest that there are implications for the future. In order to continue to enhance the child welfare workforce and improve outcomes for children and families served by the child welfare system, the following recommendations should be considered: 1) Leaders from the Children’s Bureau in concert with state child welfare agencies and schools of social work should work together to ensure that there are clear and consistent interpretations of Title IV-E training policies across states and
regional offices. One outcome of such enhanced collaboration would be

to ensure the creation and maintenance of a high quality workforce that has

the necessary skills and knowledge to perform the diverse range of complex

child welfare tasks across the full array of child welfare services; 2) Due

to the changes that continually occur in the size and scope of Title IV-E

educational partnerships, it is important that there be an on-going national
data gathering effort that would more fully report on the scope of these

efforts and their outcomes within child welfare service delivery and within

social work education programs; 3) It would be beneficial to undertake a

rigorous, multi-site evaluation of Title IV-E educational partnerships to

better ascertain their impact on social work education, staff recruitment and

retention, and child welfare outcomes, and to include both the university and

agency perspectives; 4) The recurring reports from terminated programs of

budget cuts, administrative changes and difficult policy interpretation provide

information on what appears to be counter-productive to the success of

Title IV-E partnerships. Therefore, child welfare agencies should seek out
technical assistance from states that are successfully implementing Title IV-E
educational partnerships in order to more effectively learn from those that
are successful. This could help to sustain efforts when challenges occur.

It is the hope of the researchers that the information obtained from

the surveyed Title IV-E programs can be used to address challenges and
barriers and promote sustainability of these efforts. The presence of Title IV-E
funding offers education, professional development and quality training for

workers who will be working with our nation’s most vulnerable population;
the continued evaluation and cultivation of these programs are essential to
social work education and, most importantly, child welfare practice. Ensuring
support for the education of child welfare workers and their on-going
training should be included in every child welfare policy initiative.

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