



CDSS

WILL LIGHTBOURNE
DIRECTOR

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street • Sacramento, CA 95814 • www.cdss.ca.gov



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR

REASON FOR THIS TRANSMITTAL

- State Law Change
- Federal Law or Regulation Change
- Court Order
- Clarification Requested by One or More Counties
- Initiated by CDSS

January 25, 2017

ALL COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. I-01-17

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
 ALL BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DIRECTORS
 ALL CHIEF PROBATION OFFICERS
 ALL FOSTER FAMILY DIRECTORS
 ALL TITLE IV-E AGREEMENT TRIBES
 ALL CDSS FIELD and REGIONAL OFFICES
 ALL PRIVATE ADOPTION AGENCY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: NATIONAL ADOPTION COMPETENCY MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING INITIATIVE (NTI)

REFERENCE: ASSEMBLY BILL (AB) 1790 (CHAPTER 766, STATUTES OF 2014); AB 403 (CHAPTER 773, STATUTES OF 2015); WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE (WIC) SECTION 16125

The purpose of this All-County Information Notice (ACIN) is to provide county child welfare and probation departments, behavioral health departments, tribal agencies, adoption agencies, and private Foster Family Agencies (FFA) with information about an opportunity to participate in piloting online adoption and permanency training for child welfare social workers and mental health clinicians.

BACKGROUND

The WIC section 16125 provides for any child adopted from the foster care system that is receiving or is eligible to receive Adoption Assistance benefits including Medi-Cal, to receive medically necessary specialty mental health services by local mental health providers in the county of residence of his or her adoptive parents. In 2014, AB 1790 was enacted and amended WIC 16125 to stipulate that the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) convene a stakeholder group to identify barriers to the provision of these mental health services. The bill also charges the same stakeholder group with making recommendations for voluntary measures available to both state and local government agencies and private agencies to address said barriers. One of the

key issues noted was a lack of post-graduate training specific to adoption/permanency clinical issues for mental health professionals, as well as child welfare professionals.

One of the recommendations of the stakeholder group was that child welfare and mental health professionals participate in training with the National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI) through the Center for Adoption Support and Education (C.A.S.E.). The recent enactment of AB 403 and the implementation of the provisions of California's Continuum of Care Reform (CCR), provides increased opportunities and expectations to strengthen collaborations in meeting the needs of vulnerable children and youth in foster care.

For these reasons, the CDSS is pleased to announce that California is one of seven states selected to pilot a new web-based training curriculum. The NTI is a five year, federally-funded cooperative training initiative intended to build the adoption competent, mental health capacity of child welfare professionals including probation officers who have a caseload with youth in foster care and mental health practitioners serving foster children and youth moving toward permanency through adoption and guardianship, as well as those who are already in adoptive or guardianship families. This training is also intended to improve the well-being outcomes for these children by increasing social worker, probation placement officers, and mental health clinician skills assessing mental health needs and developing joint treatment plans for children who are transitioning to permanency. In other words, by building skills in permanency, these professionals who are responsible for developing treatment and services plans will be skilled in addressing their mental health needs, providing support and the appropriate therapeutic interventions to assure stable and secure post-permanency experiences. For more information, please visit NTI's website: <http://adoptionssupport.org/adoption-competency-initiatives/national-training-initiative-nti/about-nti/>.

The goal of the NTI Initiative is to "build the capacity of child welfare and mental health professionals to effectively address the complex needs of children moving toward permanency through adoption or guardianship or living in permanent adoptive and guardianship families." This effort supports permanency for children and youth in foster care and the goals of CCR, which includes ensuring that children live with a committed, permanent and nurturing family, as well as helping children and youth maintain permanent connections and prepare for adulthood. The NTI also supports a guiding principle of CCR, which is for different parts of the service system to work together to improve services to children.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY

County child welfare, mental health and probation agencies, private or tribal foster family agencies and adoption agencies are eligible to participate in the training pilot and the launch of the training curriculum is scheduled for February 2017. There will be an open invitation for participation in two phases:

- Phase one includes child welfare social workers, supervisors, tribal social workers, probation officers, FFA, Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Program (STRTP) and adoption agency staff. This phase will run from March 2017 to August 2017.
- Phase two includes mental health professionals and will begin in January 2018.

There is no limit to the number of participants for this on-line training pilot. While participation is voluntary, we encourage staff, as well as their direct supervisors, to commit to completing the full training. It is important for supervisors of the participating staff to support the training by using Transfer of Learning Strategies. The CDSS will work with agencies to determine the number of participants from each agency based on the needs of the agencies and the pilot.

A summary of the curriculum is available through NTI's website. The pilot will inform refinements to the curriculum, the web-based delivery, coaching protocols and delivery technologies as well as implementation at the state and local levels. Category Two Continuing Education Units (20) approved via the National Association of Social Workers and accepted by the Board of Behavioral Sciences will be available through the University of Maryland, School of Social Work at no cost to the individuals completing the training.

The training is organized in the following manner:

- For child welfare professionals: 20 hours, organized into eight modules
- For child welfare supervisors: 20 hour child welfare training with three hours of supervisor-specific lessons to support worker application of learning in practice
- For mental health professionals: 25 hours, organized into ten modules, plus completion of at least four of six 90-minute topical coaching sessions

PILOT PARTICIPATION

Agencies interested in participating in the pilot should submit the attached "Letter of Interest" to the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) on February 17, 2017. Completed letters of interest can be sent to CFSNTI@dss.ca.gov.

Participating agencies will be expected to:

- Engage with the CDSS in a process of implementation planning that:
 - Examines the "fit" of NTI with the needs and resources of the state and participating agencies.
 - Identify factors that facilitate or create barriers to implementation and opportunities to capitalize on or overcome them.

- Utilize meaningful stakeholder involvement with child welfare, mental health program and training leaders.
 - Identify a communication plan to let participants know how this training fits into departmental goals and messages the importance of completing the training cycle.
 - Engage and recruit child welfare and mental health professionals to complete NTI training.
- Plan for and establish the requisite technical capacity to enable learners to access the NTI web-based training and coaching.
 - Provide substantial input into the design of training and related coaching.
 - Collaborate with NTI in formulating, testing, and learning from implementation that:
 - Facilitates integration of NTI web-based training into the training systems across diverse contexts.
 - Infuses adoption competence in the provision of mental health interventions across diverse settings i.e., community based mental health, private providers and community adoption agencies.

The CDSS is in the process of identifying participating agencies for planning purposes. For additional information about the training, please contact Dawn Wilson Wilson@adoptionssupport.org or Laura Arroyo Arroyo@adoptionssupport.org. For questions about the submission of the letter of interest, please send inquiries to CFSNTI@dss.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Original Document Signed By:

SARA ROGERS, Chief
Continuum of Care Reform Branch
Children and Family Services Division

Attachment

C: CWDA



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Letter of Interest

California Pilot: The National Adoption Competency Mental Health Training Initiative (NTI)

Please send completed letters to CFSNTI@dss.ca.gov. Deadline for submission is February 17, 2017.

Agency Name: _____

Select One: County Private Agency Tribe

Estimated number of staff to be trained: _____

The above-named agency is interested in participating in the NTI Pilot as outlined in the All County Information Notice I-01-17. I understand that this does not obligate this agency to participate in the pilot or CDSS to select this agency for the pilot.

Signed: _____, Agency Director or Designee

Print Name: _____

Primary Point of Contact:

Name: _____

Title: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____