

THE ROBERT L. SCHNEIDER ISP DISSERTATION AWARD 2015

ISP \$850 Dissertation Award: One goal of *Influencing State Policy (ISP)* is to increase the Social Work profession's effectiveness in affecting state policy and legislation. Since 1997, ISP has been assisting social work faculty and students in learning about the formation, implementation, and evaluation of state-level policies. As part of this effort, ISP sponsors an annual \$850 cash award to a social work Ph.D. student whose dissertation-in-process is focused on social policy research at the state (non-Federal) level.

Why the emphasis on State Policy? Since the 1990's, the "new Federalism" has shifted greater responsibility and autonomy to the 50 states for providing services and designing welfare programs. Priorities and fund allocations are being set in state capitals amid intense competition for state dollars. Some states are privatizing their health and social services. If social workers do not exert leadership in contributing to these decisions, others will shape social policy in the future. The NASW Code of Ethics requires all social workers to advocate for changes in policy and legislation.

Who is eligible? Any student currently enrolled in a social work Ph.D. program in the United States of America. All doctoral coursework and all comprehensive / oral / qualifying exams must be successfully passed by the deadline of April 1, 2015. Dissertation may not be completed at the time of application.

When is the deadline? An application with all supporting materials must be emailed by April 1, 2015.

What must be submitted? Each applicant must provide ISP with the following:

1. A separate single cover sheet with the applicant's name, address, phone, and email, and title of the dissertation.
2. Executive summary (2 pages maximum) of an approved dissertation prospectus. (Do not include your name on these pages). *Prospectus* is defined as a detailed, well-developed statement of proposed research, usually 30-60 pages in length, not a brief preliminary overview of a study.
3. Personal statement (2 pages maximum) by the applicant indicating how s/he expects the research to influence state level policy(s) and social work practice and an estimate of the potential number of persons who are affected by this policy(s). (Do not include your name on these pages)
4. A letter from the Ph.D. student's dissertation chairperson attesting to the student's enrollment status, successful completion of coursework and exam(s), certifying that the prospectus is approved and the expected date for completion of the dissertation.
5. One copy of the dissertation to ISP upon its completion.

What should be the focus of the dissertation? The dissertation must be a research study that addresses some aspect(s) of a state-level policy and its impact or implications for social work practice or clientele. Any arena of practice is eligible, e.g., aging, mental health, disabilities, substance abuse, advocacy, health, etc. Research outcomes or analyses will be broadly interpreted as long as there is a clear link to a state-level policy or legislative process. Examples include how a federal policy may affect state policies or programs. Or, how childhood poverty is associated with inadequate nutrition in New York. Or, how stalking legislation with automatic police reporting affects levels of domestic violence in New Mexico.

Where do I send my application? Email application materials to Jane Hoyt-Oliver, jhoytoliver@yahoo.com.

What else do I need to know? The application materials will be scored by an appointed committee based on relevance of research to social work practice; use of an appropriate methodology; clarity and organization; and potential to influence state policy. All applicants will be notified in April of the final award decision. The cash award will be forwarded soon after the final decision.

In addition to the \$850 cash award, the winning applicant will be honored at the Policy Conference 2.0 in Austin, TX, May 28-30 and at the annual ISP member's meeting held in conjunction with CSWE's annual meeting. A complimentary one-year membership in ISP will also be awarded.