Advancing Understanding of Neighborhood Influences on Child Abuse and Neglect and Early Childhood School Readiness: A University/Community Partnership

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**Project Period:**

December 1st, 2016 (or earliest possible start) – June 30th, 2017

**Total Requested Budget:**

$14,870
Abstract

The proposed pilot focuses on advancing research on factors affecting neighborhood rates of child abuse and neglect and their impact on early childhood development, and on informing community-level maltreatment prevention planning efforts. The pilot has three aims, one aim to develop a university-community partnership that demonstrates the collaborative work essential for future grant proposals and two aims related to data collection and analysis that bear on questions of shared interest for our research partnership. The first pilot aim is to cement a partnership between faculty and students at the University of Southern California (M. Hurlburt, J. Perrigo, A. Palmer, M. Finno-Velasquez [now at New Mexico State University]), and faculty and colleagues from the WE-CAN Coalition in Orange County, CA (G. Howard, K. Goll, and OC community partners) and the University of California, Irvine (D. Sorkin, the Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, and students from UCI’s Program in Public Health). Collectively, this group has a strong and ongoing interest in understanding community-level strategies for improving the social, emotional, and physical wellbeing of children and families in local neighborhoods and cities, and in prevention of child abuse and neglect. The activities planned for this pilot will create the opportunity for faculty and students in this partnership to work closely together on research questions, data analyses, and planning activities of common interest, significant scientific merit, and having practical local impact.

With respect to research activities, pilot funds will support two data collection/use activities. Specifically, pilot funds will support neighborhood-based resident interviews to assess social/environmental constructs related to child abuse and neglect in 8-10 neighborhoods in Orange County (4-5 with unusually high and 4-5 with unusually low levels of child abuse and neglect, demographically matched). The interviews will occur in collaboration with the WE-CAN coalition in Orange County to ensure that neighborhood data collection includes the information they desire about characteristics of specific local neighborhoods in Orange County. These data will extend and add power to data collection efforts with residents in local neighborhoods that occurred during a university fellowship training grant led by Hurlburt, Finno-Velasquez, and He in 2015/2016. Second, working with the Commission on Children and Families of Orange County (a WE-CAN member), official child abuse and neglect data and neighborhood-level data will be matched with universal data about early childhood development gathered by Kindergarten teachers in all public schools in Orange County. Matching of these data sources will allow for the highly unusual ability to triangulate on neighborhood levels of child neglect through independent sources, and to test for population differences among young children in levels of social-emotional development in neighborhoods with very similar demographic profiles but very different profiles of overall abuse and neglect rates.
A. SPECIFIC AIMS. Most research addressing the causes and consequences of child abuse and neglect has focused at the level of individual families and children. For example, research addresses predictors of contact with child welfare, economic and social costs to children of abuse and neglect, and cumulative societal costs connected with maltreatment. Many intervention efforts have emphasized responding to individual family needs once families are referred to child welfare due to suspicion of abuse or neglect. To complement this body of research, additional research is needed that focuses on how neighborhood and community social and institutional forces shape the experiences of children and families and the levels of abuse and neglect that occur within distinct geographic areas, especially because of the strong geographic clustering of child abuse and neglect at neighborhood levels. This work is difficult because it operates across levels (neighborhoods and families) and involves the need to work in multiple neighborhood settings.

The proposed pilot work seeks to formalize a university-community partnership with the capacity to conduct research across these levels, with a special emphasis on informing community-level maltreatment prevention and research efforts. It also seeks to pursue specific data collection, analysis, and use activities that will position this collaborative group to compete effectively for a variety of research, service, and training-related proposals. The university-community partnership would involve the Alliance for Children and Families of Orange County (and the WE-CAN collaborative), the Children and Families Commission of Orange County, faculty and students from the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, and faculty from the Institute for Clinical and Translational Science (ICTS) at the University of California, Irvine. These organizations and their roles are described in the proposal and in letters of support.

The opportunity to advance this partnership emerged from an alignment of interests between work conducted by M. Hurlburt examining neighborhood factors influencing rates of child abuse and neglect referrals in neighborhoods in San Diego and Los Angeles counties and community-level maltreatment prevention design efforts occurring in Orange County (OC). OC Alliance members wished to understand why some neighborhood areas in OC appear to have much greater protection from the occurrence of child abuse and neglect than others, despite similar population demographic profiles. A number of collaborative conversations led to the conclusion that further neighborhood-based data collection to understand factors affecting unusual rates of child abuse and neglect (very high and very low) in diverse OC neighborhoods would benefit already ongoing research (Hurlburt and students) and prevention planning efforts of the WE-CAN collaborative in Orange County. It also became apparent that one Orange County Alliance member organization (the Commission on Children and Families of Orange County) had incredibly unique, universal early childhood development data that would enable further advances in understanding of the impact of neighborhood environments on children’s development and school readiness. Public health and medically oriented members from the University of California, Irvine, also affiliated with UCI’s ICTS, were already connected with the Orange County Alliance and expressed strong interest in research collaboration. The proposed activities included in this pilot are therefore designed to cement this university-community partnership by engaging in specific data collection efforts that expand ongoing research led by M. Hurlburt, advance the agenda of the Orange County WE-CAN collaborative, and make use of early childhood data available to the Alliance for Children and Families in ways that are useful to all members and scientifically significant. The jointly conceptualized Specific Aims of this pilot are:

1. To energize a university-community collaborative with significant local and scientific impact;
2. To gather data from residents in 8-10 neighborhoods in Orange County that contribute to further understanding of social and environmental differences in population matched neighborhoods with very different (high and low) levels of child abuse and neglect referrals;
3. To utilize universal early childhood development data in OC to accomplish 3 goals, including:
   a. Seek to independently validate differences in neighborhood neglect rates using these teacher-based data, which would be a major advance for neighborhood work on child maltreatment.
   b. Examine whether early childhood development and school readiness differ in population matched neighborhoods with very different rates of abuse and neglect, and
   c. Test whether any differences in early childhood development observed in 3b also are present across neighborhoods even for children where risk of neglect seems to be quite low. Such findings would have considerable implications for thinking about the impacts of neighborhood environments in which abuse and neglect referral rates are high.
B. SIGNIFICANCE. Freedom from interpersonal violence and maltreatment (often here referred to as family violence for brevity) is central to child and family wellbeing. Although we know that family violence and maltreatment are strongly predicted by individual and family characteristics, these issues can also productively be viewed as highly place-based phenomena that affect neighborhoods and sub-neighborhood level areas such as clusters of blocks or housing units. If offered the chance, parents will voluntarily leave neighborhoods due to safety concerns, as evidenced by parents’ choices in the large, federal Moving To Opportunity Study. Neighborhoods matter and residents know it. As demonstrated in diverse regions, family violence and child maltreatment tend to cluster geographically. Such patterns tend to be so pronounced that public and non-profit service providers can consistently, accurately, and independently self-identify geographic areas of concern.

These patterns arise due to social geographic sorting of individuals/families driven by selection effects and by characteristics of neighborhoods themselves that either increase or decrease the likelihood of these and other social problems. To help guide the design of neighborhood-level interventions, some research has focused on understanding how local social processes, such as social controls (e.g., collective efficacy) and institutional resources influence the distribution of social problems above and beyond the characteristics of individuals and families living within neighborhoods. What may be underappreciated, however, is the fact that neighborhood-level interventions in areas with highest risks for family violence and child abuse and neglect (CAN) may be most efficient when they focus on family and neighborhood characteristics. We argue that current knowledge regarding individual family level predictors of family violence and maltreatment, research on characteristics of protective neighborhoods (such as proposed here), and a strong knowledge base about effective individual-level prevention models collectively establish ideal conditions for advancing and testing prevention strategies at the local level.

The overall goal of the current project is to develop a collaborative university-community partnership that creates opportunities for critical thinking, research, and evaluation around community-based strategies for child maltreatment prevention specifically, and that has the combined scientific, community, and programmatic expertise to reason across community, neighborhood, and family levels. An outstanding opportunity to advance such a partnership exists in Orange County, CA, with a unique and highly collaborative group of community-based agencies, and with faculty and students from the University of California, Irvine, including its Institute for Clinical and Translational Science. Pilot funding from the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social work would seed specific research activities that are immediately useful to the partnership and that will add in significant ways to scholarly understanding of how neighborhood environments with very high rates of child abuse and neglect affect early childhood development among the broader populations of children residing in these neighborhoods.

C. APPROACH
C.1. Overview. The proposed pilot work has three primary aims, one aim to develop a partnership that demonstrates collaborative work essential for planned future grant proposals and two aims related to data collection and analysis that bear on significant questions of shared interest for our research partnership. One of the most significant planned aims is to further develop a partnership between faculty and students at the University of Southern California (Hurlburt, Perrigo, Palmer, Finno-Velasquez [now at New Mexico State University]), and faculty and colleagues from the WE-CAN coalition in Orange County, CA (Howard, and OC community partners) and the University of California, Irvine (Sorkin, the Institute for Clinical and Translational Science, and students from UCI’s Program in Public Health). Collectively, this group has a strong and ongoing interest in understanding community-level strategies for improving the social, emotional, and physical wellbeing of children and families in local neighborhoods and cities, and in prevention of child abuse and neglect (see letters of support). The activities planned for this pilot will create the opportunity for faculty and students in this partnership to work closely together on research questions, data analyses, and planning activities of common interest.

With respect to research activities, pilot funds will support two data collection/use activities, which will facilitate the development of future joint research proposals. Specifically, pilot funds will support neighborhood-based resident interviews to assess social/environmental constructs related to child abuse and neglect in 8-10 additional neighborhoods in Orange County (4-5 with unusually high and 4-5 with unusually low levels of child abuse and neglect, demographically matched). The interviews will occur in collaboration
with the WE-CAN coalition in Orange County to ensure that neighborhood data collection includes the information they desire about characteristics of specific local neighborhoods in Orange County. These data will extend and add power to data collection efforts with residents in local neighborhoods that occurred during a university fellowship training grant led by Hurlburt, Finno-Velasquez, and He (described further in preliminary studies below). Second, working with the Commission on Children and Families of Orange County (a WE-CAN member), official child abuse and neglect data and neighborhood-level data will be matched with universal data about early childhood development gathered by Kindergarten teachers in all public schools in Orange County. Matching of these data sources will allow for the highly unusual ability to triangulate on levels of child neglect through independent sources, and to test for population-level differences among young children in levels of social-emotional development in neighborhoods with very similar demographic profiles but very different profiles of overall abuse and neglect rates.

C.2. Preliminary Studies. The SoCal Neighborhoods and Child Welfare Study (SoCNCW). In 2015 and 2016, Hurlburt, Finno-Velasquez, and He received a university fellowship training grant from the US Children’s Bureau (Administration for Children and Families). This investigative team carried out a mixed methods study of factors affecting rates of child abuse and neglect in local neighborhood environments. The project had 3 phases, including: (1) identification of highly unusual neighborhood areas (census tracts) with very high and/or very low rates of officially reported child abuse and neglect after controlling for well-established population characteristics predictive of contact with child welfare; (2) key informant interviews with individuals knowledgeable about local environments in select phase 1 neighborhoods; and (3) interviews with random samples of residents in neighborhoods selected from phase 1.

The university fellowship investigative team completed all three planned phases and developed efficient methodologies for conducting neighborhood level surveys of large numbers of local residents to understand social, physical, and resource characteristics in neighborhood environments, potentially affecting rates of abuse and neglect. Teams of doctoral students provided training to MSW student team members who assisted in conducting local interviews. Teams spent weekend days together in 29 different neighborhoods in Los Angeles and San Diego counties completing local resident interviews. More than 75 MSW students participated, learning about research directly in the field from PhD students and faculty.

The primary research questions posed by Hurlburt, Finno-Velasquez, and He were oriented around the social environmental construct of collective efficacy and its potential determinants. Interviews included questions designed to measure collective efficacy as well as neighborhood characteristics hypothesized to influence development of collective efficacy. Somewhat surprisingly, among these demographically similar and lower SES neighborhoods, collective efficacy did not discriminate between neighborhoods having unusually high and unusually low rates of reported abuse and neglect. Interestingly, other secondary neighborhood constructs hypothesized to affect recognition and reporting of child abuse and neglect also did not discriminate between neighborhoods. From the perspective of local residents, the presence of other social problems (gangs, violence, substance use) was the primary differentiator. This trend was already evident at the halfway point of our neighborhood data collection. Therefore, at that time some questions were adjusted in our surveys (about 15% of questions). Adjustments added questions about resident-perceived factors that sustain or prevent the presence of additional social concerns in the local environment and about the impact of social problems on parent health, mental health, and parent/child relationships. These new questions were asked in only 12 of the 29 neighborhoods studied.

These preliminary studies had several important and relevant impacts for the currently proposed pilot work. First, the fellowship training grant allowed us to develop a highly efficient methodology for conducting neighborhood work. Second, data collection to date has allowed us to rule out important social environmental constructs as factors affecting rates of abuse and neglect in local neighborhoods. Third, our work has led to clearer understanding of factors that do differentiate outlier neighborhood areas and to more focused questions about how such environments affect children and families. Finally, the university fellowship activities led to the preliminary development of a relationship with the WE-CAN coalition in Orange County, a group with complementary interests in research questions, data collection, and a desire for collaboration and interaction around community-based maltreatment prevention strategies (see letter of support, G. Howard). The proposed pilot funds will be used to develop our collaborative relationship.
with the coalition in Orange County and to extend in several important ways research that will position us for competitive grant and service-related proposals.


C.3.1. Overview. Pilot funding will be used to conduct resident surveys in 8-10 neighborhood areas in Orange County identified as outliers with respect to reported child abuse and neglect rates, after controlling for population characteristics known to affect family contact with child welfare.

C.3.2. Identification of Neighborhood Areas. Los Angeles, San Diego, and Orange counties are three large and diverse Southern California counties. They are home to more than 16 million people (10.0 million, Los Angeles; 3.1 million, Orange; 3.2 million, San Diego). All three have neighborhood areas with substantial diversity in physical geography, local infrastructure, and population characteristics.

As occurred separately in Los Angeles and San Diego counties as part of our previous university training fellowship, spatial regression models using Geoda will be conducted of census tracts in Orange County to identify unique tracts with consistently and unusually high and/or low rates of child welfare referrals. Data from the American Community Survey of the US Census will be merged with administrative data from the California Department of Social Services summarizing the number of child welfare referrals occurring in each census tract in 2015 and the reasons for referral. Addresses for child welfare referrals have been geocoded before coming to us, counted within census tracts, and are then divided by the total child population in the tract to derive an annual number of referrals per 100 children in each tract. On average, census tracts are designed to include approximately 4000 residents. In our analyses, only census tracts including at least 500 children will be included to stabilize child welfare referral rate estimates.

Census tracts with CAN referral rates much higher than expected and much lower than expected will be identified by examining regression residuals from spatial regression models that include predictors such as child poverty rates, median home value, adult education levels, single parent household percentage, and residential stability. Five neighborhoods each will be selected with much higher and/or lower referral rates than expected. From work in Los Angeles and San Diego, it is already known that neighborhoods are highly consistent in their outlier status from one year to the next. Within each grouping (tracts with unusually high rates; and tracts with unusually low rates), census tracts will be selected because they are not contiguous or in a cluster together in order to maximize information independence.

C.3.3. Neighborhood Resident Surveys. Relatively brief structured interviews will be conducted with approximately 15-20 adult residents in each neighborhood area (N=150-175 depending upon whether 8 or 10 neighborhoods are identified for interviewing). Starting addresses for targeted interviews will be randomly selected within each tract based on address lists obtained from an external vendor. Interview teams will send mailers and leave informational flyers at target addresses and addresses to the right of target addresses on a day prior to conducting interviews. On weekend days, interview teams will conduct interviews with local residents. If an adult cannot be interviewed at a target address, interviewers will move sequentially to addresses to the right (or up in number) until an interview is obtained.

Interviews require 20-25 minutes to complete and will be administered via handheld tablet (12 tablets already available to the research team). Interviews will be read to participants. Interviews are anonymous and conducted in English and Spanish. Interview teams will consist of faculty, doctoral students, MSW students from USC, and students in PH194 at UCI (Clinical and Translational Science Preparatory Course; faculty = Sorkin), which provides community-based research opportunities for students in public health. Pairs of interviewers in interview teams travel together and have both English and Spanish language speaking ability to enhance engagement and participation. Participants will receive a $20 gift card for their time and participation. Participants enjoy the process and appreciate payment for their time.

Measures. Interviews include questions in a number of different domains based on a priori study hypotheses and themes that emerged from qualitative interviews with key informants in study Phase 2 from our university fellowship training project. Domains include topics related to resident perceptions of the social, institutional, and structural environments in their neighborhood areas. Specifically, the interview includes measures of collective efficacy (trust and collective action), information sharing and mutual support among local residents, child rearing values, neighborhood places and opportunities for youth activities, trust in law enforcement/government agencies, social problems and concerns about social problems, overall neighborhood perceptions, resident health and mental health, and effects of neighborhoods on parenting.
C.4. Linkage with Early Development Index (EDI) data.

C.4.1. Overview. The Early Development Index (EDI) is a population measure of school readiness that collects information about kindergarten-age children at the neighborhood level.\textsuperscript{26,27} We plan to link EDI data with our existing neighborhood level data from child welfare administrative and census sources, and with data emerging from resident surveys in Orange County. Linkage of these data will allow for assessment of differences in population level early childhood development (especially around social and emotional development) in neighborhoods with very similar demographic profiles but very different official population level report rates of abuse and neglect. In addition, the EDI contains specific questions that are possible population-level indicators of child neglect, which could provide an invaluable independent source to validate official referral rates and to aid in assessment of neighborhood level effects on child development.

C.4.2. Measure. The Early Development Index (EDI) is a population measure of school readiness that provides an overall snapshot of children’s developmental progress, communicating how experiences at home and in the community can help prepare children for school. The EDI is a checklist filled out on all children in kindergarten that was developed by the Offord Centre for Child Studies at McMaster University in Canada.\textsuperscript{27} The Children and Families Commission of Orange County has spent more than five years implementing the EDI universally to assess early development of all children in public kindergarten in Orange County (see letter of support, K. Goll). Few other locations in the United States have a comprehensive, reliable, and valid, multi-domain measure of child development completed by knowledgeable raters with all children in a very large geographic area, making these data highly unique.

The EDI includes five key domain areas (physical health & well-being; social competence; emotional maturity; language and cognitive development; and communications skills and general knowledge). Checklists are completed for every child in kindergarten by teachers after they have had half of a school year to get to know the children in their classrooms. Responses can be aggregated to produce holistic, community-level measures of childhood development at the census tract level during the kindergarten year.

C.4.3. Data Linkage. EDI data will be aggregated to the level of census tracts for this project. Within each census tract, the percentage of children who are not ready, somewhat ready, and ready for school can be calculated, with breakdowns by developmental domain and demographic characteristics such as gender, race, and ethnicity. We are particularly interested in examining how excess rates of child abuse and neglect within neighborhoods (and associated differences in neighborhood context) are related to developmental readiness among children. We are also especially interested in potential developmental differences between neighborhoods among children both with and without observed levels of risk of neglect based on teacher report from four specific items within the EDI (frequency that child: (a) arrives at school hungry, (b) is over or under dressed for school related activities, (c) is too tired/sick to do school work, and (d) has problems with daily personal hygiene). De-identified data linkages, whether at the individual level within tracts or aggregated summaries at the census tract level, will distinguish between children with high and low levels of neglect risk based on these items. Data draws will be supported by Ms. Limor Zimskind, who is an expert consultant to the Children and Families Commission of Orange County. She has experience with the EDI going back to its use in Canada and throughout its implementation in Orange County.

C.5. Analysis. The first specific aim of this project is to establish a collaborative, interactive working relationship with the WE-CAN collaborative in Orange County, with its organizational and individual members, and with colleagues at UCI. Faculty members and PhD students from USC identified in this proposal (at minimum Perrigo and Palmer) will have regular meetings to define updates to resident surveys to meet the needs of the WE-CAN collaborative and to learn about and plan for future uses of multiple data sources available to the collaborative, including the universal and soon to be longitudinal EDI data. Meetings will occur at least monthly, including in person and virtual meetings.

Aim 2 extends resident surveys to 8-10 additional neighborhoods in Orange County, which will expand our overall neighborhood data to nearly 40 areas, and to 20 areas regarding questions recently added to our surveys. These data will allow for appropriately powered pilot tests of how parental health, mental health, and parenting strategies differ in demographically similar neighborhoods but with very different rates of child abuse and neglect referrals. These data will also allow us to extend and strengthen prior analyses examining factors hypothesized to differentiate neighborhoods differing in child abuse and neglect rates, including differences in collective efficacy, and factors predicted to affect identification and reporting of
abuse and neglect. Analyses will utilize multi-level, random effects models. Preparatory analyses may involve the use of multiple imputation to address the presence of missing data in some variables prior to analysis, although this has not be a problem in our prior surveys. Following handling of missing data, intraclass correlations are then used to assess the degree to which neighborhood-level constructs are warranted based on shared perceptions among local residents. Assuming such shared perceptions exist (and preliminary evidence suggests ICCs of .1-.3 on key neighborhood constructs), multi-level random effects models will then be used to examine differences between neighborhoods with unusually high and low rates of CAN referrals. Models can also examine how neighborhood level variables are associated with one another. These analyses will be completed using multi-level modeling tools in Stata 14.

Aim 3 builds from prior work in a collaborative way with the Children and Families Commission of Orange County. We will use EDI data to independently validate population level exposure to child neglect and to examine how the environments in neighborhoods with unusually high levels of abuse and neglect may impact child development among a broader range of children. First, we hypothesize that it will be possible to use a teacher-based proxy measure of neglect to validate differential rates of neglect in demographically matched neighborhoods. We predict that teacher-measured neglect risk will be higher in demographically matched neighborhoods, but with unusually high rates of official CAN reports. If this hypothesis is confirmed, it will represent a major advance in research on child maltreatment because almost all work at the neighborhood level to date has had to rely on child welfare based administrative records of abuse and neglect, without opportunity for independent verification. To the degree that independent verification is possible, it will provide opportunities to more effectively estimate neighborhood-level influences on CAN.

Given findings from our existing work, we predict that developmental readiness for school among kindergartners will be poorer in demographically matched neighborhoods that have higher levels of abuse and neglect reports. This could occur in part due to higher overall CAN rates in those neighborhoods, and/or could be affected by broader neighborhood environmental characteristics that both allow for and potentially contribute to abuse and neglect and affect parental health, mental health, and parenting. This observation leads to our third hypothesis, which will examine school readiness among children separately with high and low levels of risk on the proxy neglect measure from the EDI. Assuming that neighborhood contexts that allow for and contribute to rates of abuse and neglect also have a broader impact on other families and children, we would expect to see developmental differences between neighborhoods even among children with matched and low levels of risk for neglect. If this is the case, it will have a considerable impact on how one conceptualizes the developmental impacts associated with abuse and neglect, from focused only on individual families to focused on the families and neighborhoods in which CAN frequently occurs.

The analyses described will all utilize multi-level modeling approaches to account for the clustering of resident responses within neighborhood areas. Power in all EDI analyses is high (>8) because of the large number of census tracts in Orange County and extensive child level data. For many analyses that involve use of EDI data, it will be possible to conduct such analyses using neighborhoods in which we do not have resident survey data available because those are not necessary for identifying outlier neighborhoods.

C.6. Future Directions. The proposed pilot activities will create and enhance multiple specific new research and educational opportunities. First, the WE-CAN collaborative has a specific charge to design community-level maltreatment prevention efforts. Gene Howard, Dara Sorkin, Dan Cooper (head of UCI CTSI) and I have discussed a desire to work on projects together in this arena, including research that takes advantage of the Family Resource Center network at the heart of the WE-CAN collaborative. Second, we anticipate additional research opportunities that focus on the specific neighborhood environmental characteristics that impact family functioning and parenting and affect early childhood development. NIH and foundation proposals at multiple levels are possible in this domain. Dan Cooper, Dara Sorkin, Gene Howard, and I have also discussed bringing together CTSIs from multiple institutions to form a network focused on community-level maltreatment prevention (at a minimum to support OC efforts). Based on collaborative relationships I developed around the US during my sabbatical, this has the potential to lead to network or center proposals in collaboration with other faculty at USC (e.g., Astor, Hackman, Lee, Putnam-Hornstein, Traube, and others). Finally, this work will continue to create highly innovative community-based learning opportunities for students at multiple institutions, including our own MSW students, which may lead to separate training grants that emphasize community-oriented research and intervention design.
D. Human Subjects. Because the nature of the proposed work is consistent with work conducted within the limits of the university fellowship to Hurlburt, Finno-Velasquez, and He, it is quite possible that we will be able to amend our existing human subjects protocol to accommodate the proposed research activities. If it is not possible, a separate human subjects protocol application will be submitted. Because the data we plan to use will be completely anonymous (resident surveys) or de-identified (linked EDI data), and do not include any identifying or sensitive information from the perspective of research participants, it is expected that the proposed additional research activities will fall into the exempt classification. This was true for resident surveys we conducted in the past, which were reviewed by the Institutional Review Board at USC.
References


E. Budget, Budget Justification, and Timeline.

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<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Detailed Expenses</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Neighborhood Data Collection</td>
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<td>Gift cards</td>
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<td>Lanyards</td>
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<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>14,870</td>
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(A). In order to extend data collection into 8-10 neighborhoods in Orange County, this will require costs similar to those incurred in work conducted in Los Angeles and San Diego. Gift cards will be purchased as incentives for study participants. Lunches, lanyards, and T-shirts will be purchased for data collectors, which may include USC MSW students and UCI representatives. Mileage for USC students to and from Orange County data collection sites will be provided. Planning for the fact that survey questions will be altered to meet the needs of Orange County partners, translation costs are included. Finally, to select the target neighborhoods for Orange County data collection, address lists will be purchased from a third party vendor. (B). Some additional expenses will be incurred to bring together partners for meetings to plan the exact data to be gathered in OC neighborhoods, discuss logistics, and plan for future work. (C). This support will fund two doctoral students working with Dr. Hurlburt (Judith Perrigo and Abigail Palmer) during Summer 2017 for activities related to analyzing and publishing results that emerge and working on future proposals. (D). This amount will cover expenses for Limor Zimskind, the EDI data consultant working with the Children and Families Commission of Orange County, for any expenses associated with preparing and pulling EDI data for analysis and related consultation.

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<td>5. Proposal development</td>
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Dear Dr. Hurlburt,

On behalf of the Orange County Alliance for Children and Families, I am very excited to extend our support for the work outlined in the proposed project: **Advancing Understanding of Neighborhood Influences on Child Abuse and Neglect and Early Childhood School Readiness: A University/Community Partnership.** This represents a wonderful opportunity for the Orange County Alliance to formalize our collaborative relationship with you and the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work. The Alliance is a consortium of 14 private nonprofit agencies providing a comprehensive array of services to children and families in the child welfare system. We have recently become part of a new group called the WE-CAN Coalition in Orange County, which aims to engage the entire community in dealing with issues surrounding child abuse and neglect. I am leading a specific sub-committee charged with developing a community level response to child abuse and neglect prevention. We were very excited to learn about your work that examines social dynamics in communities with unusual rates of child maltreatment referrals in Los Angeles and San Diego counties.

Since our initial conversations, we have been interested in identifying an opportunity to work together with you on extending data collection from this work into Orange County neighborhoods and incorporating you into thinking about potential community prevention efforts in Orange County. During the proposed period of pilot support, we look forward to opportunities to work together to refine planned resident interviews so that they are maximally effective for informing your work and the work of our community prevention subcommittee. We are also extraordinarily enthusiastic about the planned efforts to make use of the Early Development Index (EDI) data available in Orange County. Your thinking will be helping us to make use of existing data resources in Orange County in ways we had not already considered and we very much look forward to collaboration around how the EDI data and other data resources in Orange County can be brought to bear to inform our work.

Overall, I want to express our sincere support for the planned pilot work because it will create opportunities for us to work together, to discuss prevention strategies, and to plan for future research and evaluation that arises in the context of the community-based abuse and neglect prevention efforts in Orange County. I know that you and the students you work with will benefit from the opportunity to work with the many invested government, non-profit, and community agencies and stakeholders involved in our collaborative. Thank you for including us in this proposal.

Sincerely,

Gene Howard
Executive Director
November 1, 2016

Michael S. Hurlburt, PhD
Associate Professor
Director of Doctoral Programs and Chair of the PhD Program
USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work
University of Southern California

Dear Dr. Hurlburt,

It is my pleasure to support your application for the project “Advancing Understanding of Neighborhood Influences on Child Abuse and Neglect and Early Childhood School Readiness: A University/Community Partnership”. The Children and Families Commission of Orange County is a leading collaborative partner, within the First Five community, statewide, and nationally, in responding to children’s needs and supporting programs and policy best practices for children’s health and development. As a leader of funding and planning efforts to advance children’s healthy development in Orange County, we invested in administering the Early Development Index (EDI) as a tool to evaluate the developmental progress and school readiness of children when they enter kindergarten. Through strong partnership with school districts and school personnel, we have been able to obtain valid data in 100 percent of the public elementary schools in Orange County, enabling evaluation of individual community and countywide trends. We now possess an impressive source of data on child development in Orange County, and we welcome opportunities to partner with you, your students, and the other collaborators in this pilot work to advance knowledge on children’s development and its connection with neighborhood environments.

Your proposal to link our EDI data with child abuse and neglect referral data in order to conduct analyses that have relevance for thinking about child health and well-being at the community level is just the type of project we would love to support. Our expert consultant with the EDI data, Limor Zimskind, has worked to ensure the quality of the data and its readiness for analysis that will produce valid results. She will be available to provide the de-identified EDI data that are needed for the planned research activities and to consult with you about use of and interpretation of analyses using these data. We know that the EDI represents a highly unique data resource in the United States with respect to early child development and we are excited about the opportunity to work together to use these data in interesting ways that will help to inform understanding of neighborhood level influences on early childhood development and school readiness, and to inform the work of the WE-CAN collaborative. We also are enthusiastic about the opportunity to partner with you and the opportunities it may create for future research efforts.

Sincerely,

Kimberly Goll
Executive Director
October 31, 2016

Michael S. Hurlburt, PhD
Associate Professor
Director of Doctoral Programs and Chair of the PhD Program
USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work
University of Southern California

Dear Dr. Hurlburt,

I am writing to express my enthusiasm and willingness to partner with you in your proposed research project, “Advancing Understanding of Neighborhood Influences on Child Abuse and Neglect and Early Childhood School Readiness: A University/Community Partnership”. This study has the potential to create a number of important and interesting opportunes. First, Orange County has a number of characteristics that makes it a unique area for exploration. It is the third most populous county in California, with some of the greatest ethnic/racial diversity in the state. Santa Ana, a city within Orange County, is among the most Hispanic/Latino percentage cities (75%) in both CA and the U.S. Orange County also has the largest proportion of Asian Americans in Southern California, where one in five residents are Asian American. Thus, having access to this diverse population will help you to broaden your conceptual understanding of factors that contribute to child abuse and neglect. The opportunity, importantly, is bi-directional. This project will also give us the opportunity to learn from the methods you have developed for examining neighborhood influences on child abuse and neglect, and will enhance our capacity as a county to be able to model and intervene in areas of high risk. Leveraging this information, in combination with our partnership with Gene Howard and the Orange County Alliance for Children and Families, will serve as a critical building block in these efforts. Third, your research project offers a rare opportunity to engage and involve students in community-based health research, a critical step in training the next generation of professionals involved in clinical and translational science, and a key strategic goal of UCI’s Institute for Clinical and Translational Science. Finally, I personally am looking forward to working with you in this research capacity to consider how we can expand current conceptions of neighborhood influence to include models of health promotion.

Since 2014, I have been Associate Professor in the Department of Medicine at the University of California, Irvine (UCI), and am currently serving as the Director for Community Engagement for UCI’s Institute for Clinical and Translational Science. I am a health services researcher trained in lifespan developmental and health psychology with extensive experience in developing and testing
health promotion interventions for diverse populations, particularly ethnic/racially diverse adults, using social networks, innovative incentives and interventions, and the use of mobile technologies. I am also experienced in survey development and administration from different populations using a variety of modalities of administration, including web-based survey design. I have specific expertise in the areas of behavioral health, including obesity, diabetes prevention and control, and mental health (specifically depression and post-traumatic stress disorder).

This project is important, and has the potential to become the foundation for furthering important community and institutional partnerships. I look forward to the opportunity to work with you and your team.

Sincerely,

Dara Sorkin, PhD
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