

**Early-Phase Competition Absolute Priority 4 (SEL)
Cook Center for Human Connection, L3C
S411C230020**

Helping Helpers Help: An Integrated Model for Empowering Educators and Parents as Partners in Supporting Student Wellness and Learning

Applicant Name: Cook Center for Human Connection

Project Title: Helping Helpers Help: An Integrated Model for Empowering Educators and Parents as Partners in Supporting Student Wellness and Learning

Type of Grant Requested: (select one) Early-Phase Mid-Phase Expansion

Absolute Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

Absolute Priority 1-- Demonstrate a Rationale (Early), Moderate (Mid), Strong (Expansion)

Absolute Priority 4-- Meeting Student Social, Emotional, and Academic Needs

Competitive Preference Priorities the Project Addresses: (select all that apply)

Competitive Preference Priority 1— Promoting Equity in Student Access to Educational Resources and Opportunities: Implementers and Partners

Total number of students to be served: 25,000

Grade level(s) to be served by the project: 6, 7, 8

Definition of high-need students: Middle school students who are attending a high poverty school, are children of color, and/or are living in a county with a shortage of mental health services.

Brief description of project activities: “Helpers” addresses the national emergency in youth mental health and suicide and related social-emotional barriers to learning. “The “Helpers” model includes both onsite and virtual professional learning to build the skills, knowledge, and perceived self-efficacy of educators in recognizing and helping with mental-health related issues with students and families. Schools and educators learn to share powerful resources for family efficacy through Mental Health Seminars and ParentGuidance.org, a suite of personalized courses and coaching services to support parents and help improve protective factors at home, including connection, warmth, structure, consistency, and support. Developing this parental engagement is a powerful pathway to equity, as students with better mental wellness experience fewer barriers to learning and thus improved success.

Summary of project objectives and expected outcomes: Objectives include piloting and iteratively improving the “Helpers” model with culturally and linguistically responsive supports, and then evaluating its efficacy using mixed methods and a cluster randomized controlled trial. Measured outcomes include school climate, teacher practice, teacher well-being, and parent engagement in supporting adolescent mental wellness and learning, all of which ultimately affect student learning success.

Summary of how the project is innovative: “Helpers” features an innovative combination of research-based strategies to help schools help their helpers—educators and parents—better help their students and children learn, develop, and thrive.

Other studies related to the project: Epstein, et al., 2008; Balaguru et al., 2013; Marraccini & Brier, 2017

Proposed implementation sites: Rural middle schools in AZ & NM serving > 20% Hispanic students

Organizations partnering with this project: New Mexico State University, School Superintendents Association (AASA), New Mexico Coalition of Education Leaders, Arizona School Administrators, and 3