



## ABOUT THE ANNIE E. CASEY FOUNDATION

The Annie E. Casey Foundation is a private, national philanthropy that creates better futures for the nation's children by strengthening families, building economic opportunities and transforming neighborhoods into safer and healthier places to live, work and grow. For more information, visit the Foundation's website at [www.aecf.org](http://www.aecf.org).

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# AN INVESTMENT IN THE FUTURE

Helping low-income communities become places that support and strengthen families is a complex challenge that requires bold, imaginative and catalytic action, and leaders who step up to drive and sustain change.

The Annie E. Casey Foundation recognized that without this strong leadership, investments in programs and system reform initiatives alone were insufficient to accelerate measurable and lasting improvements in child and family well-being. Acting on this conviction, the Casey Foundation developed the Children and Family Fellowship, a 20-month executive leadership program for accomplished professionals. The Foundation's unique approach to leadership development—results-based leadership—stems from a conviction that results-driven leaders are vital to achieving measurable and lasting improvements in child and family well-being. The Fellowship explicitly strives to increase the pool of diverse, visionary leaders with the confidence and competence to lead and sustain major system reforms and community change initiatives that benefit large numbers of children and families.

Since its launch nearly 20 years ago, the Children and Family Fellowship remains the Casey Foundation's signature program for developing the potential of leaders at the helm of public and non-profit organizations working to improve outcomes for children. It is part of a comprehensive portfolio of tools and programs to identify and develop talent, and support existing leaders in communities, organizations and systems to build their capacity for sustaining and accelerating results. The Fellowship represents an important investment in the future of the human services field—and in the futures of our nation's most vulnerable children.

### Seeking Talented Professionals, Aspiring and Achieving Leaders

The Fellowship seeks people who are committed to helping low-income families succeed in their roles as parents, members of communities and productive participants in the workforce and economy. We seek people who are committed to achieving better outcomes for children, families and communities. We seek talented, accomplished and ambitious professionals from across the country who want to strengthen public and nonprofit systems in ways that make them more reliable, equitable, effective and efficient. We seek people who strive for excellence, who want to accelerate their professional and personal development, and who want to amplify their impact and make a greater difference.

### A Life-Changing Opportunity

The Fellowship is an intensive program designed to increase the capacity of leaders to improve outcomes for America's vulnerable families. Through 20 months of Fellowship activities, participants broaden their vision, increase their base of knowledge, and expand and refine their skills. Fellows develop new networks and strengthen their existing ones, and accumulate the experience they need to lead major change efforts. A unique opportunity for reflection, exploration and learning, the Fellowship fosters career-enhancing growth and provides lifelong connections to the Foundation and its networks.

### High Expectations

At the end of this rich experience, Fellows travel a career path of increasing impact and influence. The Casey Foundation makes a significant investment in its Fellows, and has ambitious expectations for them as they go forward. We expect Fellows to be in significant leadership positions where they can effectively lead system reforms or community change efforts that improve the life circumstances and prospects of vulnerable children and families living in low-income communities.



## YOLIE FLORES

1993

Yolie Flores doesn't shy away from championing reforms that hold school systems accountable for providing a quality education to all children. As a Los Angeles Unified School District Board of Education member, she spearheaded school choice and parent engagement initiatives. She now leads an organization committed to closing the achievement gap for thousands of low-income and minority students as chief executive officer of Communities for Teaching Excellence, launched in 2010 to ensure "effective teaching for every student, in every classroom, every year." In its first four sites, Hillsborough County, Florida; Memphis; Pittsburgh; and Los Angeles, the organization helps inform, engage and empower communities to advocate for reforms in the evaluation, placement and compensation of teachers to bolster student success. "What I'm doing is so connected to everything I learned in the Fellowship, because it's so results- and accountability-focused," notes Flores. "But there is so much resistance! The only path forward is if parents are fully involved, because you can't always count on progressive leadership. You have to create a community that demands, expects and gets reform."

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## BRENDA DONALD

1995

While offering to help Washington, D.C., Mayor Vincent Gray find a new director for his Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA), Brenda Donald talked up the city as “a great place to run a child welfare agency” because of its size, leadership and climate for reform. But Donald, a former D.C. deputy mayor who later became Maryland’s Secretary of Human Resources and then a vice president at Casey, “kept feeling this tug” that maybe she was the right candidate. “I kept thinking how cool it would be to go back with all I had learned from the Fellowship, Casey and in Maryland,” says the D.C. native. Confirmed as CFSA director in April 2012, Donald works to “narrow the front door” so fewer children enter foster care, more find permanent homes and practice reflects research on youth touched by trauma. “D.C. is a city and county and state all in one, and it’s just 67 square miles. The kids we touch are all connected; we can really get to the heart of the issues,” notes Donald, who has since hired two other Fellows on her team.



# the fellowship experience

## A Competency-Based Leadership Program

The Children and Family Fellowship is centered on the following five core competencies that equip leaders to make changes intended to produce results:

- Being results-based and data-driven, using results-based accountability as their approach to change and decision making. This includes defining a result, engaging partners to achieve the result and using data to assess and drive progress.
- Working to close the racial, class and cultural disparities in outcomes that exist for vulnerable populations.
- Viewing themselves as change agents, believing that individual leaders are

capable of being catalysts for positive change, regardless of what positions they hold within their organizations.

- Mastering adaptive leadership skills that will help them bring about lasting change through shifts in stakeholder beliefs and practices.
- Collaborating with others, understanding that the ability to foster group consensus enables leaders to work together to achieve results.

## The Fellowship Experience

The 20-month Fellowship program brings together leaders from varied professional backgrounds, geographic regions and racial and ethnic groups.



## FELLOWSHIP GOALS

### The Children and Family Fellowship

experience is designed to achieve these goals:

- **BROADEN VISION**

Fellows gain insight into the possibilities for improving outcomes for fragile families and disinvested neighborhoods and can envision the pathways needed to reach those goals.

- **ENHANCE LEADERSHIP CAPACITY**

Fellows hone their adaptive and technical skills, expand their ability to think strategically, and increase their self-awareness—all critical aspects of successful leadership.

- **EXPAND KNOWLEDGE**

Fellows learn about innovative programs, policies, practices and powerful strategies that are strengthening communities and families, and closing disparity gaps.

- **ENLARGE NETWORKS**

Fellows gain exposure to people, programs and ideas that challenge their thinking and assumptions. This network-building also helps Fellows develop relationships that will be important resources as they progress through their careers.

- **INCREASE CONFIDENCE**

Fellows build the self-assurance and boldness needed to take on challenging career paths and lead significant change initiatives.

This diverse group of Fellows becomes a powerful learning community that serves as both catalyst and support throughout this intensive experience. At the same time, the Fellowship is structured to serve the complex and individual learning needs of each Fellow. Change is the hallmark of the Fellowship—personal and professional change, change in perspective and vision, and changes of scenery as Fellows travel to 10 seminars at the Casey Foundation and around the country. While balancing the demands of their current positions, Fellows participate in a series of leadership opportunities, including executive seminars, peer consultations and individual coaching to provide real-time application and learning.

## Group Seminars

The cornerstone of the Fellowship experience is a series of 10 four- to five-day seminars that employ a dynamic, experiential learning approach. Codesigned by Fellowship faculty, Foundation staff and Fellows, the seminar series follows an arc of learning designed to build the competencies of Fellows to achieve results and close disparities. The seminars are based on the core proposition that effective leaders understand the dynamics of a shared power world and that real change requires productive partnerships involving families, communities and the faith, for-profit, public and nonprofit sectors. The seminar series will



## EDWARD CHISOLM

1997

Edward Chisolm started his career in Savannah as a case manager for New Futures, Casey's first multi-site initiative to improve results for youth. Today, he is executive director of the Chatham-Savannah Youth Futures Authority (YFA), a state-legislated collaborative that mobilizes stakeholders and residents to improve results around teen pregnancy, educational outcomes, juvenile delinquency and child development. Initially, "We were convinced we were on the right track" by emphasizing system reform, notes Chisolm, but soon realized the importance of addressing community needs. "We made a major shift to do both." Before returning to YFA as director in 2008, Chisolm led an infant mortality initiative, worked for the mayor and was executive director of the Neighborhood Improvement Association. "These experiences have allowed me to bring research, policy and practice together" to help YFA prioritize policy goals. The Fellowship has been pivotal, he says. "Being able to pick the brains of experts equally passionate and committed is like having a smorgasbord of your favorite food and you can have as much as you want."

enhance the Fellows' leadership capacity in four major arenas:

- leadership for the benefit of children, families and communities;
- leadership for the development of their organization;
- leadership to transform the systems and sectors the leader works within; and
- their personal and professional development.

Each seminar explores real-time leadership challenges, and encompasses exposure to leaders who are producing measurable results for children and families and organizations employing best practices. The seminars offer a concrete set of tools to aid Fellows in the realization of effective personal, organizational and systems change, building Fellows' mastery of the core competencies of results-based leadership. The seminars provide an opportunity for reflective practice, peer learning and networking.

## Individual Learning Plans

As part of the program, Fellows construct an individual learning plan that serves as the road map for their Fellowship experience. The plan asks each Fellow to frame a personal theory of change, that is, a vision of how change occurs for children, families and communities and the leadership roles they aspire to play in creating that change. The plan evolves throughout the Fellowship and serves as a powerful reflective tool. It focuses each Fellow on the results they want to achieve, establishes personal learning and professional development goals, and describes a set of Fellowship experiences strategically designed to meet those goals. Fellows

will have access to Fellowship faculty to provide individual coaching to support their journey.

## Individual Learning Activities

To complement the seminars and other group activities, Fellows pursue individual experiences that address the specific needs and goals set out in their learning plans. These activities include specialized individual learning, peer consultations, directed readings and much more. Fellows are connected to content-relevant Casey staff and Casey Fellowship alumni with whom they negotiate learning activities such as a site visit to an innovative program or participation at a conference.

## The Casey Fellows Alumni Network

All Fellows become part of the growing network of influential Casey Fellows across the country. The Casey Fellows Network provides opportunities for professional collaboration and supports Fellow-to-Fellow relationships that maximize the impact of the Fellowship experience. The Network meets semiannually and conducts ongoing professional development activities. It also provides resources to support Fellows, including grants and technical assistance resources. The Network supports collaborative activities among Fellows and encourages them to take advantage of the wealth of knowledge and expertise among Fellows, leverage Casey resources in their own work, and offer ongoing consultation and leadership to the Fellowship program and the Foundation.

Through the Fellowship, I was able to think more strategically about social change.



## GRANT JONES

1999

Grant Jones is the founding executive director of the Center for African American Health, a community-based organization serving the Denver metro area that seeks to reduce serious health disparities among African Americans. The Center partners with a wide variety of organizations to provide culturally appropriate disease prevention and disease management programs to thousands of African Americans each year. It also acts as a voice for African Americans in the public policy arena to promote system reforms that improve access to health care and the quality of care. Jones's innovative work with the Center, which caps a career of distinguished service in the nonprofit sector, has earned him a number of prestigious awards, many of which followed on the heels of the Fellowship. "The Fellowship was a powerful experience for me," he says. "It provided leadership skill enhancement, a powerful network of colleagues, access to resources and an opportunity for renewal. Through the Fellowship, I was able to think bigger and more strategically about social change."

## MOLLY MCGRATH TIERNEY

2001

When Molly McGrath Tierney became director of the Baltimore City Department of Social Services in 2008, she recognized that, “We had to get to families before things got so bad” that removing a child was even considered. Her leadership reaped results: Between 2008 and 2012, the share of children in foster care dropped by 48 percent, children placed in group homes plummeted by 82 percent and children with permanent families rose 47 percent. The Fellowship brought mentors like 1995 Fellow Brenda Donald, who hired her while Secretary of the Maryland Department of Human Resources, into Tierney’s life and altered her worldview.

“Before, I might have felt confident about how to solve a program problem in a small place; now I focus on how to change the world.” In running a \$650 million agency whose services touch a third of the city’s population, Tierney looks beyond silos. “I can go to the school system and say, ‘Give me the name of every kid who is chronically absent so we can send out a support worker to find out what is going on.’”



# selection criteria

The Children and Family Fellowship seeks highly qualified individuals who have made a difference in the lives of disadvantaged children and families, the communities in which they live or the systems that serve them. The candidates we are looking for have a minimum of 10 years of diverse professional experience in the social sector, characterized by increasing levels of responsibility in the field of children and families (for example, directors, deputies, program managers, department heads and executives). They have a strong record of achievement and career advancement and have set their sights on even higher levels of impact and influence.

## A Leadership Profile

Strong candidates demonstrate a variety of leadership qualities and show evidence of even greater leadership potential. They have a vision for change and the drive to impact outcomes. They are capable of promoting collaboration and cooperation across disciplines and among diverse groups, and of managing and institutionalizing change. They are able to innovate, take and manage risks, listen and learn, inspire others and persevere, often against great odds. They have significant influence within their organizations and have the opportunity to immediately apply the concepts learned through the

Fellowship within their organizations. The Fellowship seeks people who can translate their beliefs into action, think strategically, get things done and measure the difference they are making for children and families.

## Ambitious Career Goals

The Fellowship wants leaders who are ready for significant professional challenges and expanded leadership roles—in major community-building initiatives and in public systems. They should not simply aspire to the next rung on the organizational ladder. They have ambitious career goals and want increasing responsibility for leading systems and community change efforts that improve outcomes for large numbers of disadvantaged children and families.

## At a Pivotal Point in Careers

The Casey Fellowship is not for everyone. We seek the right people, but also people at the right moment in their careers. Fellows must be prepared to participate in the program—committing the time and energy to take full advantage of the Fellowship opportunity while balancing the demands of their current positions.

The Fellowship aims to support, strengthen and nurture leaders representative of the communities and people who are served by public and nonprofit systems. We seek Fellows from varied personal, racial, ethnic and professional backgrounds.



## JANET CARTER

2003

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." This Margaret Mead quote is a favorite of Janet Carter's, for good reason. Carter helped launch a national movement to end violence against women while vice president at the Family Violence Prevention Fund and is now building a movement to improve health and education outcomes for kids in low-income communities through the power of service and sports. Carter is executive director of Coaching Corps, which mobilizes college students to serve as volunteer coaches in after-school sports programs serving low-income communities. The program aims to eliminate disparities in organized sports programs and to reach more than 500,000 kids in five years. Coaches also use teachable moments to mentor the youth. "Our volunteer coaches talk about how outraged they are about the lack of opportunities for these youth, and we are helping them raise awareness of these disparities among the public and policymakers," notes Carter. "I absolutely would not be doing this work if it were not for the Fellowship. It builds the character to lead at a bigger level."

## KEY COMMITMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

### Achieving results, holding accountability and using data to improve systems

Candidates embrace the use of data to improve programs, services and the systems in which they operate. They are interested in employing evidence-based practice. They recognize that collaborative leadership and partnerships are essential to achieving results. They act with urgency and are committed to producing results that can be monitored and measured.

### Improving the life circumstances of America's most vulnerable children and families

Candidates have demonstrated a commitment to assisting underserved

communities, reducing racial disparities and managing a diverse workforce. They reflect the diversity of client and employee populations and understand how race, ethnicity, class, gender and language affect service delivery, policy, practice, advocacy and leadership decisions.

### Strengthening the role and control families have in deciding their futures

Candidates recognize that their role is to support families in realizing the aspirations they have for themselves and their children. They believe that children do well when their families do well. Candidates recognize that services and supports to families are most effective when the family is a full

← I absolutely would not be doing this work if it were not for the Fellowship. It builds the character to lead at a bigger level.

partner in decisions made about the family. Candidates believe that when families have the needed resources and capacity they will act on their own behalf in ways that support and strengthen the family.

### **Tackling the adaptive challenges to achieve true organizational and systems change**

Candidates understand that the hard work of changing the culture of organizations and systems in order to achieve results often requires strategies to change deeply held attitudes, habits and ultimately values. They have the will to take on these challenges by disrupting dysfunctional patterns of staff and organizational behaviors and building new organizational norms and culture that establish the achievement of results at the heart of the work.

### **Leading in the context of a “shared power world”**

Candidates engage partners in the community, public agencies and other sectors to achieve measurable results for children and families. They are committed to including families in

decision making. They understand that in today’s shared power world a leader must look beyond traditional realms and engage multiple viewpoints and stakeholders in action to improve outcomes.

### **Striving for organizational excellence**

Candidates are capable of leading and institutionalizing change. They can apply the knowledge and tools acquired in the Fellowship to their own organizations and to the communities and systems in which they work. They strive for high performance for themselves and for their organizations.

### **Investing in professional and personal growth**

Successful candidates are committed to investing in their professional and personal development. They are interested in learning about themselves and understanding others. They are reflective about their leadership and interpersonal styles, and willing to make changes that help them become change agents.



**DANIEL CARDINALI**  
2007

During his Casey Fellowship, Daniel J. Cardinali, president of Communities in Schools (CIS), received heartening news. Data from a third-party evaluation revealed CIS was the only dropout prevention organization in the United States with scientific evidence demonstrating that it lowers dropout rates and increases the rate of young people graduating from high school with four-year degrees. CIS, a network of 200 local nonprofits and state organizations, focuses on closing the achievement gap and eliminating the causes for kids dropping out of school. “The Fellowship pushed me to think about how to leverage our results in a systemic way, and what our responsibility was vis-à-vis the larger education system,” reflects Cardinali. CIS was instrumental in developing the Keeping Parents and Communities Engaged Act introduced by the late Senator Edward Kennedy in the summer of 2009, which would expand family and community involvement in schools and address high dropout rates among at-risk children. “The Fellowship helped me see results not as an end in themselves but as a means of promoting change,” notes Cardinali.

## GLORIA O'NEILL

2010

Gloria O'Neill has been aggressive in expanding the reach of the Cook Inlet Tribal Council in Anchorage, Alaska, where she's been president and chief executive officer since 1998. Pursuing grants and partnerships, she has increased the Council's budget six-fold and grown its staff from 70 to 230. Providing social, educational and employment opportunities residents need to succeed in tough economic times is challenging, but thanks to the Fellowship, O'Neill has the right tools. "The Fellowship was one of the most transformative experiences in my career," says O'Neill, who recently established a for-profit digital gaming company to develop educational and consumer games as a stable source of revenue for her organization. "The initiative was a bold move, but we needed to bring in unrestricted resources to develop a model for sustainability so that our people can advance," says O'Neill, who also uses concepts she learned in the Fellowship such as results-based accountability, leadership development and strategic visioning. "Four years ago, I wouldn't have had the same insight or tools to fully realize the potential of the path ahead."



## selection process

The Casey Foundation solicits nominations for the Children and Family Fellowship from a prestigious, national network of organizations and individuals who lead many of the most dynamic systems, institutions and programs in America today. Their wide spheres of influence throughout the public, nonprofit and private sectors uniquely position them to identify the talented leaders sought by the Children and Family Fellowship.

Once nominated, candidates are invited to complete a Fellowship application. The Fellowship selection committee, composed of a diverse team of Casey staff, Fellowship alumni and partners in the Foundation's work, reviews all applications and recommends candidates for further consideration. Special attention will be given to candidates with significant ties to the places, organizations and areas of interest in which the Foundation invests. Personal recommendations are then sought and reviewed. The committee selects a small number of finalists who are invited to the Casey Foundation for an interview. Final selection of Children and Family Fellows is announced following the interviews.



# foundation support

The Casey Foundation funds the cost of tuition of the Children and Family Fellowship as well as all program-related expenses, including:

- Travel to and from Fellowship activities
- Meals
- Lodging
- Materials

The Foundation may also cover additional expenses incurred because of participation in the Fellowship. In addition, the Foundation provides resources to support the Fellow's individual and/or organizational learning.



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