

Qualified Treatment Trainee Grants Program

Fiscal Year 2021 Report



University of Wisconsin
Whitewater

Center for Inclusive Transition,
Education and Employment

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Introduction

Background

The Wisconsin Qualified Treatment Trainee (QTT) Grants Program is intended to expand the number of Qualified Treatment Trainees (QTTs) and invest in statewide QTT supervisor development by awarding grants to agencies providing outpatient mental health services. The state of Wisconsin's 2020-2021 budget bill allocated \$500,000 each fiscal year to support qualified treatment trainee grants. (§ 146.618) The statute specifically outlined grants for treatment programs to support supervision, training, and resources, including salaries, benefits, and other related costs. The QTT Grants Program was planned and developed during the 2020 fiscal year, with implementation beginning in the 2021 fiscal year through a collaboration between the Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Division of Care and Treatment Services, Bureau of Prevention, Treatment, and Recovery (DHS/DCTS/BPTR) and UW-Whitewater's Center for Inclusive Transition, Education and Employment (CITEE). The QTT Grants Program development was guided by an advisory committee consisting of statewide stakeholders, including representatives of professional associations, mental health agencies, and advocates.

Through the planning and development process, stakeholders identified and targeted two goals as a method to increase statewide mental health treatment capacity: to expand the number of statewide placement opportunities for QTTs; and to increase statewide QTT supervisory capacity through professional development and support.¹ Statutes provide two definitions of a QTT: a graduate student who is enrolled in an accredited institution in psychology, counseling, marriage and family therapy, social work, nursing, or a closely related field; and a person with a graduate degree from an accredited institution and course work in psychology, counseling, marriage and family therapy, social work, nursing or a closely related field who has not yet completed the applicable supervised practice requirements. (DHS 35.03(17m)) The QTT Grants Program specifically targeted an increase in employment opportunities for post-graduate QTTs in the first year of implementation.

A QTT requires both direct practice experience and supervision to fulfill requirements for this credentialing process. The QTT Grants Program increased access to required employment experience and the supervision necessary during this process by expanding financial and supervisory support at qualified agencies. High-quality, consistent supervision is a critical aspect of a QTT's ability to develop the professional clinical skills necessary to gain professional credentials. For this reason, the QTT Grants Program facilitated supervisor development by utilizing a specific, evidence-informed supervision skills framework delivered and practiced during a peer-peer, supervisor community of practice during the grant program.

In order to provide a comprehensive scope to the targeted outcomes of the QTT Grants Program, three grant types were created, with unique rationales and scopes of work designed to best meet the needs of agencies supervising QTTs. A QTT Supervision Practice Profile was developed by members of the UW-Whitewater Social Work Department using resources identified by Core Team members, intended to support internal supervisors in the use of best practices in supervision. This report will provide a summary of the implementation year of the program, detail program outcomes, and outline key recommendations for future program years.

¹ See *Appendix I – Logic Model* for a description of targeted outcomes.

Stakeholders

Throughout the planning and implementation of the QTT Grants Program, multiple stakeholders participated and contributed.² Stakeholders fell into three major categories:

- Core team members
- Advisory Committee members
- Grant recipients

The Core team consisted of the Department of Health Services, Division of Care and Treatment Services (DHS-DCTS) and UW-Whitewater's Center for Inclusive Transition Education and Employment (CITEE). This team provided overall management and administration of the grants program. Members of this team also conducted key activities, including facilitation of initial training events and Community of Practice sessions.

The Advisory Committee advised the core group on the development of all grants program materials, applications, and grant selection priority criteria. Members supported the outreach efforts of the program and reviewed applications for completion of priority criteria recommendations. Members of the advisory committee included representatives of the following groups:

- Federal Qualified Health Centers
- DHS 35 Clinics
- Wisconsin County Human Services Departments
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing community
- Professional mental health care provider associations
- UW-Whitewater's Social Work Department

The QTT Grants Program Grantees consist of agencies that currently employ or plan to employ QTTs with the support of QTT grants. Many agencies consist of mental health service providers, community social service agencies, and other clinical settings.

² For a complete listing of individuals representing each stakeholder group, see *Appendix II – Stakeholder List*.

Competitive Application Process

Priority Areas

In order to garner a pool of applicants best qualified to meet the targeted program outcomes, the Core Team and the Advisory Committee collaborated to develop priority areas for the three grant types. After defining these areas and delineating standards, the following application categories and subcategories were established:

- Consumer characteristics
 - Provision of service to populations at or below the poverty level
 - Provision of service to historically disadvantaged populations
- Service Provider characteristics
 - Level and type of agency certification
 - Historical levels of Medicaid billing
 - Provision of service within under-served geographic regions
- Supervisory characteristics
 - Readiness to provide or move toward provision of qualified internal QTT supervision
 - Readiness to increase hiring of post-graduate QTTs
 - Distinct productivity standards for QTTs and QTT supervisors
- Organizational goals and commitments
 - Use of tele-health service provision
 - Demonstrated commitment to professional development
 - Diverse hiring practices
 - Description of overall grant impact

Grant Award Types

The Core Team, in concert with the Advisory Committee, established three distinct QTT grant award types: Emerging Agency Grant, Supplemental Accommodations Grant, and the Expanding Agency Grant. Grants totaling \$310,000 were identified in order to offer grant funds to a variety of agencies depending on their current capacity to expand QTTs positions, as well as their current capacity to hire, supervise and accommodate a diverse group of QTTs. Each grant type was created to meet the overall program goals of both increasing the number of QTTs and developing supervisory best practices at their agency in a unique way, and each was designed with unique required activities to be completed by the recipient.

The Expanding Agency Award was created to support agencies with a history of hiring post-graduate QTTs in increasing their total internally supervised post-graduate QTT positions. Fourteen individual awards in the amount of \$20,000 were set aside, for a total of \$280,000. Successful Expanding Agency Award recipients designated one internal supervisor to participate in a Supervisory Community of Practice, which included six monthly sessions focused on supervisory topics, ongoing documentation of supervisory sessions with at least one post-graduate QTT, and feedback from the supervisor and QTT on the supervisory alliance.

The Emerging Agency Award was created to aid agencies in overcoming barriers to increasing their hiring of post-graduate QTTs or to the provision of quality internal supervision of QTTs. Eligibility agencies were required to identify one or more activities that needed to be completed in order to

increase their ability to hire and supervise post-graduate QTTs, as well as providing a budget for their planned activity. A total of \$5,000 was set aside by the Core Team and Advisory Committee, to be divided among qualified applicants.

The Supplemental Accommodations Award was created in order to provide support to agencies in hiring and internally supervising QTTs with a communications-related need for accommodations, such as a QTT who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing. An award amount of \$25,000 was set and stipulated as renewable for one year based on successful completion of grant activities. As QTT licensure is typically a two-year process, the renewal option was intended to provide support to the agency through the entirety of the post-graduate QTT's credentialing process.

Application and Award Process

Applications for all grant types were solicited between September 21 and October 16, 2021 through a variety of publication methods, including communication through DHS mailing lists, dissemination to professional association membership by Advisory Committee members, and contact through CITEE mailing lists. Upon the close of the application period, CITEE was in receipt of a total of 55 Expanding Agency Award applications, ten Emerging Agency Award applications, and one Supplemental Accommodations Award application.

At the close of the application period, scoring was completed in two parts. First, items that had been identified as quantitative measures (i.e. agency type, historic Medicaid billing levels, etc.) were scored automatically according to the standards set by the Advisory Committee and the Core Team. Next, items that had been identified as qualitative measures (i.e. description of overall grant impact, distinct supervisory productivity standards, etc.) were de-identified and scored by Advisory Committee members. Multiple Advisory Committee members scored each qualitative item of each application. Using the mean score of each qualitative item for each application, final rankings were compiled, items and overall scores were reviewed for any anomalies, and a final list of recommendations was provided to the DHS team for approval. In total, fourteen Expanding Agency Awards, three Emerging Agency Awards, and one Supplemental Accommodations Award were approved and distributed.

Outcomes

Expanding Agency Awards

After reviewing and scoring 55 applications, 54 of which were complete, 14 agencies were identified to receive an Expanding Agency Award (Table 1).

Table 1: Expanding Agency Award Recipients (Fiscal Year 2021)

Agency Name	Location
AMRI Counseling Services	Milwaukee
Catalpa Health	Appleton
Children's Service Society of Wisconsin	Stevens Point
Children's Service Society of Wisconsin	Marshfield
Family Service Agency of Waukesha County	Waukesha
Foundations Counseling Center, Inc.	Belleville
Hope for a Better Tomorrow	Waukesha
Integrative Psyche, LLC	Milwaukee
Lake Superior Community Health Center	Superior
Northwest Counseling and Guidance Clinic	Frederic
Oregon Mental Health Services, LLC	Oregon
Professional Services Group	Kenosha
SaintA	Milwaukee
Shorehaven Behavioral Health, Inc	Brown Deer

Expanding Agency Award recipients were required to complete and provide documentation of a set of specific program activities:

- Identification of designated supervisor to participate in Community of Practice (CoP)
- Participation in administrative/overview webinar
- Completion of CoP Initial Workshop by designated supervisor
- Participation in CoP sessions by designated supervisor
- Ongoing submission of Supervisory Session Checklists by designated supervisor
- Documentation of an increase in the number of post-graduate QTT positions by one over the average number of positions in the two previous fiscal years

Recipients reported a total of 89 post-graduate QTT positions in fiscal year 2019, and 119 in fiscal year 2020. Based on the average of their reported positions over the two previous fiscal years, each agency was assigned a goal, and was required to report their total number of post-graduate QTT positions at the conclusion of the grant period. The table below shows the goal number and reported totals for each recipient agency (Table 2). In total, the recipient agencies reported 146 post-graduate QTT positions, an increase of 23% over fiscal year 2020, and an increase of 40% over the average of fiscal years 2019 and 2020.

Table 2: Expanding Agency Recipient QTT Position Targets versus Reported in Fiscal year 2021

Agency	FY21 QTT Goal	FY21 QTTs
AMRI Counseling Services	14	16
Catalpa Health	5	7
Children's Service Society of Wisconsin - Marshfield	9	13
Children's Service Society of Wisconsin - Stevens Point	9	13
Family Service Agency of Waukesha County	3	7
Foundations Counseling Center, Inc.	6	7
Hope for a Better Tomorrow	6	7
Integrative Psyche, LLC	2	4
Lake Superior Community Health Center	2	2
Northwest Counseling and Guidance Clinic	6	7
Oregon Mental Health Services, LLC	3	4
Professional Services Group	14	24
SaintA	3	9
Shorehaven Behavioral Health, Inc	19	26

Designated supervisors were asked to use the QTT Supervision Session Checklist to report on basic aspects of each supervision session held with their identified QTT.³ These reports included session fundamentals, topics, and some qualitative measures. Across the 16 weeks of the CoP, a total of 221 checklists were submitted by the designated supervisors.

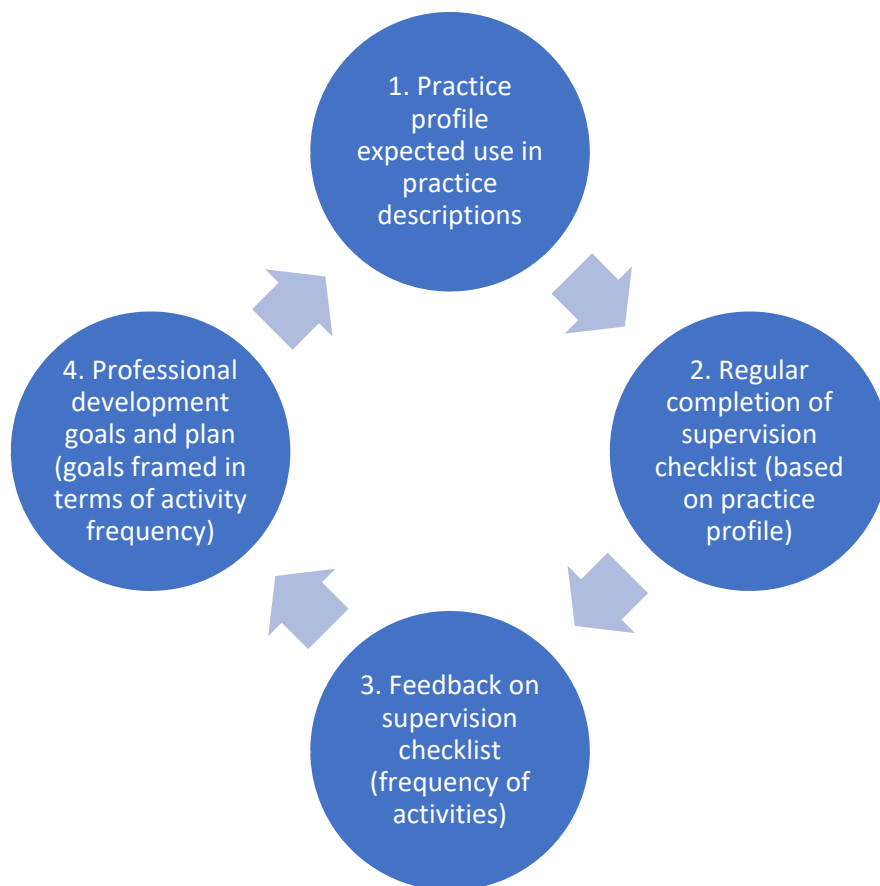
A secondary goal of the QTT Grants Program was to invest in supervisor professional development. The focus of professional development was outlined in the QTT Supervision Practice Profile, created specifically for the program by UW-Whitewater Graduate Social Work faculty based on a selected review of the clinical supervision literature, the practice profile identified the essential processes, core component, and expected elements of effective supervision. Essential processes included the following: ongoing supervisor development; initial supervision planning; establish and maintain a supervisory working alliance; focusing, foster trainee development; and evaluation. Within each process, components and elements of effective clinical supervision practice were specified and operationalized. With the practice profile as the guide, designated supervisors participated in an ongoing process based on five activities to support professional development.

First, supervisors completed an initial workshop. The workshop provided an overview to the practice profile and featured structured discussions, skill practice, and demonstration. Second, supervisors attended a monthly Community of Practice. Meetings focused on process-specific components and elements from the practice profile. Like the workshop, the CoP meetings were designed to foster discussion, to provide practice opportunities, and to encourage self-reflection. Following each meeting, supervisors provided feedback on the key takeaways from the session, future topic requests, and input on continuous improvement. Third, supervisors completed brief assignments in-between some meetings. Assignments included development and revision of a professional development plan. The plan focused learning goals and individualized the learning process for each supervisor. Fourth, supervisors

³ See *Appendix IV – QTT Supervision Session Checklist*

completed the QTT Supervision Session Checklist based on the processes, components, and practice elements identified in the practice profile. Supervisors were asked to take 3-5 minutes to complete the checklist in an electronic format following each supervision session with an identified QTT. Regular completion of the checklist allowed supervisors to reflect on their provision of clinical supervision and learning goals. Supervisors and identified trainees also completed the Supervisory Working Alliance at one point in the learning process. Fifth, supervisors received individualized written feedback based on completed surveys. For example, frequency of supervision activities was provided based on the QTT Supervision Session Checklist. Supervisors also received feedback on their self-assessment and trainee assessment of the supervisory working alliance. As depicted in Figure 1, the above learning activities provided the basis for an ongoing, iterative supervisor development process.

Figure 1: Ongoing, Iterative Process of Supervisor Professional Development



As a part of the iterative professional development process, the monthly sessions allowed supervisors from a variety of agencies across the state to interact. Supervisors varied on the length of their supervisory experience as well as the number of individuals being supervised, which allowed them to bring diverse experiences to the discussions. Experience levels ranged from a first-year supervisor to an individual with 35 years of experience supervising trainees, with an average of 8 years of experience (N=14). A total of 87 trainees were supervised by the participants throughout the Community of Practice, with an average of 6 trainees per supervisor (N=14).

Supervisors and at least one of their trainees also completed a brief form of the Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory, which allows the supervisor and the trainee to think deeply about their working relationship structures. After completion, supervisors were provided with individualized feedback incorporating both an anonymized version of their trainee ratings (if at least two trainees completed the form) and the ability to compare their ratings to the standardized norms and the overall aggregates of the cohort.⁴ In general, supervisors participating in the CoP cohort were rated more highly by their trainees than in their own self-analysis.

At the conclusion of the planned set of CoP sessions, participating supervisors shared their interest in continuing the peer-based learning and practice experience. Of the 14 supervisors, 12 responded and indicated a strong interest in participating as their time and duties allowed. Based on the feedback, the Core Team decided to create a participant-led Alumni Learning Community in subsequent grant year.

Emerging Agency Awards

After review of ten applications, six of which were complete, three applicant agencies were granted Emerging Agency Awards (Table 3). One agency utilized funds to provide additional training to internal supervisors, and two agencies utilized funds to prepare necessary infrastructure to support additional post-graduate QTTs. A total of \$5,000 was awarded across the three grants, and each agency successfully completed their required program activities. As the target of this award is the preparation of an agency to increase hiring and internal supervision of a QTT, an additional measure of success will be examined in the upcoming grant year, when successful Emerging Agency Award recipients will be given priority consideration as an Expanding Agency Award applicant.

Table 3: Emerging Agency Award Recipients (Fiscal Year 2021)

Agency Name	Location
Community Health Systems, Inc.	Beloit
Holistic Counseling Services, LLC	Beloit
Reflections Mental Health, LLC	Madison

Supplemental Accommodations Award

One agency completed an application for and was qualified to receive a Supplemental Accommodations Award in the amount of \$25,000 (Table 4). This agency had begun an employment relationship with a post-graduate QTT in need of communication-related accommodations and provided a statement of need for accommodations. During the grant award period, the agency provided American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation services for the interviewing, training and supervision of the identified QTT, as well as creating accessible signage, updating accessible written training materials, and captioning video-based training materials.

⁴ See *Appendix IV – Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory Feedback Report*.

Table 4: Supplemental Accommodations Award Recipient (Fiscal Year 2021)

Agency Name	Location
Pauquette Center	Portage

The grant recipient identified communication-related barriers to licensing exams and the overall credentialing process for a QTT who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, and began the planning to provide supportive services throughout the licensing and credentialing process.

During this grant period, the Core Team and the grant recipient identified further supports needed in order to increase the number of QTTs identifying with a communication-related accommodation need. Specifically, the need for support for this population prior to reaching the stage of post-graduate QTT was clearly outlined. In the upcoming grant year, the Core Team and Advisory Committee will work to identify specific points in the credentialing process where the grants program may be able to successfully intervene and provide necessary supports.

Recommendations

Each individual grant award type targeted specific goals and successfully met those goals. Several areas of improvement have been identified through feedback and advice from the Advisory Committee as well as participating grant recipients.

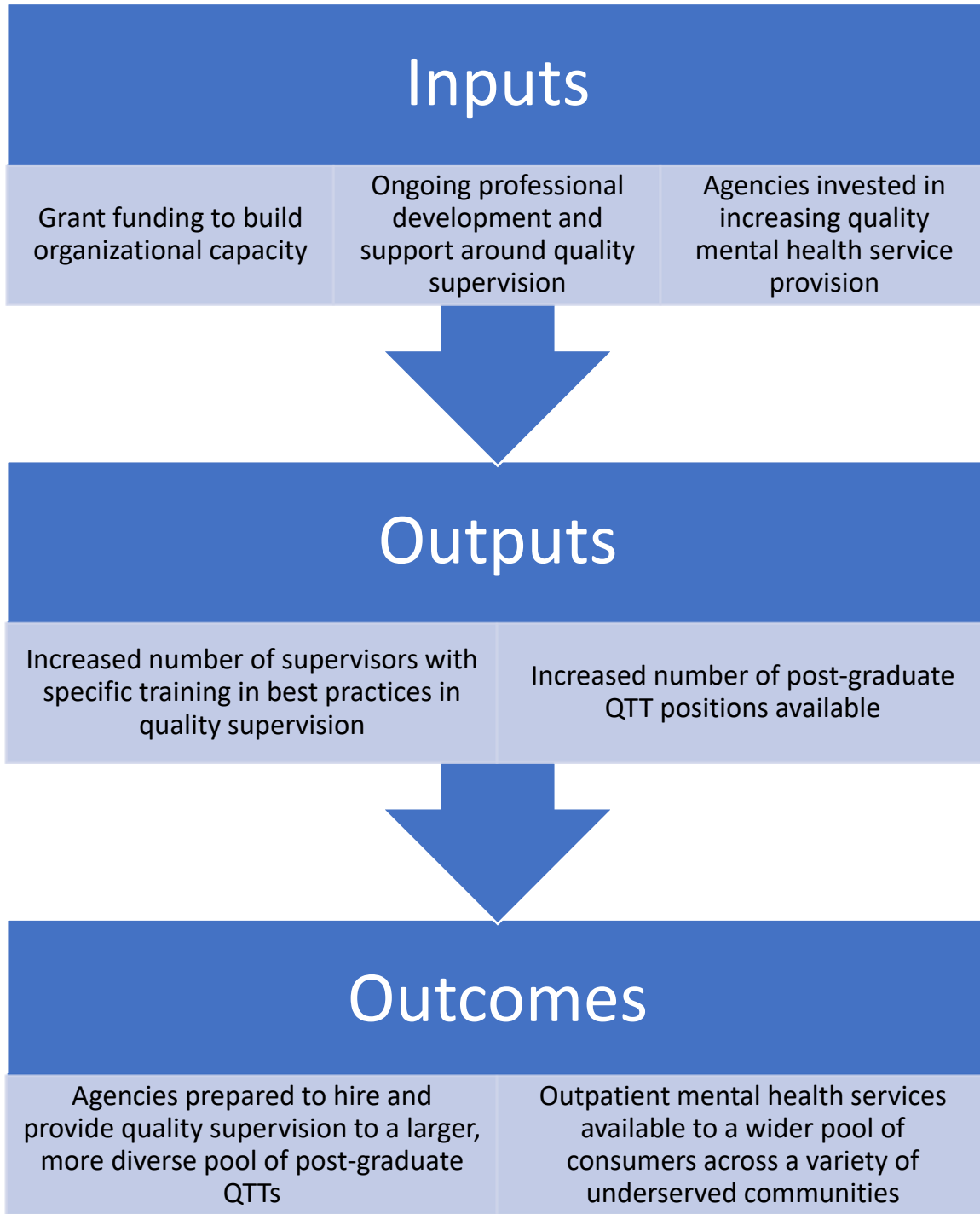
Specifically, the Supplemental Accommodations Award was identified as the most difficult to complete successfully. One major purpose behind the award was to increase the number of licensed mental health professionals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing as a way to improve the available mental health services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing population overall. It is recommended that Deaf or Hard of Hearing individuals interested in obtaining advanced licensure be identified and provided with a wider variety of supports earlier in the process, as the number of individuals able to reach the post-graduate QTT level was anecdotally found to be very small. Feedback from the award recipient noted specific difficulties with completing an internship and completing testing requirements for licensure, which should be followed up on with a more detailed review.

Feedback from participants in the Community of Practice noted that while there is a specific practice profile developed for use by supervisors, a similar document intended for use by trainees would also be helpful, which is currently in development by the Core Team.

Advisory Committee members noted specifically that in upcoming years, careful attention should be paid to balance grant award amounts with the amount of work required by agencies or supervisors to participate successfully in grant activities. In order to maintain participation in the Community of Practice and completion of grant activities as reasonable for grant recipients, it must be clear that participation continues to be valuable and to allow participating supervisors to enhance their skills.

Finally, continuing to target grant awards to agencies providing mental health services to under-served populations across the state of Wisconsin and representing a variety of communities and agencies should remain a top priority for the Core Team and Advisory Committee.

Appendix I – Logic Model



Appendix II – Stakeholder List

Role	Name
Department of Health Services, Division of Care and Treatment Services, Bureau of Prevention, Treatment and Recovery, Integrated Services Section - Representatives	Kenya Bright, Section Chief
	Cory Flynn, Contract Administrator
	Scott Caldwell, Subject Matter Expert, CoP Facilitator
Advisory Committee Chair	Marc Herstand, National Association of Social Workers, Wisconsin Chapter
Advisory Committee Members	Christin Skolnik, La Crosse County Human Services
	Alice Sykora, Mental Health Core Group for Services for Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deaf/Blind
	Amanda Anderson, Wisconsin Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
	Dr. Maria Amarante, Multicultural Trauma and Addiction Treatment Center of WI, LLC
	Jennie Bowyer, Green County Human Services
	Mary Neubauer, Mental Health America of Wisconsin
	Molly Jones, Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association
	Judy Toppel, Racine County Human Services
	Kathy Markeland, Wisconsin Association of Family and Children's Agencies
	Mary Sella, Oregon Mental Health Services, LLC
UW-Whitewater Department of Social Work faculty	Dr. Sarah Hessenauer – Chair, Graduate Program, Faculty expert for Practice Profile development
	Dr. Kristen Prock – Faculty expert for Practice Profile development
	Dr. Katherine Drechsler – Field Coordinator, back up representative for Graduate Program, Faculty expert for Practice Profile Development
UW-Whitewater CITEE	Ben Mompier, Project Coordinator
	Jessica Smith, Director
	Brenda Johansen, Data Manager
	Carole Carlson, Community of Practice instructional design
	Kadeesha Duncan, current MSW student

Appendix III – QTT Supervision Session Checklist

Session Date

Session Format (In person, Phone, Online/video conference)

Session Type (Individual, Group, Other)

Session Duration (estimated minutes)

Which of the following processes occurred during this session?

Ongoing Supervisor Development

- Overall Session Supervisor Preparation
- Professional Ethics Session Preparation
- Specific Session Learning Activity Preparation
- Ongoing Learning Preparation

Initial QTT Supervision Planning

- Establish Supervision Contract
- Professional Development Planning
- Documentation

Establish and Maintain a Supervisory Alliance

- Engagement
- Open Questions
- Affirmation
- Reflective Listening
- Trainee Perspective

Focusing Supervision

- Agenda Setting
- Seeking Trainee Perspective
- Maintain Focus

Foster Trainee Development - Consultation

- Clinical Consultation
- Reflective Listening
- Sharing Expertise
- Ethics

Foster Trainee Development - Ongoing Learning

- Secondary Trauma and Self-Care
- Role Playing
- Documentation Review
- Observation of Practice
- Skill Discussion

Foster Trainee Development - Diversity Competence

- Facilitated Discussion
- Reflective Listening

Evaluation

- Completed Evaluation
- Evaluation Feedback

What went particularly well in this session?

What was a challenge in this session?

What came up that you plan to follow up on in future sessions?

Appendix IV – Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory: Feedback Report

The purpose of this report is to provide trainee results and your self-ratings on the Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory (SWAI). Please keep in mind that results only offer a snap shot at a specific point in time, with two trainees, and on selected domains of supervision. Results should not be generalized to your global work as a supervisor. Take few minutes to review results and interpret, then complete the reflection activity that follows.

Results:

SWAI – Brief Version by Item	Trainee average	Trainee aggregate (N = 28)	Supervisor (self-rating)	Supervisor aggregate (N = 14)
1. I feel comfortable working with my supervisor.		6.6		6.3
2. My supervisor welcomes my explanations about the client's behavior.		6.7		6.8
3. My supervisor treats me like a colleague in supervisory session.		6.7		5.6
4. I work with my supervisor on specific goals in the supervisory session.		6.1		5.9
5. My supervisor's style is to carefully and systematically consider the material I bring to supervision.		6.4		5.8
Total Score		6.5		6.1

Results:

SWAI Subscales	QTT Supervisor (self-rating)	QTT Supervisor aggregate	Supervisor norms
Client Focus		5.7	5.48
Rapport		6.2	5.97
Identification		5.9	5.41

Interpretation: Response scale is 1 (*almost never*) to 7 (*almost always*). Higher scores are indicative of alliances that are more effective.