



Center for Social Development

GEORGE WARREN BROWN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Call for Papers

A Convening on Financial Capability and Asset Building: Advancing Education, Research and Practice in Social Work

April 8-10, 2015
St. Louis, Missouri

Background

One hundred years ago, social workers focused on household economic life, but by the middle of the 20th century, this approach was largely abandoned (Stuart, 2013; Specht & Courtney, 1995). Today, in a context of increasing financialization of everyday life, and rising income and asset inequality, it is time for social work to renew its focus on the financial lives of vulnerable families.

During the past 20 years, applied research and policy and practice innovations on financial capability and asset building (FCAB) have laid important groundwork for this renewal (Sherraden, 1991; Birkenmaier, Sherraden, & Curley, 2013). Drawing on social work's person-in-environment perspective (Kondrat, 2008), financial capability includes both financial education and financial access - combining people's *ability to act* with their *opportunity to act* to improve financial well-being (Sherraden, 2013). Financial capability has implications for direct social work practice given its importance in helping people manage household finances, protect against income volatility, invest in education and human capital, build homeownership and social enterprises, and prepare for income security after retirement. At the same time, financial capability must open access for financially vulnerable households to beneficial financial products and services and social policies, including those for asset accumulation.

Although social work has made important strides by contributing to FCAB scholarship and education, the need for evidence based practice is essential (Birkenmaier, Kennedy, Kunz, & Horwitz, 2013; Jacobson, Sander, Svoboda, & Elkinson, 2011). Social work has a unique opportunity for leadership in helping financially vulnerable families gain a secure economic foothold. In this way, social workers can renew their historical commitment to people's financial well-being.

The Convening

The convening will bring together scholars and educators to examine research and education, and develop the social work agenda in FCAB.

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Organized by the *Financial Capability and Asset Building (FCAB) Initiative* at the Center for Social Development at Washington University in St Louis (<http://csd.wustl.edu/Pages/default.aspx>), and the *Financial Social Work Initiative* at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (<http://www.ssw.umaryland.edu/fsw/>) the aims of the convening are twofold: 1) To advance FCAB in social work education, practice and research; and 2) to strengthen networks of FCAB scholars, educators, professional associations, and funders.

Call for Papers

Scholarly papers are invited that assess practice and policy roles of social workers in FCAB, examine approaches to teaching FCAB in social work, and inform understanding of reaching vulnerable populations with FCAB policies and programs.

Papers should discuss theoretical and practical implications for social work education, practice, and research related to FCAB in financially vulnerable households and communities.

Paper topics may include, but are not limited to:

1. Evaluations of teaching FCAB, including BSW, MSW and continuing education, that inform effective approaches, delivery methods, and other factors that enhance teaching effectiveness in social work education.
2. Research on FCAB interventions that inform models of service delivery and social policy for financially vulnerable populations.
3. Research on FCAB practice with financially vulnerable populations (e.g., people with disabilities, people facing intimate partner violence, victims of natural disasters, people with health or mental health challenges, youth, active military or veterans, older adults, immigrants, and ex-offenders).

Transportation and lodging will be covered for authors whose papers are selected (one author will be covered per paper). Authors will receive an honorarium of \$500 per paper upon delivery.

Please submit 500 word abstracts (not counting references) that include a title, background, methods, results and implications, along with full contact details, and any questions to Margaret Sherraden (msherraden@wustl.edu) or Julie Birkenmaier (birkenjm@slu.edu). Papers should adhere to the standards of APA (6th edition). High quality manuscripts will be considered for a proposed special issue of an academic journal. The submission deadline is July 31, 2014.