Sample Bigel Proposal “B”

1. Project Title:  "Policy Research on Minority Issues & Disability"

2. Project Description

I am proposing to work as a summer intern, conducting policy research for The National Black Disability Coalition (NBDC). NBDC is a non-profit organization located in New Jersey that addresses issues facing African-Americans with Disabilities in America. Their goals are to promote unity among the Black community with disabilities, their families, and communities; to advance equity within the disability movement and their communities; and to foster opportunities for the Black community with disabilities. Their emphasis is on people who live in poverty. More information about the organization can be found here: http://www.blackdisability.org/

There is a huge overlap in issues facing racial minorities in the U.S., particularly African Americans, and people with disabilities (PWDs). Two areas that highlight this overlap are the educational system and the criminal justice system. For example, the benefits of special education have not been equitably distributed. Almost one in four male African-American students in New Jersey is identified as having a disability. Although African-Americans are much less likely to receive services overall, they are particularly under-represented in preschool education and other types of early intervention (U.S. Department of Education 1998). They are also under-represented in categories relating to speech-language disabilities, which often result in the most inclusive placements (Gottesman, 2012). When African-American children are classified, they tend to be placed in the most segregated settings (Gottesman 2012). The effects of poverty do not satisfactorily explain the racial disparities in these classifications (Patton, 1998). As a consequence of being systematically underserved in the educational system, disability scholars have noted that this population is in fact caught in a “school to prison pipeline” (ACLU.org); others have argued that this is a modern day version of Jim Crow (Harris, 2012). Once in the criminal justice system, PWDs are more likely to experience the effects of multiple types of oppression. For example, the imprisonment rate for black males is more than 6x higher than that of whites; research estimates the rate of learning disabilities among incarcerated youth and adults at 50%-70% of this population (Gottesman, 2012). Similarly, the impact of disability affects arrest, confession, and access to services. Disabled people faced longer sentences and did harder time: jailed inmates who had a mental health problem were twice as likely as those without it to have been charged with a facilities rule violation (Gottesman, 2012).

Despite the overlap in issues of race and disability, the two sets of advocacy groups remain disparate. Disability policy and leadership reflects that of a white middle class perspective and race-based groups, like the NAACP, are rarely inclusive of
people with disabilities nor address those concerns (Dunham 2012). The NBDC is one exception. That is why it is so important that I help them with their mission and this important work.

In this research, I will also examine the intersection of race and disability from an anthropological perspective. Clearly this project is consistent the concerns of the Anthropology Department at MSU to support “Community Development” and to use the anthropology towards applied ends.

3. Purpose of Grant Funds

I plan to work as a summer intern for the NBDC, under the supervision of Jane Dunhamn, co-founder and current member. The funds will help support me, by offsetting hours that would otherwise be engaged in paid employment.

4. Expected Outcomes

Deliverables include:

- Developing materials for the NBDC website (in particular the section under “Culture”, which is currently blank)
- Developing research FAQ sheets on various topics that the organization can use to present to legislators
- Develop “talking points” on various topics related to race and disability
- Other, to be developed in conjunction with my mentors

5. Budget

I am requesting the full amount of the Bigel application: $2500, as this will allow me to do the maximum amount of work possible for NBDC this summer. It will be spent accordingly:

$1200 per month at a rate of $12 hour = 100 hours per month (or 25 hours per week) for a duration of 2 months.

The additional $100 will be used to cover gas costs for driving to and from meetings with my mentors at NBDC and MSU.

Financial need

Once the academic year ceases, I continue my job in my hometown working between 25-30 hours. I would like to dedicate as much time to the NBDC as possible,
so being financially compensated would be a huge help. I want to be able to assist as well as learn as much as possible, and I feel it would be a great loss if I wasn’t able to fulfill my goal due to financial barriers.

**Dissemination Plan:**

I will present a talk and/or a PowerPoint presentation about my project to faculty and students during a brown bag discussion or other event.

**Letter of Recommendation:**

Forthcoming

**References**

ACLU.org
http://www.aclu.org/racial-justice/school-prison-pipeline


Harris, James. “Social Justice, Dominant Culture Values in Disability Policy.” Lecture presented to ANTH 423 class, on March 27, 2012.

Gottesman, Sue. “Social Justice, Dominant Culture Values in Disability Policy.” Lecture presented to ANTH 423 class, on March 27, 2012.
