

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT:

CORINNE WEAVER



Corinne Weaver is the Senior Manager of Research, Data, & Evaluation at Catholic Charities Fort Worth. Formerly a mental health counselor, Corinne transitioned into research and evaluation work in order to better understand and help improve the efficacy of social service interventions. Corinne holds a B.S. in Psychology from the University of Georgia and a M.A. in Psychology from the Chicago School of Professional Psychology. Corinne is currently pursuing a M.Ed. in Measurement, Evaluation, Statistics, and Assessment from the University of Illinois, Chicago.

What are your responsibilities with LEO research studies?

I manage CCFW's research and evaluation work which currently includes two LEO partnership projects, the Padua Pilot and Stay the Course. My primary responsibilities include coordinating client recruitment and enrollment, executing data sharing with the research team, and overseeing our internal data collection, analysis, and reporting processes.

In addition to regular conference calls and occasional site visits with the entire LEO team, I communicate regularly with two LEO team members, Shawna Kolka and Brendan Perry. Through regular communication we execute data sharing, consult on client eligibility questions, and troubleshoot any project complications that arise.

CCFW designed Padua in conjunction with LEO's research study - what led CCFW to this decision?

At CCFW, we hold a vision to end poverty for good, one family at a time. To accomplish this vision, we have to understand what works to help families reach self-sufficiency. We also have to try bold, new approaches because we already know the status quo in poverty intervention is often not enough. Padua was designed to break the mold of the status quo and invest in a new approach of "supercharged" case management that

leverages individualized strengths-based asset plans and a community of support to help families reach self-sufficiency.

Last summer, a LEO undergraduate research assistant worked alongside you in Fort Worth - how did this contribute to the ongoing research studies?

Our LEO summer intern, Emily David, was fantastic! She was able to look at our work with fresh eyes and asked great questions about how our work related to what she was learning at Notre Dame. Emily was instrumental in our day-to-day data collection and reporting, but also took on a project to help us better understand the impact of subsidy programs and the "cliff-effect", which occurs when clients lose public benefits as earnings rise, on our clients' lives. Due to the success of Emily's placement in Fort Worth, we are excited to host another LEO intern this summer.

How do you anticipate LEO's research will improve Padua?

I believe LEO's research will provide us with something all social service agencies need – an unbiased examination of not only the overall efficacy of our work, but also a deeper understanding of which aspects of our intervention were the most and least successful, for whom, and under what conditions. It is only with this information that we can continuously improve our services to make the greatest impact on the lives we serve.

In your opinion, what role does research play in reducing poverty?

When looking at the field of medical research it is clear that carefully conducted, rigorous research can lead to products that improve and save lives. I believe strongly that research aimed at understanding and improving poverty prevention and intervention can have the same effect. Strong research can not only lend support to a new, promising intervention, but it can also let policy makers and practitioners know when it is time to improve or move away from practices that are less effective. I am honored to play my small role in this effort.