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June 2016 Spotlight on the SRCD Policy Fellow: Amy Leffler, Ph.D.

2015-2016 Federal Executive Branch Policy Fellow

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The start of the Executive Fellowship for Amy Leffler (formally Griffin) has been one of transitions. The new last name being only one of the changes. The transition from a Congressional Fellow to an Executive Fellow brought with it understanding a different arm of the government, new learning opportunities, and of course new federal government acronyms to decipher. Starting in September at the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), in the Violence and Victimization Research Division, she found herself in a terrain drastically different from the southeast quadrant of DC on Capitol Hill. NIJ is located within the Office of Justice Programs of the Department of Justice in the bustling Chinatown section of DC. NIJ is the research and evaluation division of the Department of Justice, handling an array of topics pertinent to today's society such as campus sexual assault, school safety, community policing, body worn cameras, and unmanned aircrafts to name a few. She entered the division joining the Children Exposed to Violence portfolio, a topic lending itself well to her previous research on dually-involved youth (youth involved in both the child welfare and juvenile justice systems). In this portfolio, she has helped to oversee a meeting of current grantees and other federal employees to discuss not only their research but the field of research and where it should be going. The

notes of that meeting have been made public and are currently on the NIJ website. Additionally, she worked with current grantees to help NIJ better disseminate the findings from these studies. For example, one study is an evaluation project that analyzes two state demonstration projects linking systems of care that interact with children and families who are exposed to violence. She also attended numerous interagency meetings that focus on a variety of aspects of child development and how the federal government and research are responding to these issues (e.g., bullying, selfregulation, and teen-dating violence). In November, when a full-time federal position opened up within her division, Dr. Leffler jumped at the opportunity to apply to be a part of the team in a new and long-term way. In the spring she transitioned to being a federal employee within the Violence and Victimization Division at NIJ. Currently her portfolio consists of issues related to violence against women, as well as the impact on children within these families. She is truly thankful to SRCD and the fellowship program for paving the way for her to obtain this position. The lessons learned from her Congressional Fellowship and Executive Fellowship provided invaluable lessons of the federal government, policy making, and the important interplay of research and policy.