



## **PRESS RELEASE**

*NBCC Foundation*

3 Terrace Way

Greensboro, NC 27403-3660

Phone: 336-232-0376

www.nbccf.org

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Crystal Nikia Gray Awarded \$20,000 Counseling Fellowship From NBCC and Affiliates**

Winston Salem, NC—The NBCC Foundation, an affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), recently selected Crystal Nikia Gray, of Winston Salem, North Carolina, for the National Board for Certified Counselors Minority Fellowship Program (NBCC MFP). As an NBCC MFP Fellow, Gray will receive funding and training to support her education and facilitate her service to underserved minority populations.



The NBCC MFP is made possible by a grant first awarded to NBCC by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in August 2012. The Foundation is contracted by NBCC to administer the NBCC MFP, as well as training and collaboration activities, such as [webinars](#), that are open to all National Certified Counselors (NCCs). The goal of the program is to strengthen the infrastructure that engages diverse individuals in counseling and increases the number of professional counselors providing effective, culturally competent services to underserved populations.

The NBCC MFP will distribute \$20,000 to Gray and the 22 other doctoral counseling students selected to receive the fellowship award. Gray is a graduate of The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and is both a student and graduate of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she is currently pursuing a doctoral degree in counseling. Gray is pursuing a doctoral degree in order to advocate for the school counseling profession and conduct research to catalyze systemic changes that will reduce the opportunity gap and ensure equitable education for all students, and particularly for African-American students. This fellowship will assist Gray in conducting a dissertation study addressing how school counselors may deal with educational gaps, such as high school graduation rates, which persist and undermine African-American students' social and economic advancement. This fellowship opportunity will allow her to connect with a network of professionals who are interested in conducting similar research necessary to further mental health professionals' ability to serve an increasingly diverse clientele within and outside the school context. Currently, Gray is immersed in full-time doctoral studies, but she is a senior academy mentor in Winston-Salem Forsyth County Schools and meets weekly with an African-American male senior who is working toward high school graduation. She also completed a 600-hour internship at Youth Focus Residential Treatment Center, where she worked with students of color and those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Immediately after graduation, Gray plans to work in an underserved high school in Charlotte-Mecklenburg County Schools, and she will work diligently and actively to address her students' needs. Ultimately, she will pursue an administrator role within the school system or a school counselor educator position that will allow her to equip school counselors with tools to act as social justice agents and ensure equitable opportunities for students of color. This fellowship will assist Gray in reaching these professional goals and contributing to an area of research and practice that is a moral and

professional imperative for school counselors working with students of color and other historically marginalized groups.

The Foundation plans to open the next NBCC MFP application period in September 2016. To learn more about the NBCC MFP and its fellows, please visit [www.nbccf.org/Programs/Fellows](http://www.nbccf.org/Programs/Fellows).

#### ABOUT THE NBCC FOUNDATION

The NBCC Foundation is the nonprofit affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), based in Greensboro, North Carolina. NBCC is the nation's premier professional certification board devoted to credentialing counselors who meet standards for the general and specialty practices of professional counseling. Currently, there are more than 60,000 National Certified Counselors in the United States and more than 50 countries. The Foundation's mission is to leverage the power of counseling by strategically focusing resources for positive change.

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