

## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 9, 2019

### Curissa C. Sutherland-Smith Awarded \$10,000 Counseling Fellowship From NBCC and Affiliates



Chicago, IL—The NBCC Foundation, an affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), recently selected Curissa C. Sutherland-Smith of Chicago, Illinois, for the NBCC Minority Fellowship Program Mental Health Counseling-Master's (MFP-MHC-M). As an NBCC MFP-MHC-M Fellow, Sutherland-Smith will receive funding and training to support her education and facilitate her service to underserved minority populations.

The NBCC MFP-MHC-M is made possible by a grant awarded to the NBCC Foundation by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The Foundation administers the MFP, including training and collaboration activities, such as [webinars](#), that are open to all National Certified Counselors (NCCs). The goal of the program is to reduce health disparities and improve behavioral health care outcomes for racially and ethnically diverse populations by increasing the number of available culturally

competent behavioral health professionals.

The NBCC Foundation MFP will distribute up to \$10,000 to Sutherland-Smith and the other 29 master's-level counseling students selected to receive the fellowship award. Sutherland-Smith is a graduate of Hope College, in Holland, Michigan, and is currently a master's student in the clinical mental health counseling and clinical rehabilitation counseling program at Illinois Institute of Technology, in Chicago. The foundation of her counseling identity is to assist individuals in becoming good stewards of their mind, body, and spirit. She is committed to increasing the utilization and access to mental health resources to underserved populations. Sutherland-Smith aspires to empower, promote, and create a social change in research, counseling practices, and educational curriculum. As a future Clinical Mental Health and Rehabilitation Clinician, she plans to advance her work as a community and faith leader by serving, educating, and inspiring the transition-age population who struggle with self-esteem, self-efficacy, and lack of resources and care. Sutherland-Smith is passionate about helping individuals restore self-confidence, recover their identity, and reclaim their lives. She plans to use integrated, evidence-based therapeutic approaches in cooperation with biblical principles. Throughout Sutherland-Smith's academic career, she has helped to fill in the gaps and increase awareness of mental health needs through her various employment, internship, and leadership roles. Sutherland-Smith's research focus is on the African diaspora, mental health, and youth. Sutherland-Smith's career ambition is to establish an environment that rehabilitates more than the person's mental health, but also the ability to empower one's identity within their family, community, and culture. Upon receiving her master's degree, she plans to work with organizations that service low income and at-risk populations. Sutherland-Smith's long-term goal is to obtain her PhD in psychology in order to educate the next generation of mental health clinicians on the importance of embracing social justice and international and multicultural issues.

The NBCC Foundation has also awarded 20 \$20,000 [doctoral fellowships](#) through the Minority Fellowship Program and 40 [master's-level fellowships](#) of \$15,000 through the MFP-Addictions Counselors (MFP-AC). The Foundation plans to open the next NBCC MHC-M application period in fall 2019. To learn more about the NBCC MFP and its fellows, please visit <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 66,000 board certified counselors in the United States and over 50 countries. The Foundation's mission is to leverage the power of counseling by strategically focusing resources for positive change.

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