

Dear Entering Full-Time Student:

California is experiencing a critical shortage of professionals in public child welfare holding master's degrees in social work. In an attempt to ameliorate this shortage, the University of Southern California (USC) Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work is participating in a workforce development initiative for social work students who are interested in the field of public child welfare. The goal of this program is to produce social workers who will secure employment and embark on a career working with children and families involved with the child protection system.

In support of this effort, a generous **stipend of \$18,500 per academic year (totaling \$37,000)** is being offered to students whom upon completion of their MSW degree, commit to work at the **Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)** for a minimum of two years.

Public child welfare demands the highest level of professional skills and knowledge to preserve, support and strengthen families, and to protect children. The move to professionalize public child welfare programs is one we - at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work - enthusiastically participate in and wholeheartedly support.

Please review the information sheet on page 2 of this document which explains the stipend requirements. Please be aware that if you are awarded a stipend, you will be required to enroll in **the Department of Children, Youth and Families**. In addition, the stipend requires a genuine interest in the field of public child welfare, and a commitment to work for the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services upon graduation. **You must also pass a criminal clearance background check, have no felony convictions, including DUI convictions, and pass a psychological evaluation in order to qualify.** Lastly, if you are awarded the stipend, you will need to attend a two-day and a one-day contract signing orientations - all tentatively scheduled during the first week of August. You must sign the contract before the stipend award is released. In addition, if you are awarded the stipend, you will need to attend a training on "Core Concepts for Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice" offered by USC. This training has been designed specifically to prepare MSW students for trauma-informed child welfare practice.

During the second year of this stipend program at USC, students are selected to participate and complete two different internship models. One group is selected for the "traditional" DCFS-only field placement while the second group is selected to participate in DCFS-Community Based Organization field placement.

The application deadline is **Thursday, June 1, 2017 at 5 pm**. Please note that any applications received after the deadline will not be considered *even if the application was received by the student after the deadline*. You can mail your application to:

**UCCF Public Child Welfare Project Coordinator
850 W. Washington Blvd., 1st floor, Los Angeles, CA 90015**

OR email an electronic version of the application to uccfstipend@usc.edu

Students selected will be contacted for interviews that are typically conducted in-person. **Please be available mid-June through July.** Applicants who do not qualify for the interview round will be notified via email. Before applying, we highly encourage you to watch a short video by clicking on this link:

- <http://www.mss.ca.gov/SocialServicesPositions/SocialWorkerVideo>

Virtual Academic Center: Due to the strict contract requirements and attendance at specialized UCCF academic courses and field practicum expectations, VAC students are not be eligible for the stipend program unless they transfer to the UPC campus.

- **Students receiving the UCCF stipend must reside in the state of California by the time they start the program.**
- **Students must attend the University Park Campus location and be a full-time student.**

If you have any questions or concerns, please email Dr. Debra Waters-Roman at watersro@usc.edu.

Full-Time UCCF Stipend Information Sheet

1. NATURE OF STIPEND

The UCCF stipend provides support of **\$18,500 per year for two years to students enrolled full-time** in the MSW program at USC. Part-time students are not eligible. This stipend is designed to prepare students for careers in public child welfare. Students must agree to enroll in the **Department of Children, Youth, and Families**. They must also complete an elective course in the fall semester of the second year titled **SOWK 619 Social Work in Public Child Welfare Settings**. Field placements must be in non-profits (1st year) and at the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (2nd year).

Please note that if you receive this award, your financial aid package will be impacted. A representative from the Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work Financial Aid Office will meet with all awardees during a webinar in July and during the orientation in early August to discuss any questions that you may have related to the stipend.

2. WORK REQUIREMENTS

Students must sign a contract agreeing to pay back this award and to secure employment with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services. Students must work one year for each year of aid awarded (e.g., two-year award = two years' work).

3. WORK INTERRUPTION

A graduate who terminates employment before the pay back requirement is completed, must repay the prorated stipend. Hardship extensions may be applied for and granted, but they only postpone the work requirement for one year. Waivers of repayment may be made in case of permanent disability or death. If a graduate is laid off because of county budget cuts and/or cannot secure a job at the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services after demonstrating reasonable efforts through formal documentation, payback may be waived.

4. PAY BACK REQUIREMENTS

Students are responsible for payback of stipends and any costs of collection under the following circumstances:

- a) Failure to maintain good academic standing in the MSW program (below a 3.0 GPA or poor field performance);
- b) Failure to complete the MSW within the standard two-year period (unless a hardship extension is granted);
- c) Failure to accept appropriate employment;
- d) Failure to qualify for employment, as a result of failing an interview, medical or psychological exam, or criminal clearance;
- e) Conviction for a felony or crime involving harm to children;
- f) Voluntary termination of employment before completion of the work requirement (unless a hardship extension is granted);
- g) Termination of employment before completion of the work requirement due to poor or improper conduct; or
- h) Violation of the NASW Code of Ethics.

5. SELECTION OF STUDENTS

All students who meet normal admissions standards and who have a genuine interest in public child welfare are eligible to apply. Applicants who have language skills matching community needs are encouraged to apply.

Students selected must pass a criminal background check, which requires that you have no felony or DUI convictions on your record. If you think your record has been "expunged", we encourage you to verify this before applying. Students must also pass a psychological evaluation.

PLEASE TYPE APPLICATION AND INCLUDE YOUR RESUME

7. PERSONAL INFORMATION

First Name: _____ Middle Name: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Daytime Telephone: (_____) _____ Cell Phone/Pager: (_____) _____

Email: _____ Birthdate: _____

Graduation Year: _____

Ethnicity/Race: _____ Gender: _____

Languages spoken other than English: _____

Degree of fluency: (circle one for each) 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

1- Can understand some, cannot engage in a conversation

3- Can understand and speak a little

5- Can understand and speak fluently

Name of university/college where you received your bachelor's degree: _____

Date Degree Conferred: _____ BA BS BSW Major: _____

Are you currently a public child welfare employee? Yes No Are you applying for/on educational leave? Yes No

If currently a public child welfare employee, name of agency: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip Code: _____

Job Title: _____ Supervisor's Name: _____

Dates of Employment: From: _____ To: _____

If you are a current employee in a county CWS agency, please provide us with a statement of support from your agency executive /district supervisor in order to qualify for preference in stipend assignment. **Please remember that USC does not offer a part-time option for this stipend program.**

Citizenship and Residence History (all information will be kept strictly confidential)

Country of Birth: _____

Country of Citizenship: _____

If a Naturalized U.S. Citizen, Date of Naturalization: ____ / ____ / ____

If not a U.S. Citizen, Expiration Date of Green Card: ____ / ____ / ____ or DACA: ____ / ____ / ____

Are you an international student? ____ Yes ____ No

8. ESSAY QUESTIONS

Name of Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Please type your responses to the following questions on separate sheets of paper. **Don't forget to add your name to your responses.** These questions are neither right nor wrong but will serve as a means of assessing the fit between you and public child welfare work. Your answers to each question should be no less than half a page and no more than two (2) pages in length – single or double-spaced.

1. Describe your understanding of what work in a public child welfare setting entails. In what ways have your prior experiences prepared you for working in a public child welfare agency? What interests you about public child welfare work and makes you think you would like to focus your education and career in this area?
2. Maria and Carlos are ages 4 and 6. They lived with their parents until their maternal grandmother called the child abuse hotline telling them that she suspected her son-in-law of inappropriate sexual contact with her grandchildren when her daughter (the mother) was at work during the evening hours. When interviewed, the children kept changing their story. The father vehemently denies any abuse ever happened. Because the grandmother has never approved of their marriage, the children's mother believes the father. The children were temporarily placed in the grandmother's home rather than in foster care. Discuss the issues and dynamics that would be relevant in working with each of the family members. How does this case impact you and your belief system?
3. In what ways do people become involved in the public child welfare system? If this happened to you or a member of your family, how would you respond? What are the similarities and differences between you and the clients with whom you will interact?
4. The environment of a public child welfare agency will require you to demonstrate flexibility, self-advocacy, and effective communication skills. How do you see yourself utilizing these skills at the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services?