

This program option is available to UCCF stipend interns during the second year of their MSW program.

BACKGROUND

The education and training of social workers in the Los Angeles County public child welfare system has undergone significant changes. In 2013 the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection, an independent entity, was established by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors to develop a corrective action plan to address the roles of law enforcement agencies, schools, and other county and city agencies. In doing so, proposed reforms were identified to improve outcomes for children and families. Within this transformational context, DCFS, SHIELDS for Families (a non-profit community based organization), and the Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work at USC have partnered to establish an innovative co-located field placement model for Department of Children Youth and Families MSW students. Second year UCCF students are concurrently placed at DCFS and SHIELDS for Families for one academic year. The goal is to prepare MSW students to effectively work in an extremely complex and challenging urban setting, and to advance the safety and well-being of children and at-risk families in Los Angeles County.

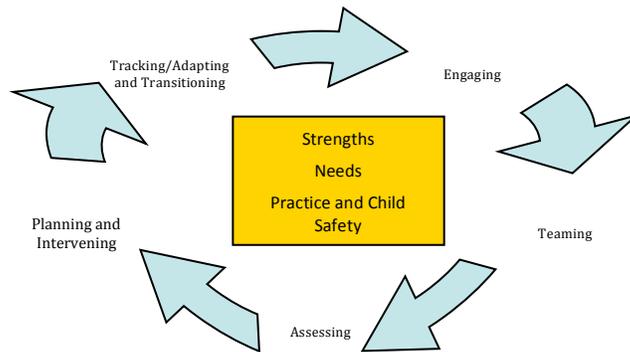
ROLE OF A PUBLIC CHILD WELFARE SOCIAL WORK INTERN

As a public child welfare social work intern you will have the opportunity to support and work with families and children who have come to the attention of DCFS. You will provide services under the supervision of an assigned DCFS staff member. The families and children being served are often identified by members of the community such as family, friends, neighbors, or mandated reporters such as teachers, educators or medical providers, when there are concerns that children are being abused or neglected. Your role will be to investigate, support, and collaborate with an array of families and agencies to resolve any problems that create risk to the safety and well-being of children. If children are not safe under the supervision of their legal caregivers (usually their birth parents), then you will intervene to ensure the safety of the children. As a public child welfare social work intern, you assist families in accessing community resources to alleviate the risks and concerns that led to the involvement of DCFS and/or the Juvenile Dependency Court. These community resources should increase the parenting and ability of caregivers to provide for the children's basic needs. Your role is to advocate for the families and children you work with and to identify the most permanent and safe living arrangement for the children, including adoption or legal guardianship if children cannot be reunited with their legal caregivers.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

UCCF is building a team approach between universities, DCFS, and other community organizations that goes beyond the exchange of information and moves towards true collaboration. Innovation and open communication are vital requirements at every level for the universities and DCFS. USC, in coordination with DCFS and SHIELDS for Families, has implemented a unique Community-Based Organization (CBO) field education model that is based on a teaching institute philosophy that functions in DCFS' Service Planning Area (SPA) 6 in the City of Compton. This model assumes that all partners have a shared commitment to documentation and assessment of outcomes and continuous improvement in practice. The core of the program is based on the field instruction, implementation of Title IV-E training goals, and active support of UCCF DCFS/CBO interns in their co-located field placements. SHIELDS for Families serves as the community based agency, while the overall program is strongly built on the foundation of the CORE Practice Model (see

below) established by the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, and the Probation Department.



UCCF STUDENT SCHEDULE

The UCCF DCFS/CBO model provides an opportunity for students to learn and directly experience multiple areas of the public child welfare service delivery system. The following table describes a typical 24-hour week for a UCCF DCFS/CBO intern:

Monday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 hours of field work at SHIELDS placement • 30-minute individual supervision with SHIELDS Preceptor
Tuesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class day • UCCF DCFS CBO Field Seminar every other week
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group supervision every other week at DCFS from 9:00 am – 10:15 am • 8 hours of field work at DCFS placement • 60-minute individual supervision with DCFS Field Instructor
Thursday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class day
Friday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 hours of field work at DCFS placement

Students develop a unique dual perspective that allows appreciation of the realities of non-profit agencies while learning to navigate a county bureaucracy “from the inside” through the provision of child protective services. SHIELDS is a clinical placement where students provide therapeutic services. DCFS can be described as a “clinical case management” placement.

Supervision:

- 1) Students receive one-hour of individual supervision with their DCFS Field Instructor and 30 minutes of individual supervision with their SHIELDS Preceptor on a weekly basis.
- 2) Students participate in biweekly group supervision where the sessions are co-led by SHIELDS and DCFS staff. This group supervision provides a forum where students can process their experiences and receive concurrent feedback from the perspectives of DCFS and SHIELDS staff. A USC field faculty professor is also present to provide supplemental support.
- 3) Students participate in a weekly non-graded field seminar. The seminar provides a process-oriented

forum that is guided to mold the mentality and professional identity of participating students to enhance the following skills in their social work practice: **accountability, civic mindedness, common sense, critical thinking, effective communication, leadership, observation and investigatory skills, self-inquiry and self-reflection.**

Training:

Students receive over 100 hours of training from DCFS and SHIELDS for Families, along with a summer training on “Core Concepts for Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice” offered by USC. This training has been developed specifically to prepare MSW students for trauma-informed child welfare practice. The curriculum is based on the 12 guiding core concepts in trauma developed by a panel of trauma experts in association with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Lastly, if you are awarded the stipend, you will need to attend a one-day contract signing orientation – tentatively scheduled during the first week of August. You must sign the contract before the stipend award is released.

Employment:

UCCF graduates have top priority for being hired by DCFS. Upon graduation, candidates are required to work for the County of Los Angeles DCFS, with full pay and benefits for a minimum of two years. Again, the intent of this program is for you to pursue a long-term career at DCFS.

ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS

- Select and enroll in the Department of Children, Youth and Families.
- Successfully complete the 619 social work practice in public child welfare course.
- Complete final two semesters of the advanced year of the program in concurrent field placement with DCFS and SHIELDS for Families, Inc.
- Successfully complete 698a/b and 699a/b.
- Successfully participate in specialized stipend seminars and other related requirements.
- Must finish entire MSW program while maintaining an overall grade point average of at least 3.0.
- Must have a valid California driver’s license, current car insurance, and secure the use of a car.
- Provide proof of U.S. citizenship or legal permanent residency.
- Pass pre-screening for county employment including a criminal background check and psychological evaluation.
- Sign a contract to secure full-time employment at DCFS after graduation from the MSW program.