Los Angeles County Mental Health Stipend Facts Sheet

Overview

The goal of the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) Stipend Program is to increase the public mental health workforce with qualified individuals committed to providing services in high priority areas.

Stipend Objectives

1. To recruit graduate students who have linguistic capacity to provide services in one of the threshold languages in areas identified as high need. The threshold languages include Arabic, Armenian, Cambodian, Farsi, Korean, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, and additional Chinese dialects.

2. To recruit graduate students who have cultural competency and the capacity to provide culturally appropriate and sensitive services to consumers in areas identified as high need.

3. To recruit graduate students who would be employed to serve in areas the County has designated as a workforce priority. These areas are currently identified as Service Area 1 (Antelope Valley), Service Area 4 (Downtown Los Angeles), Service Area 6 (South Los Angeles), Service Area 7 (East Los Angeles), services in juvenile justice programs throughout the county, Specialized Foster Care (Katie A), and programs funded through the Mental Health Services Act.

4. To recruit graduate students who have prior training or experience with public mental health services provided to veterans, either through internship training or through curriculum specialization.

5. To recruit graduate students who have prior training or experience with public mental health services provided to older adults, either through internship training or through curriculum specialization.

6. To recruit graduate students who have prior training or experience with public mental health services provided to the homeless population, either through internship training or through curriculum specialization.

7. To recruit graduate students who have prior experience in the mental health delivery system of the LAC DMH through previous or current employment or through internship training.

Stipend Amount and Commitment

LAC DMH will be awarding educational stipends of $18,500 to eligible graduates. Stipend recipients will need to be employed full time for one year in a public mental health agency, either directly operated by or contracted with LAC DMH.
Qualifications and Requirements

To qualify and remain eligible for this mental health stipend, recipients must do the following:

1. Be entering the second year of study, with a graduation date of that following May.
2. Be enrolled in the “on-the-ground” MSW program.
   a. Eligibility for VAC students will be assessed on a case-by-case basis due to strict contract requirements and attendance in-person at specialized academic courses and field practicum expectations, all in the Los Angeles area.
3. Maintain good academic standing in the MSW program with 3.0 or better GPA and satisfactory performance in field placement.
4. Pass specific elective courses.
5. Attend an orientation meeting in August before classes start, on or near the University Park Campus (UPC).
6. Attend a stipend information meeting at Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health in the fall.
7. Participate in a specialized, bi-weekly stipend seminar on Tuesdays from 11:45 am-12:45 pm throughout the academic year at the UPC. Stipend students must actively participate in at least 6 of 7 seminar sessions per semester.
   a. Date and time of this stipend seminar is subject to change.
8. Attend a five-day trauma-informed training during August before classes start, on or near the UPC.
9. Must pass a criminal record background check (Live Scan prints will be required when applying for employment)
10. Must be able to legally work in the United States
11. Must be willing to commit to one year of full time work at a DMH funded agency after graduating
12. Meet the requirements listed below

DMH stipend recipients must also do the following:

1. Be from any of the three MSW departments.
2. Complete a field placement at a LA County-operated or county-contracted mental health agency.
3. Enroll in elective course requirements as follows:
   a. AHA students:
      i. Complete 618 Systems of Recovery from Mental Illness in Adults and complete a second elective from this group:
         1. 616 Clinical Practice with Older Adults
         2. 617 Substance Related and Behavioral Addictive Disorders and Recovery
         3. 653 Social Work Practice with Older Adults
   b. CYF students:
      i. Complete 677 Mental Health Practice with Children and Adolescents with Serious Emotional Disturbance and complete a second elective from this group:
         1. 602 Contemporary Family Therapy and Social Work Practice
         2. 617 Substance Related and Behavioral Addictive Disorders and Recovery
         3. 620 Social Work Practice with Transition Age Youth
   c. COBI students
i. Complete 612 Assessment and Diagnosis of mental disorders and 617 Substance abuse with Consideration of other Addictive Disorders

ii. Third elective is highly encouraged from this group:
   1. 616 Clinical Practice with Older Adults
   2. 618 Systems of Recovery from Mental Illness in Adults
   3. 677 Mental Health Practice with Children and Adolescents with Serious Emotional Disturbance

Students who take the 617 Substance Related and Behavioral Addictive Disorders and Recovery elective in the second semester of their first year will have a stronger application.

Notes:

1. Students in the Department of Children, Youth and Families may earn a Pupil Personnel Services Credential (PPSC), as long as they also meet the requirements of the stipend program.
2. Students with abilities in one of the threshold languages in Los Angeles are highly desirable.

Recruitment of Eligible Students

Students will be recruited from the MSW schools that participate in the Inter-University Consortium of Social Work Schools. LA County Department of Mental Health has partnered with the Inter-University Consortium in addressing the County’s shortage of qualified mental health practitioners capable of providing culturally and linguistically competent services in certain geographic areas or specialized treatment programs. Administration of the stipend program on behalf of this partnership is provided by the LAC DMH in conjunction with the Long Beach Foundation, Long Beach, CA.

Payback Commitment

In exchange for the DMH Mental Health stipend, students agree to work, upon graduation, for at least one calendar year, in a payback-eligible position in a directly-operated or county-contracted mental health agency in a geographical or programmatic area in Los Angeles County designated by DMH to have high need and/or hard to fill. All DMH stipend recipients are placed in a separate pool in the LA County DMH hiring system, which is a hiring advantage.

LAC DMH Information/Contract Signing Session

Applicants awarded a stipend must attend an Orientation Session conducted by LAC DMH. The Orientation Session will be held at a Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health facility to be determined. Attendance at the Orientation Session is required of all stipend awardees. The LAC DMH Stipend Contract will be distributed and signed during the Orientation Session. The contract is an agreement between LAC DMH and the student and outlines the responsibilities of each party. The contract also outlines options for stipend repayment if the stipend recipient does not graduate by June 30, 2017, does not obtain employment in a DMH agency, or does not complete one year employment in a DMH agency.
Distribution of Stipend Amount

The stipend funds will be dispensed to student-awardees through the Long Beach Foundation and is intended to occur within 60 days* of the Orientation Session when all students have signed the county contract.  * Pending finalization by the County and transfer of funds to the Long Beach Foundation.

Verification of Employment

Students awarded a stipend will need to verify obtaining employment in a DMH, or DMH contracted agency, to be in compliance with the contract agreement. To verify employment, an administrator of that agency will need to submit the DMH Verification of Employment Form. The form will verify that the agency is a DMH contracted facility and that the stipend recipient has been employed as a mental health provider. The form will also verify if the stipend recipient is employed in a designated high need area, and/or is providing services to consumers using one of the threshold languages. The verification form needs to be mailed to the Long Beach Foundation by the agency’s administrator. This form will be made available to the student once the stipends are awarded.

Application Process

Applications for this stipend of $18,500 can be accessed through the Social Work website, from the Financial Aid page by clicking on Stipends (http://sowkweb.usc.edu/admissions/master-of-social-work/financial-aid/stipends). Written applications are due on March 25, 2016 by 5:00 p.m., and are evaluated and scored. The highest scoring applicants will be contacted for an interview. Interviews will be held during the month of April. Awards will be made on the basis of the quality of the application and the interview. You may apply to both the Los Angeles County DMH and CalSWEC Stipends by checking both boxes on the application, however, you can only receive one. Applicants must complete packet in full.

Please note that if you receive a stipend it may impact your financial aid package. A representative from the School of Social Work Financial Aid Office will be available during the August orientation to discuss any questions that you may have related to the stipend. Disbursement of this stipend has typically occurred late in the fall semester.

Questions: Please contact Professor Rosemary Alamo at ralamo@usc.edu