

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 the 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), 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 in public mental health services provided to veterans, either through internship training or curriculum specialization
5. To recruit graduate students who have prior training or experience in public mental health services provided to older adults, either through internship training or curriculum specialization
6. To recruit graduate students who have prior training or experience in public mental health services provided to the homeless population, either through internship training or 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 for that following May;
2. Be enrolled in the “on-the-ground” Master of Social Work program;
 - a. Eligibility for Virtual Academic Center students will be assessed on a case-by-case basis due to strict contract requirements as well as in-person attendance requirements at specialized academic courses and field practicum expectations, all in the LA area
3. Maintain good academic standing in the MSW program with at least a 3.0 GPA and satisfactory performance in field placement;
4. Pass specific elective courses;
5. Attend an orientation meeting in August before classes start at or near the University Park Campus (UPC);
6. Attend a stipend information meeting at LAC DMH in the fall;
7. Participate in a specialized, biweekly stipend seminar on Tuesdays from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. throughout the academic year at UPC. Stipend students must actively participate in at least six of seven seminar sessions per semester;
 - a. Dates and times of these stipend seminars are subject to change
8. Attend a trauma-informed training during August before classes start at or near 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 upon graduation; and
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 an LAC-operated or county-contracted mental health agency; and
3. Enroll in elective course requirements as follows
 - a. Adults and Healthy Aging 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 with Older Adults
 - b. Children, Youth and Families students:
 - i. Complete 677 Mental Health Practice with Children and Adolescents and complete a second elective from this group:
 1. 602 Advanced Theories and Clinical Interventions with Families
 2. 617 Substance Related and Behavioral Addictive Disorders and Recovery
 3. 620 Social Work Practice with Transitional Youth
 - c. Community, Organization, and Business Innovation students:
 - i. Complete 612 Assessment and Diagnosis of Mental Disorder and 617 Substance Related and Behavioral Addictive Disorders and Recovery

- ii. Completing a third elective is highly encouraged for 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

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 as long as they also meet the requirements of the stipend program
2. Students with abilities in one of the threshold languages in LA are highly desirable

Recruitment of Eligible Students

Students will be recruited from MSW schools that participate in the Inter-University Consortium of Social Work Schools. LAC DMH 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 Community Foundation located in Long Beach, California.

Payback Commitment

In exchange for the DMH mental health stipend, students agree to work for at least one calendar year upon graduation in a payback-eligible position at a directly-operated or county-contracted mental health agency in a geographical or programmatic area in LAC designated by DMH to have high need and/or hard to fill. All DMH stipend recipients are placed in a separate pool in the LAC 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 session, which is required for all stipend awardees, will be held at a LAC DMH facility to be determined. 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, 2018; does not obtain employment in a DMH agency; or does not complete one year of employment at a DMH agency.

Distribution of Stipend Amount

The stipend award will be dispensed to student recipients through the Long Beach Community 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 Community Foundation*

Verification of Employment

To be in compliance with the contract agreement, students awarded stipends will need to verify obtaining employment at a DMH or DMH-contracted agency. 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 that 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 must be mailed to the Long Beach Community Foundation by the agency's administrator. This form will be made available to students once the stipends are awarded.

Application Process

Applications for this \$18,500 stipend can be accessed through the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work website. From the homepage, go to Financial Aid and then click on Stipends (<https://sowkweb.usc.edu/admissions/master-of-social-work/stipends>). Written applications are due on **March 10, 2017, 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 late April or early May. Awards will be made on the basis of the quality of the application and the interview. Students may apply to both the LAC DMH and California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) stipends by checking both boxes on the application; however, only one will be given per student. Applicants must complete the packet in full.

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

Questions: Please contact Holly Priebe-Sotelo at hsotelo@usc.edu