

This stipend program is only available to full-time students at the University Park Campus in their last two semesters when completing 698a/b and 699a/b. Students must apply in the spring semester when taking 588 and 589b. Virtual Academic Center students may be eligible to apply but would need to complete all “on-the-ground” stipend requirements in person and conclude the Master of Social Work program in May.

The University Consortium for Children and Families (UCCF) is a federally funded program under the Title IV-E provision of the Social Security Act. UCCF is a partnership between the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and seven local MSW programs, including USC. UCCF is committed to MSW student education grounded in a spirit of inquiry, use of evidence-based practices, continuous reflection and deep connections with agencies serving families. The **stipend of \$18,500** is available to second-year students who are committed to careers in public child welfare. Upon graduation, UCCF students are required to complete one calendar year of continuous and satisfactory full-time paid employment at DCFS. The goal is for graduates to further their public child welfare career, beyond the one year of payback employment, and adopt a leadership role to become effective agents of change.

BACKGROUND

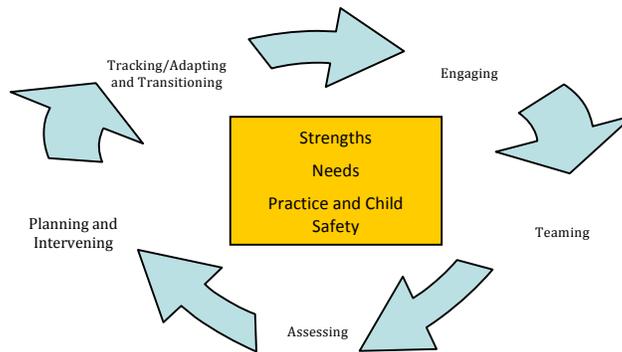
The training and education of social workers in the LAC public child welfare system has undergone significant changes. In 2013, the LAC Board of Supervisors established the Blue Ribbon Commission on Child Protection — an independent entity — to develop a corrective action plan to address the roles of law enforcement agencies, schools, and other county and city agencies. In doing so, proposed reforms could be identified to improve outcomes for children and families. Within this transformational context, DCFS, SHIELDS for Families (a nonprofit community-based organization) and the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work have partnered to establish an innovative co-located field placement model for Department of Children, Youth and Families MSW students who are in the advanced year of the program. UCCF students are 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 LAC.

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 like teachers, educators or medical providers, when there are concerns that children are being hurt or neglected. Your role will be to investigate, support and collaborate with an array of entities and families 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 risk 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 among universities, DCFS and other community organizations that goes beyond the exchange of information and moves toward 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 based on a teaching institute philosophy that functions in DCFS’s Service Planning Area 6 in Compton, California. 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 LAC DCFS, 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"> • Eight 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 from 11:15 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. every other week (subject to change)
Wednesday	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group supervision every other week at DCFS from 8:30 to 9:45 a.m. • Eight 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"> • Eight hours of field work at DCFS placement

Students develop a unique dual perspective that allows appreciation of the realities of nonprofit 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 sessions led by SHIELDS and DCFS. This group supervision provides a forum where students can process their experiences and receive concurrent feedback from the perspectives of DCFS and SHIELDS. A USC field faculty professor is also present to provide supplemental support.
- 3) Students participate in a weekly nongraded field seminar. It 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, 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 12 guiding core concepts in trauma developed by a panel of trauma experts in association with the National Child Traumatic Stress Network. **Lastly, if awarded the stipend, students will need to attend a two-day orientation and a one-day contract signing orientation, both tentatively scheduled for the first week of August 2017. Students must sign the contract before the stipend award is released.**

Employment:

UCCF graduates have top priority for being hired by DCFS. Upon graduation, selected candidates are required to work for the LAC DCFS with full pay and benefits for a minimum of one year. Again, the intent of this program is for UCCF graduates 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 MSW program in concurrent field placements with DCFS and SHIELDS for Families;
- 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 GPA of at least 3.0;
- Must have a valid California driver’s license, current car insurance and secure use of a car;
- Provide proof of U.S. citizenship or legal permanent residency;
- Pass prescreening for county employment, including a criminal background check and psychological evaluation; and
- Sign a contract to secure full-time employment at DCFS upon graduation from the MSW program