This stipend program is ONLY available for students in their last two semesters when completing 698a/b and 699a/b at UPC. Students apply in the spring semester when they are taking 588 and 589b. VAC students might be eligible to apply but would need to complete all “on-the-ground” stipend requirements in-person and complete MSW 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 County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Families (DCFS) and seven local MSW programs, including USC. UCCF is committed to MSW student education grounded in a spirit of inquiry, use of best available evidence, deep connection with family-serving agencies, and continuous reflection. The stipend of $18,500 is available to second year students who are committed to a career 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 - with a leadership approach.

BACKGROUND

The training and education of social workers in the public child welfare system in Los Angeles County 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 that addresses the role of law enforcement agencies, schools, and other county and city agencies. In doing so, proposed reforms could be identified that improve outcomes of children and families. Within this transformational context, DCFS, SHIELDS for Families (a non-profit community based organization), and the 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 that are in the advanced year of the program. UCCF students are placed at DCFS and SHIELDS for Families throughout one academic year. The goal is to prepare MSW students for effective work in an extremely complex and challenging urban setting and to advance 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 collaborate with families and children that have come to the attention of DCFS 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 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 cannot be 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 risk and concerns that led to the involvement of DCFS and/or 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 of the children, including adoption and 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 exchange of information and moves towards true collaboration. Innovation and open communication are required at every level for 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 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 Teaching Institute while the overall program is strongly laid on the foundation of the CORE Practice Model (see below) established by Los Angeles County Departments of Children and Family Services, Mental Health and Probation:

UCCF STUDENT SCHEDULE

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>• 8 hours of field work at SHIELDSD placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 30-minute individual supervision with SHIELDSD Preceptor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>• Class day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• UCCF DCFS CBO Field Seminar from 11:15 am – 12:45 pm (Subject to change)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>• Group supervision every other week at DCFS from 8:30 am – 9:45 am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 8 hours of field work at DCFS placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• 60-minute individual supervision with DCFS Field Instructor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>• Class day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>• 8 hours of field work at DCFS placement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 could 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 weekly group supervision where the sessions are 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 non-graded 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 concepts 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 through DCFS, SHIELDS for Families’ teaching institute model, along with a 30-hour 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.

**Employment:**

UCCF graduates have top priority in the hiring at DCFS. Upon graduation, selected candidates are required to work for County of Los Angeles DCFS with full pay and benefits for a minimum of one year. Again, the intent of this program is for you to have a long career at DCFS.

**ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS**

- Students must be enrolled in the “on-the-ground” program.
- Select and enroll in the Department of Children, Youth and Families.
- Successfully complete 619 social work practice in public child welfare.
- 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.
- Must finish entire MSW program while maintaining an overall grade point average of at least 3.0.
- Must have a valid driver’s license, current car insurance, and secure use of a car.
- Provide proof of U.S. citizenship or legal permanent residency.
- Pass pre-screening for county employment: criminal background, physical and psychological examinations.
- Sign a contract to secure full-time employment at DCFS after MSW graduation.
APPLICATION PROCESS

Typical of stipend programs, applying is a competitive process. **We are looking for the best and brightest interns who will be committed to the public child welfare field and who are willing to be leaders.** Interested candidates must provide an updated resume and short statement (no longer than one page) answering the following question: **Why are you interested in pursuing a public child welfare career with DCFS?** No further application is required, however if selected, candidates will be required to participate in a panel interview. Send both documents via email to Dr. Elizabeth Pringle-Hornsby at pringleh@usc.edu.

**DUE DATE: March 25, 2016.** Students awarded the UCCF stipend program, will be required to complete an application packet provided by DCFS to initiate the background screening process.

The stipend of $18,500 will impact your financial aid package and you must consult with the School’s Scholarship Program Office to plan accordingly.

**ARE YOU INTERESTED IN PURSING THIS CAREER OPPORTUNITY?**

If the answer is **YES** and/or if you have additional questions, you may contact **Dr. Elizabeth Pringle-Hornsby** via email at pringleh@usc.edu to start the conversation.

**FIGHT ON!**