

Dear MSW Student:

California is experiencing a critical shortage of professionals in public child welfare holding a master's degree in social work (MSW). In an attempt to ameliorate this shortage, the University of Southern California (USC) Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work is participating in a workforce development initiative for graduate social work students who are interested in public child welfare. The goal of this program is to produce social workers who will secure employment and embark on a career working with children and families involved with the child protection system.

In support of this effort, a **stipend of \$52,000 for two academic years** is being offered to students whom upon completion of their MSW degree, commit to work at the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services for a minimum of two calendar years.

Public child welfare work demands the highest level of professional skills and knowledge to preserve, support and strengthen families, and to protect children. The move to professionalize public child welfare programs is one we - at the USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work - enthusiastically participate in and wholeheartedly support.

Please review the information sheet on page two (2) of this document which explains the stipend requirements. Please be aware that if you are awarded a stipend, you will be required to be in **the Department of Children, Youth and Families**. In addition, the stipend requires a genuine interest in public child welfare, and a commitment to work for the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services upon graduation. **You must also pass a criminal clearance background check, have no felony convictions, including DUI convictions, also pass an interview with DCFS staff in order to qualify.** Lastly, if you are awarded the stipend, you will need to attend a two-day orientation and a one-day contract signing orientation - all typically scheduled for the second week of August. You must sign the agreement before the stipend award is released. In addition, if you are awarded the stipend, you will need to attend a training on the "Core Concepts for Trauma-Informed Child Welfare Practice". This training has been designed to prepare MSW students for trauma-informed child welfare practice.

Applications are accepted until **Friday, June 13, 2025 at 5 pm PST**. Applicants must complete the packet in full and are encouraged to apply early. If interested in applying for the LA DCFS Stipend Program, please reach out to obtain information about application deadlines.

**You can email your completed application to: [jessiczb@usc.edu](mailto:jessiczb@usc.edu)**

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Students selected will be contacted for an interview. Interviews are being conducted virtually at this time. Interviews are held on a rolling basis. Applicants who do not qualify for the interview round will be notified via email.

**Virtual Academic Center and other MSW Programs:**

Students in the Virtual Academic Center or Working Professionals programs may be eligible to participate in the LA DCFS Stipend Program if they meet the following eligibility requirements:

**Students receiving the LA DCFS stipend must reside in the state of California.**

- **Students must attend the University Park Campus location and complete their second internship with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services.**
- **During the stipend program, all students will be placed at a DCFS regional office for their second internship placement.**

If you have any questions or concerns, please email Professor Holly Priebe-Sotelo at [hsotelo@usc.edu](mailto:hsotelo@usc.edu) or Professor Debra Waters-Roman at [waterro@usc.edu](mailto:waterro@usc.edu)

**Please continue to the next page where the LA DCFS Stipend Application is located.**

**Note that the deadline to apply is Friday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025 at 5 pm PDT.**

**PLEASE TYPE APPLICATION AND INCLUDE YOUR RESUME PERSONAL INFORMATION**

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

**Expected MSW Graduation Month, Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

Check this box  to confirm you read and understand the information on the LA DCFS Stipend Information Sheet.

Ethnicity/Race: \_\_\_\_\_ Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Languages spoken other than English: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree of fluency: (circle one for each)                      1 2 3 4 5                      1 2 3 4 5

- 1- Can understand some, cannot engage in a conversation
- 3- Can understand and speak moderately
- 5- Can understand and speak fluently

Name of university/college where you received your bachelor's degree:  
\_\_\_\_\_

Degree/Major: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Degree Conferred: \_\_\_\_\_

If you are a current employee in a county/public child welfare agency, please provide us with a statement of support from your agency executive /district supervisor in order to qualify for preference in stipend assignment.

**Citizenship and Residence History (all information will be kept strictly confidential)**

**Country of Birth:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Country of Citizenship:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If a Naturalized U.S. Citizen, Date of Naturalization:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

If not a U.S. Citizen, Expiration Date of Green Card: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ or DACA: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

**Criminal Background:** If you have been convicted of a misdemeanor or felony in the last three years and you were over the age of 18 when convicted, please attach a separate sheet with date(s), charges, location(s) and penalties. You do not need to include offenses that occurred prior to your 18th birthday, traffic violations with fines of \$500.00 or less (unless the traffic violation resulted in a felony or misdemeanor conviction), or expunged offenses.

Not Applicable  Description Attached

Do you have an automobile for placement related travel? Yes  No

**Driver's License and Insurance**

Driver's License Number: \_\_\_\_\_ State Issued: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Automobile Insurance Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

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Name of Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please type your responses to the following questions on separate sheets of paper. Don't forget to add your name to your responses. Your responses are neither right nor wrong but will serve as a means of assessing the fit between you and public child welfare work. Your answers to each question should be no less than half a page and no more than two (2) pages in length- single or double-spaced.**

1. Describe your understanding of what work in a public child welfare setting entails. In what ways have your prior experiences prepared you for working in a public child welfare agency? What interests you about public child welfare work and makes you think you would like to focus your education and career in this area?
2. Maria and Carlos are ages 4 and 6. They lived with their parents until their maternal grandmother called the child abuse hotline telling them that she suspected her son-in-law of inappropriate sexual contact with her grandchildren when her daughter (the mother) was at work during the evening hours. When interviewed, the children kept changing their story. The father vehemently denies any abuse ever happened. Because the grandmother has never approved of their marriage, the children's mother believes the father. The children were temporarily placed in the grandmother's home rather than in foster care. Discuss the issues and dynamics that would be relevant in working with each of the family members. How does this case impact you and your belief system?
3. In what ways do people become involved in the public child welfare system? If this happened to you or a member of your family, how would you respond? What are the similarities and differences between you and the clients with whom you will interact?
4. The environment of a public child welfare agency will require you to demonstrate flexibility, self-advocacy, and effective communication skills. How do you see yourself utilizing these skills at the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services?