

Overview

The Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) stipend program is a federally-funded partnership between Los Angeles County DCFS and several local MSW programs, including USC's, under the Title IV-E provision of the Social Security Act. The two-year stipend of \$52,000 is available to students who are **committed** to pursuing a career in public child welfare in Los Angeles County.

Please keep in mind that this program relies on external funding every year.

Qualifications and Requirements

To qualify and remain eligible for the LA DCFS Public Child Welfare Stipend, recipients must do the following:

1. Be able to complete your final internship with the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services in a Los Angeles County DCFS Office.
2. Maintain good academic standing with a 3.0 or better GPA and satisfactory performance in practicum placement.
3. Pass a public child welfare elective course.
4. Attend an orientation in August before classes begin.
5. Participate in specialized training sessions throughout the academic year. Attendance is mandatory, and these training sessions are held in person on the USC campus. Date and time of training sessions are subject to change.
6. Attend a trauma-informed training.
7. Students will be required to participate in an OCSE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) to enhance their client engagement and interviewing skills.

DCFS Stipend Program Opportunities

During the stipend program, all students will be placed at a DCFS regional office for their second internship placement.

Payback Commitment

Students who participate in the LA DCFS stipend program agree to work at the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services for two calendar years after graduation. Graduates will be placed in the DCFS offices with the highest need for staff. The goal is for DCFS graduates to further their public child welfare career beyond the two years of employment payback and adopt a leadership role to become effective agents of change.

Additional Information about Interning with LA County DCFS

LA County DCFS is the largest public child welfare agency in the United States. Established in 1984, DCFS is designed to provide a wide range of protective and social services to residents of Los Angeles County. The Department's primary focus is ensuring the safety of children and families, while focusing on the maintenance of family systems, the reunification of families who have children placed in resource care, and securing permanent homes for children who need this service through permanency planning. The Department operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORKER (INTERN)

As a DCFS Intern, you will be responsible for:

- Meeting the ongoing safety needs of clients who are under DCFS supervision.
- Providing psychosocial assessments and services to families of diverse cultures.
- Educating, advising, advocating, and supporting involuntary clients who may present as ambivalent, angry, fearful, and/or traumatized and who may be living in difficult environments and social situations.
- Being a referral/resource for clients, and networking with the legal, medical, educational, and psychological service systems that impact the client's situation.
- Knowing, understanding, and adhering to the legal and ethical boundaries that define social work case management at DCFS.
- Documenting all client contacts and services provided as well as creating case plans and writing court reports within expected time frames.

On any given day, you may find yourself:

- Dealing with an unexpected casework or administrative issue.
- Prioritizing your client's needs with the demands from court and the expectations of managers.
- Providing crisis intervention services to clients regarding child abuse referrals, child removal/replacement, child death or injury, and financial or housing problems.
- Assessing and servicing client situations involving serious physical or sexual abuse.

Possible Benefits:

- Ability to create positive change in the lives of children and families.
- Ability to interface with diverse populations, situations, and organizations.
- Ability to develop skills and work towards a professional social work degree.
- Ability to promote and/or be reassigned to various job functions.

Application Process

Applications are accepted until **Friday, June 13, 2025 at 5:00 pm (PST)** and are evaluated and scored. The highest scoring applicants will be contacted for an interview. Interviews are held on a rolling basis. Awards will be made on the basis of the quality of the application and the interview. **Applicants must complete the packet in full and are encouraged to apply early.**

Please note that if you receive this award, it will impact your financial aid package. A representative from the School's Scholarship Programs Office will meet with all awardees to discuss any questions that you may have related to the stipend.

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

Note that the deadline to apply is Friday, June 13th, 2025 at 5 pm PDT.