

**Master of Social Work (MSW)  
Child Welfare Education & Advancement Program**

The Child Welfare Education & Advancement Program (CWEAP) is a partnership between the Wisconsin Division of Children and Family Services and the Collaborative MSW Program at UW – Green Bay and UW – Oshkosh. CWEAP operates with federal funds made available through Title IV-E of the Social Security Act, which provides training stipends for MSW students who are committed to a career in public child welfare. The stipend is a monetary award, paid at the beginning of each semester, which is equivalent to the cost of in-state tuition and fees.

The Child Welfare Education & Advancement Program has two primary goals:

- To prepare graduate social work students for employment in regional public, tribal and community partner agencies that provide child welfare services, and;
- To prepare current employees of these agencies for advanced practice and leadership in the field of public child welfare.

Toward this end, the Program combines specialized child welfare coursework with a supervised field practicum in a public or tribal child welfare agency in NE Wisconsin. Students accepted into the Program are awarded a yearly stipend. Program participation requires a commitment by the student to work in a public or tribal child welfare agency upon graduation.

Eligibility

Students accepted into the Collaborative MSW Program who envision a career in public or tribal child welfare in the State of Wisconsin are eligible to participate.

Program requirements

Applicants must meet and / or agree to these general requirements:

- Admission to the Collaborative MSW Program;
- Enrollment in recommended child welfare course(s);
- Completion of field practicum in public or tribal child welfare agency;
- Students new to the field of child welfare must attend a one-day Child Welfare Practice Seminar prior to beginning their field practicum.

- Attend a CWEAP Orientation, which will cover the program guidelines and expectations, as well as any other subsequent meetings scheduled by the Child Welfare Coordinator.
- Commitment to work full-time for one year (12 months) for each year stipend funds received in a Wisconsin public, tribal or community partner child welfare agency upon graduation.

### Application

A packet will be distributed to each student who expresses an interest in working in the field of child welfare. The packet consists of an Application form, Field Placement Screening Tool, Contract and Program Guidelines.

All applications received by May 15 will receive full consideration.

### Selection and distribution of stipend awards

The Child Welfare Coordinator will conduct an initial screening of all applications to ensure that the student's practice and employment interests are congruent with the program goals.

When the number of eligible applicants is equal to the number of stipends available in any given year, the Child Welfare Coordinator, in consultation with the MSW Field Coordinator, will issue stipend awards.

When the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of stipends available in any given year, applications will be reviewed and approved by at least three members of the MSW Child Welfare Education Committee, according to criteria established by this Committee. Stipend awards will be issued to the most qualified applicants.

Stipends are awarded for one academic year. Foundation year stipends are equivalent to the cost of in-state UW – Green Bay graduate tuition and fees for Fall and Spring Semesters. Advanced year stipends are equivalent to the cost of in-state graduate tuition and fees for Fall, Spring and Summer Semesters.

### Special considerations for students in the 2-Year MSW program

A defined number of stipends are allocated each year for Foundation and Advanced MSW students.

Students enrolled in the 2-year MSW Program may apply for their Foundation year, their Advanced year, or both. Students who receive a stipend for their Foundation year are not guaranteed a stipend for their Advanced year. These students must reapply; their applications will be considered as part of the applicant pool for the number of Advanced stipends available in any given year.

Students enrolled in the 2-year MSW Program who receive the stipend only for one year must remain committed to the requirements of the program, which include successful completion of the Child Welfare course and Advanced Practicum in an approved public / tribal child welfare agency. These students are subject to a one-year post-graduation employment commitment, and documentation requirements, as specified in the Contract. If students are unable / unwilling to agree to these program requirements, they must reimburse the full amount of stipend funds received.

#### Student requirements

To remain an active participant in the program, students must meet these expectations:

- Maintain graduate status and enrollment in the Collaborative MSW Program
- Successfully move toward completion of the MSW degree
- Be accepted for and successfully complete approved field placement(s)
- Complete the Wisconsin Child Welfare Training System online Pre-Service training in conjunction with the field placement
- Demonstrate competency in child welfare practice
- Participate and attend all CWEAP meetings and activities as defined above;
- Assure that employment schedules and demands do not interfere with course and field work

#### Field education

Participants must complete their Foundation and / or Advanced Practicum in a Wisconsin public or tribal child welfare agency. Approved field agencies include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Brown County Department of Human Services
- Calumet County Department of Human Services
- Door County Department of Social Services
- Fond du Lac County Department of Social Services

- Green Lake County Department of Human Services
- Kewaunee County Department of Human Services
- Marathon County Department Social Services Department
- Marquette County Department of Human Services
- Manitowoc County Department of Human Services
- Menominee County Department of Human Services
- NEW Partnership for Children and Families
- Oconto County Department of Human Services
- Oneida Tribal Social Services
- Outagamie County Department of Human Services
- Portage County Health & Human Services
- Shawano County Department of Human Services
- Sheboygan County Department of Human Services
- Waupaca County Department of Human Services
- Waushara County Department of Human Services
- Winnebago County Health & Human Services
- Wisconsin DCFS – Adoption Services
- Wood County Department of Human Services

### Contracts

A current contract signed by the student and the Child Welfare Coordinator must be on file prior to disbursement of any stipend funds. Contracts are in effect until the CWEAP participant's obligations are fulfilled or stipend funds are reimbursed in full. The availability of stipend funds is contingent upon continued federal and state funding.

Any additional contractual stipend or grant award requiring a post-graduation employment commitment is to be considered separate from the requirements for this program.

The Contract will be considered to be completed when one of the following conditions is met:

- The participant fulfills their post-graduation employment commitment in a qualified public, tribal or community partner child welfare agency
- The stipend recipient is granted a waiver of their post-graduation employment commitment
- The stipend recipient reimburses the full amount of stipend funds received

Participants will receive written notice when they have fulfilled the requirements of their contract.

### Stipend payments

Stipend payments will be disbursed to students by their university of enrollment each semester the student is enrolled in the program.

### Post-graduation employment commitment

Prior to graduation, students will be notified of the length of time they must work in a qualified Wisconsin public, tribal or community partner child welfare agency. The length of the employment commitment is calculated at one year (12 months) employment for each (academic) year which the student receives a stipend.

Qualified employment (as defined below) within the state of Wisconsin will meet this requirement.

Graduates who are not employed in public child welfare must apply for and accept qualified employment within the NE Wisconsin region comprised of the 26 “NEW Partnership” counties: <http://www.uwgb.edu/newpart/Partner.htm> . A map of the NEW Partnership counties is printed on the last page of this document.

If qualified employment is secured prior to graduation, the maximum time that can be counted toward the post-graduation employment commitment is thirty (30) days.

Graduates who were employed in public child welfare during their MSW program must remain employed by their current agencies (in their current or another child welfare-related position) for the duration of their post-graduation employment commitment.

### Qualified child welfare employment

The general child welfare job functions that meet program guidelines for post-graduation employment include:

- Child protective services (investigation / risk assessment)
- Case management (ongoing protective services, substitute care, etc.)
- Family preservation / reunification services
- Child placement services (foster, kinship and group care)
- Independent living services
- Permanency planning

- Adoption services
- Foster home recruitment / licensing
- Supervision of child welfare staff
- Child welfare program management / agency administration
- Child welfare training

### Post-graduation employment search & reporting

Graduates must document their job search activities and report these to the Child Welfare Coordinator each quarter for at least one year after graduation. Supplementary materials, such as copies of employment announcements and applications, letters documenting the outcome of employment applications, and verification of employment may be required at the discretion of the Child Welfare Coordinator.

Graduates must accept offers for qualified employment, notify the Child Welfare Coordinator, and remain employed for the equivalent of one year of full-time employment for each year of stipend funds received. If requested, participants must agree to sign a release-of-information form authorizing the Child Welfare Coordinator to verify qualified employment.

Federal guidelines governing child welfare traineeships (SEC. 429 [42 U.S.C. 628a]) obligates the Collaborative MSW Program to “track the employment record of the recipient, for the purpose of determining the percentage of recipients who secure employment in the field of child welfare services and remain employed in the field” for a 3-year period that begins on the date the recipient completes their program of study. By signing the Contract, CWEAP participants agree to provide current contact information to the Child Welfare Coordinator for three (3) years after graduation in order to fulfill this federal requirement.

### Default

Failure to comply with all program requirements places participants in default, which requires them to reimburse the Collaborative MSW Program the full amount of stipend funds received within 90 days of notice of default. Participants will be considered in default when one of the following conditions exists:

- Withdrawal from the CWEAP Program at any time.
- Failure to adhere to basic program requirements as outlined in this document as determined by the Child Welfare Coordinator.
- Failure to graduate from the Collaborative MSW Program.

- Failure to document search for qualified employment for one year after graduation.
- Failure to maintain contact with and respond to requests for information from Child Welfare Coordinator during the contract period.
- Failure to accept offers of qualified employment.
- Voluntary or involuntary termination (based upon a personnel action, not layoff) of qualified employment during the employment commitment period.

Participants will receive written notice when they are in default of their Contract. An invoice for the full amount of stipend funds received will be issued.

#### Reimbursement of stipend funds

Participants, who withdraw from CWEAP or the Collaborative MSW Program, must immediately notify the Child Welfare Coordinator of the circumstances of their withdrawal and their plan for voluntary reimbursement of stipend funds. All stipend funds must be reimbursed within 90 (ninety) days of the date of withdrawal from either program.

CWEAP participants who are in default of their Contract, and who do not make arrangements for and / or follow through with voluntary reimbursement of stipend funds, will be referred for collection. Participants are responsible for the balance due the Collaborative MSW Program in addition to any collection agency or legal fees.

#### Deferral / waiver of employment obligation

Participants who are unable to complete their post-graduation employment commitment due to military deployment, a health or family-related emergency, or other extenuating circumstance may request a deferral or waiver of their post-graduation employment commitment.

Participants who document active search, as defined above, for qualified employment for a minimum of twelve (12) months after graduation, and have not secured such employment, may request a waiver (cancellation) of their post graduation employment commitment.

In either of these situations, the participant must initiate a written request to the Child Welfare Coordinator which includes supporting documentation. The Child Welfare Coordinator may defer or waive the recipient from their post-graduation employment commitment.

### Child welfare program staff

For further information, materials, or questions about the MSW Child Welfare Education & Advancement Program, please contact:

Matthew Mattila, ACSW, CISW  
Child Welfare Coordinator  
UW – Green Bay  
2420 Nicolet Dr., CL – 710  
Green Bay, WI 54311-7001  
[mattilam@uwgb.edu](mailto:mattilam@uwgb.edu)  
(920) 465-2867

The Child Welfare Coordinator is authorized to make decisions regarding the day-to-day operations of the Child Welfare Education & Advancement Program. All questions and concerns regarding the Program should be discussed with the Coordinator.

If, in the judgment of the Child Welfare Coordinator, participants fail to comply with the program requirements contained in this document, all outstanding stipend payments will be suspended and participants will receive notice of default.

If participants have a concern regarding a decision made by the Child Welfare Coordinator, they should contact the Social Work Program Chair at their designated University:

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