



## Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium

### 2022-2023 Program Description

#### Program Overview

The Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium (CCWSC), formerly known as the Child Welfare Stipend Program, aims to grow and support a well-educated and prepared child welfare workforce through social work education and post-graduation professional development. The CCWSC is part of a national effort to invest in the undergraduate and graduate social work education of selected students to attract qualified professionals into the field of public child welfare. Title IV-E training and programs across the country are vital to the recruitment, development, and retention of trained social workers to the field of child welfare.

The CCWSC is made possible through funds available from Title IV-E of the Social Security Act and matching funds from the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS). Metropolitan State University of Denver's Department of Social Work currently leads this effort and acts as the central entity for the program. Participating social work programs include:

- Colorado State University (CSU) Pueblo
- Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver), Department of Social Work
- University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (UCCS)
- University of Denver, Graduate School of Social Work (GSSW)

These social work programs, as well as, representatives from CDHS and county departments of human/social services encompass the Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Committee. The Committee is responsible for overseeing the recruitment, application, selection and retention of child welfare scholars to the field in Colorado.

Selected Child Welfare Scholars will enter into a contract with their university, formally committing them to the terms of the program. Scholars will receive scholarships for the academic year to be paid directly to their student account at their respective university. Scholars range depending on the Scholar's social work program status and interest in working for an urban or rural child welfare agency. Scholarship amounts include:

	Full Time	Part Time
<b>MSW (Urban)</b>	\$12,000	\$6,000
<b>BSSW (Urban)</b>	\$7,000	\$3,500
<b>MSW (Rural)</b>	\$14,000	\$7,000
<b>BSSW (Rural)</b>	\$9,000	\$4,500

\*Students who accept a child welfare scholarship will be required to sign a formal contract reflecting the details and requirements included in this announcement. Requirements are subject to change and will be communicated with all Child Welfare Scholars.



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## Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium

Child Welfare Scholars agree to complete one year (12 months) of work “payback” in a Colorado county department human services or Colorado Tribal child welfare agency for each year of stipend funding received.

### Scholar Eligibility and Selection

Financial scholarships are available to students in both the full time and part time BSSW and MSW programs, including those completing their degrees online and MSW Advanced Standing students. Students of color and bilingual students and students whose first priority is to complete their payback work requirements in a rural Colorado county are encouraged to apply.

BSSW students should apply during their junior year to receive a scholarship for their senior year in the social work program, when they are in their field placement.

MSW students can apply for to the program prior to being accepted into their social work program for their foundation year (Regular Program) or concentration year (Advanced Standing). Foundation year students can also apply to receive a scholarship for their concentration year. Students must be admitted into the social work program to accept a scholarship.

If students are in the MSU Denver MSW Program on the part time plan, see the *Am I Eligible for a Part-Time Scholarship?* document available from:

<https://www.msudenver.edu/ccwsc/interested-students/>, for more information about when they are eligible to receive a scholarship.

County employees in the part-time social work program are eligible for a child welfare scholarship at any point in their program. They are exempt from the field placement requirement of the scholarship during years one and three of the social work program. They will be expected to complete the field requirement as part of their educational requirements and before their payback employment can begin.

Part-time students who are not county employees and not in their field experience are NOT eligible to receive a Scholarship until they are in their field placement year.

To be eligible for a child welfare scholarship, students must:

- Apply to the BSSW or MSW program – students must be accepted into the MSW program to interview and accept the scholarship. Admittance into the program will be determined in advance of the second round of child welfare interviews.
- Apply and interview for the child welfare scholars program.
- Have and maintain a valid Colorado Driver’s License, a working vehicle, proof of insurance.
- Meet county requirements for hire based on a background check and a check of their driving record.

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## Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium

### **Selection Criteria**

The selection of Child Welfare Scholars will be made by a panel consisting of members of the statewide Child Welfare Scholars Committee, including university, state and county representatives. Selection is based on academic history, demonstrated writing ability, experience, and demonstrated commitment to the field of child welfare. Preference may be given to applicants demonstrating a commitment to working in rural Colorado county department of social/human services and those already working in the field of child welfare. In addition, preference may be given to applicants who are bilingual, in an effort to meet the needs of the child welfare system in Colorado.

### **Academic Requirements**

Child welfare scholars must complete the entire social work program and remain in good standing as defined by their social work program.

Child welfare scholars must follow the child welfare-specific requirements and electives with their academic advisor and child welfare program staff to advance their skills in child welfare practice.

MSU Denver BSSW Scholars: The following courses must be completed BEFORE beginning their senior year. These courses are offered several times a year.

- SWK 3100 – Child Welfare and the Law
- SWK 3150 – Social Work and Child Maltreatment

BSSW Scholars must complete the same social work and non-social work pre-requisites and multicultural perspective requirements as all other social work majors.

DU MSW Scholars must complete the required courses as part of the Child Welfare Concentration within the MSW program.

### **Field Experience Requirements**

Child welfare scholars are required to complete their field experience (internship) in a Colorado county department of human/social services or Colorado Tribal child welfare agency and meet the minimum required field hours based on their university's requirements.

The field experience is intended to integrate classroom knowledge with practice and to experience the roles and requirements of a professional social worker.

County Field Coordinators will be notified of awarded child welfare scholars. It is the responsibility of the child welfare scholar and Field Coordinator to make final field placement determinations based on the county-specific process.

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## **Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium**

It is the Scholar's responsibility to notify the field team and Consortium staff of the acceptance of an internship, in accordance with their field team's requirements.

Child welfare scholars agree to complete the Colorado new caseworker certification training within an intern cohort as part of their field experience. They may also attend new caseworker training in a regular regional cohort, if space is available. Child welfare scholars who are already certified as a child welfare caseworker in the State of Colorado do not need to attend the new caseworker training again.

Child welfare scholars who are employed by a Colorado County Department of Human/Social Services or Tribal child welfare agency may complete their field experience in their place of employment. Child welfare scholars should review their social work program and DHS/DSS policies regarding field experience in place of employment. Once the field placement activities are determined, they must follow the social work program policy for confirming their field placement in their place of employment.

### **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)**

Child welfare scholars in the final year of their social work program (BSW and MSW) are required to participate in the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) process and corresponding learning circles as part of their field experience.

## **Payment Information**

Financial scholarships are provided by each university and must be used to support the Scholar's education expenses. Therefore, they are applied directly to the student's account at their respective university. Payments are split across two semesters or three quarters (DU), with a review of the scholar's academic standing prior to the disbursement of additional funds.

## **Payback Requirements**

### **Work Requirements**

Child welfare scholars agree to accept a paid position serving IV-E eligible children, youth and families in a Colorado county department of human/social services or Colorado Tribal child welfare agency following graduation. Scholars commit to "rural" or "urban" county as part of the scholarship process and agree to work a full year (12 months) for each year they receive a scholarship. Scholars in the part-time program and receiving half of a scholarship each year commit to half of the work payback or 6 months for each scholarship they receive.

Child welfare scholars have two months following graduation to secure employment in an urban or rural county of Colorado. If they do not secure employment in an urban county of Colorado during this period, they may be required to relocate to a rural county to fulfill the work payback requirements. Should a scholar fail to obtain employment within two months of graduation, they may be required to accept employment in a county chosen by the state.

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## Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium

If a graduate cannot locate a job within two months of graduation, payback may be delayed for up to one year, in increments up to three months, upon approval of the Child Welfare Scholars Consortium staff and/or the statewide committee. The graduate must demonstrate efforts to secure employment within that year, participating in all interviews, and accepting employment, if offered.

### Financial Repayment

Child welfare scholars are required to repay the total amount of the financial scholarship, interest and any cost of collection under the following circumstances:

1. Failure to complete the social work program, including required courses, within the normative period, except for hardship or disability.
2. Failure to successfully complete the field placement, including the Child Welfare Fundamentals training, in a Colorado county child welfare setting serving IV-E eligible children, youth and families.
3. Violation of university policies or procedures during the academic or internship experience.
4. Failure to meet security clearance screens for work with children. These include, but are not limited to, background checks from: the C.B.I., Division of Records and Reports (Child Abuse Registry), F.B.I. for students who have been in Colorado less than 5 years, driving records, and any other background checks required by the county departments of social/human services to which the student applies for employment.
5. Failure to meet the legal requirements for employment within the USA as defined by 8 U.S.C. § 1324a.
6. Violation of the National Association of Social Worker (NASW) code of ethics during the internship or work payback period.
7. Failure to accept employment in a Colorado urban, rural or Tribal county child welfare position, depending on the scholarship commitment that is outlined here, serving IV-E eligible children and their families, within two months of graduation (unless a deferment is granted).
8. Failure to gain employment in a Colorado county child welfare position serving IV-E eligible children and their families within one year of graduation, in spite of having participated in interviews.

### Terms of Repayment

Child welfare scholars who do not fulfill the terms of their agreement are responsible for the total or prorated award, interest, and collection costs. Terms of repayment will be negotiated with the CCWSC Administration & Finance Services Specialist.

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Scholars who have paid back part of their work requirement will pay a prorated amount under the following circumstances:

1. Voluntary termination of employment before completion of the work requirement (unless a hardship deferment is granted).
2. Termination of employment before completion of the work requirement.

Full financial repayment must take place within twelve (12) months of the initiation of a repayment plan unless a different repayment scheduled is agreed to by the Consortium staff. Financial repayment cannot exceed forty-eight (48) months/four (4) years of the initiation of a repayment plan.

If no agreement is reached or the student/graduate defaults on the repayment agreement, collections procedures will be undertaken by MSU Denver's collection agency.

#### **Payback Deferment**

If a Scholar cannot locate a job within two months of graduation, work or financial payback may be deferred for up to one year, in increments up to three months.

Written deferment requests must be submitted to the Scholar's program coordinator and approved by Consortium staff. The Scholar must demonstrate efforts to secure employment within that year, participating in all offered interviews and accepting employment if offered. Deferments may be extended for one additional year. At the end of the deferment period, the Scholar must return and complete the work payback requirements or repay the amount of the award. Deferment may be granted to Scholars in the following circumstances:

1. Inability to secure a position.
2. Delay of graduation due to personal hardship or disability.
3. Change in employer.



## **Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium**

### **Graduate School Deferment**

BSW Child Welfare Scholars have several options, if continuing onto an MSW program in Colorado. BSW graduates may:

1. defer their work payback obligation until they complete the MSW program.
2. use a newly acquired paid employment in a child welfare position within a county or Colorado Tribal department of human/social services as their field placement during the MSW program, with approval from their employer and the university field team.
3. begin the work payback obligation for their BSW scholarship in a child welfare position within a county or Tribal department of human/social service while completing the MSW program. This option would require their MSW field experience to be completed in addition to and outside of their work hours.

BSW Child Welfare Scholars must select **one** of the above options if continuing onto an MSW program in Colorado. These MSW students are eligible to apply to be a child welfare scholar while in the MSW program. They must follow the same program completion and payback terms as defined in their MSW Scholars Contract. If a Scholar fails to complete the MSW program, they may still complete their work payback obligation for their BSW program and are subject to the repayment agreement outlined in their MSW Scholars Contract for their MSW scholarship.

BSW Scholars who complete their MSW program outside of Colorado automatically defer their work and financial repayment obligation until completion of their MSW program or twenty-four (24) months, whichever comes first.

### **Repayment Forgiveness**

Repayment forgiveness is at the discretion of the statewide Child Welfare Scholars Committee and requires a written request to the committee to initiate the forgiveness process. Waivers of repayment may be made in the case of permanent disability or death of the Child Welfare Scholar.