Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium (CCWSC)
Program Description

Overview
The Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium ('Scholars Consortium') is part of a national effort to invest in the social work education of selected students ('Scholars') to attract qualified professionals into public child welfare in Colorado. The Scholars Consortium is supported through funds available from Title IV-E of the Social Security Act and matching funds from the Colorado Department of Human Services (CDHS).

The Scholars Consortium consists of child welfare professionals from CDHS and county departments of human/social services as well as representatives from social work programs at:

- Colorado Mesa University (CMU)
- Colorado State University (CSU) Pueblo
- Metropolitan State University of Denver
- University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (UCCS)
- University of Denver (DU) and the Butler Institute for Families

This statewide Scholars Consortium is responsible for overseeing the recruitment, application, selection, and retention of Scholars to the program and child welfare in Colorado.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Academic Requirements
Scholars must complete all of the social work pre-requisites and the entire social work program and remain in good standing as defined by your social work program.

Scholars must follow the child welfare-specific requirements, as outlined on the first page of this contract. In addition, Scholars shall plan electives with their academic advisor and child welfare program staff to advance their skills in child welfare practice.

Internship (Field Placement/Practicum) Requirements
Scholars must complete their internship (field placement) in a Colorado county department of human/social child welfare or Tribal child welfare agency and meet the minimum internship hour requirements outlined by your social work program.

Internship coordinators within county departments of human/social services or Tribal child welfare agencies will be notified of awarded Scholars. The Scholar and internship coordinator is responsible for making final placement determinations based on the county-specific process. It is the Scholar's responsibility to notify their university's internship team and CCWSC staff of the acceptance of an internship.

New Scholars have the option to complete the new caseworker certification training within an intern cohort as part of their internship. They may attend the new caseworker training in a regular regional cohort, if space is available. They should discuss this option with their internship instructor (supervisor), task supervisor, and/or agency internship coordinator.

Scholars who are already certified as Colorado child welfare caseworkers do not need to attend the new caseworker training again.

Scholars employed by a Colorado county department of human/social services or Tribal child welfare agency may complete their internship in their place of employment. Scholars should review their social work program and DHS/DSS policies regarding internships in place of employment. Once the internship activities are determined, they must follow the social work program policies for confirming their internship in their place of employment.

Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)
Scholars in the final year of their bachelors or master's social work program must participate in the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) process and corresponding learning exchanges as part of their internship. Scholars who participated in the IDI process as part of their BSW scholarship can retake the IDI and participate in the process again as returning MSW scholars.

Research and Evaluation
Scholars agree to participate in any research and evaluation efforts undertaken by the CCWSC or CDHS, as it relates to the CCWSC.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)
In compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), the disclosure of information from a Scholar's educational record is considered confidential and will not be released, with certain exceptions, without the Scholar's written consent.

By completing the Child Welfare Scholars application, including the FERPA Student Consent to Release Confidential Information form, the Scholar agrees to the release of all educational records necessary for the completion of the Child Welfare Scholars Program to all parties of the statewide CCWSC.

Funding Use & Payment
As identified in 8.1H Title IV-E, Administrative Functions/Costs, Training and the CDHS claiming process, child welfare scholarships must be used to support the Scholar's educational expenses. Therefore, the financial scholarship will be applied directly to the Scholar's student account at their individual university at the beginning of each semester or quarter.

For CMU, CSU Pueblo, MSU Denver, and UCCS half of the total award will be disbursed prior to tuition due dates at the beginning of Fall and Spring semesters. For DU Scholars, a third of the total award will be disbursed before the start of Fall, Winter and Spring quarters.

No taxes are withheld from this scholarship payment. The University does not issue any year-end tax forms for this financial scholarship. Neither CCWSC nor our partners are able to provide legal, accounting, tax, or other financial advice. Scholars should contact their university's financial aid office or a professional tax advisor for any financial or tax-related questions concerning this scholarship.

All funds are contingent on the award and continued availability of state and federal funds for this purpose. In the event that funds are no longer available, the CCWSC and partnering universities are not responsible for paying the balance of the financial award to the Scholar.

Work Requirement
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 a Colorado Tribal child welfare agency following graduation. Scholars commit to a "rural" or "urban" county as part of the application and selection process and agree to work a full year (12 months) for each academic year they are part of the program. Scholars who receive a "rural" scholarship, commit to completing their work requirement in a "rural" county agency. "Rural" counties are defined by the Colorado Department of Human Services. Scholars who receive an "urban" scholarship may complete their work requirement in either an "urban" or "rural" county agency.

Scholars in a part-time program and receiving a part-time scholarship award commit to half of the work requirement or 6 months for each scholarship received.

While completing the work requirement, Scholars must provide personal contact information to Consortium staff and keep in regular communication with program staff during this time. This includes prior notification of any changes to employment including position or agency-level changes, to ensure they meet the work requirements. Consortium staff may request employment confirmation at any time. This confirmation may consist of a letter confirming employment status written on agency letterhead and signed by the Scholar's supervisor or a human resources representative.

It is the responsibility of the Scholar to complete the Employment Verification form and submit it to CCWSC program staff (as indicated on the form) once their work requirement is complete.

The work requirement timeline begins on the date a Scholar graduates from their BSW or MSW program. County employees may not count any previous work experience toward their work requirement. See 'Graduate School Deferment' and 'Work Requirement – Contract Amendment' (below) for exceptions.

Scholars have two months following graduation to secure employment in an urban or rural county of Colorado or a Colorado Tribal child welfare agency. Should a Scholar fail to obtain employment within two months of graduation, they may:

- be required accept employment in a county chosen by CDHS;
- be asked to relocate to fill workforce needs across the state;
- request repayment deferment (see below); or,
- financially repay the scholarship.

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

Written deferment requests must be submitted to and approved by the Consortium staff. The Scholar must demonstrate efforts to secure employment within that year, participating in all interviews offered 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 their work requirement or financially 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.

Graduate School Deferment
BSW Scholars have several options, if continuing onto an MSW program in Colorado. BSW graduates:

1. defer their work requirement until they complete the MSW program.
2. use a new paid child welfare position within a county or Colorado Tribal department of human/social services as their internship during the MSW program, with approval from their employer and the university internship team.

As MSW students, they are also eligible to re-apply for a child welfare scholarship. They must follow the same program completion and work requirements as defined in their MSW Scholars Contract. If a Scholar fails to complete the MSW program, they may still complete their work requirement for their BSW scholarship. They 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 requirement until completion of their MSW program or twenty-four (24) months, whichever comes first.

See 'Work Requirement – Contract Amendment' at the end of this contract for additional exceptions to the fulfillment of the work requirement.

Financial Repayment
Scholars are required to financially repay the total amount of the 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 internship, including the new caseworker 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 program or internship.
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 Scholar 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 their internship or work requirement period.
7. Failure to accept employment in a Colorado urban or rural county or Tribal child welfare position, depending on the 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, despite participating in interviews.

Terms of Financial Repayment

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 CCWSC staff.

Scholars who have completed 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. Financial repayment cannot exceed forty-eight (48) months/four (4) years of the initiation of a repayment plan. An alternative repayment schedule may be agreed to by Consortium staff.

If no agreement is reached, the Scholar defaults on the repayment agreement, or fails to communicate with Consortium staff regarding their work or financial requirements collections procedures will be undertaken by Metropolitan State University of Denver's approved collections agency.

To manage the collection process, University Coordinators will share Scholar's contact information, award information, and work status with Consortium staff. Consortium staff will determine reasonable costs of the collections process in accordance with their standard operating procedures, not to exceed 30% of the total amount owed. If a Scholar meets one of the circumstances identified above and requests a deferral or waiver or otherwise complies with the terms of their financial repayment plan, then the interest for this scholarship repayment is 0%.

Should a Scholar enter into a financial repayment agreement and gain employment at a Colorado County Department of Human/Social Services or Tribal child welfare agency during the

financial repayment period, they may stop financial repayment and be prorated for the amount already repaid against the remaining work requirement.

For example: *Molly receives a $10,000 scholarship while attending the concentration year of their MSW program. Molly defers payback for one-year post-graduation while they apply to available positions. After twelve (12) months of applying and interviewing they are unable to secure a position. Molly enters into a financial repayment agreement to pay $833.33/month x 12 months = $10,000 scholarship repayment within a year. Molly gains employment at Jefferson County after making three (3) months of payments towards their agreement. Molly must now work for at least nine (9) months in Jefferson County to fulfill the work and financial requirements of this scholarship agreement.*

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 Scholar.

Work Requirement – Contract Amendment
The Colorado Child Welfare Scholars Consortium (CCWSC) is amending the work requirement of the child welfare scholar contract to best support child welfare scholars and county agencies.

This amendment applies to Scholars who were students during academic years beginning 2019 to current. The CCWSC will revisit this amendment each year to assess the needs of scholars and stakeholders to determine the longevity of this program modification.

Under this amendment, county employees who previously received a child welfare scholarship, can use one hundred percent (100%) of their current child welfare position as their post-graduation work requirement, while attending a Colorado-based social work program, if they are not currently receiving a child welfare scholarship.

This amendment applies most directly to the following scenarios:

- BSW scholars who obtain child welfare employment following graduation, can use that employment towards their work requirement, even if they are also using their employment as their MSW internship, if they are not currently receiving a child welfare scholarship during the MSW program.

- MSW scholars in their Foundation, can use their on-going child welfare employment during their concentration year towards their work requirement for their foundation year scholarship, if they are not receiving a child welfare scholarship during the concentration year of the MSW program.