

Frequently Asked Questions about the Child Welfare Education Program

The Child Welfare Education Program (CWEP) is also known as The Child Welfare Partnership. Both Bachelor's in Social Work (BSW) and Master's of Social Work (MSW) students are eligible for the program.

Do I have to be a Child Welfare Employee to qualify?

No. Persons who are deeply committed to a career serving children and families in public or tribal Child Welfare are encouraged to apply. It should be noted that only Department of Human Services (DHS) Child Welfare (CW) employees will be accepted into the MSW Partnership Advanced Standing Program. We want students to have a grounded framework on how community and Child Welfare work together.

Is there a certain amount of time that Department of Human Services Child Welfare employees have to be employed with the agency?

Yes, employees must be in good standing and employed a minimum of two years in a permanent position at the time of submitting your Child Welfare Education Program Application.

Am I required to have a driver's license?

Yes. You must have a valid driver's license and an acceptable driving record.

If I am already a Department of Human Services employee, do I need permission from my supervisor or manager to apply for the Partnership?

Yes. There is a form approving your application that must be signed by your supervisor and branch manager and it is part of the application packet. Also, one of your reference letters must be from your supervisor.

How much money do I actually get?

Students in the School of Social Work BSW program and MSW students who are not employed by DHS Child Welfare (also known as recruits) may be awarded up to \$2,000 per term; up to \$6,000 per academic year. BSW students only receive tuition support for their senior year. MSW students who are employed by DHS Child Welfare (including Social Service Assistants) may be awarded up to \$10,000 per academic year; up to \$30,000 total, and up to \$18,000 total for MSW recruits. Please note that the tuition support only applies towards tuition, and not university fees or books. The tuition support is credited directly to your student account at Portland State University.

What do I have to do in return for receiving the Tuition Support?

You will sign an agreement between you and Oregon Department of Human Services, which states that you agree to work for public or tribal Child Welfare for each year you received the tuition support. If you would like to see a copy of the agreement, please email [Laurie Leasure](mailto:lleaseure@pdx.edu) (lleaseure@pdx.edu) at the Partnership office.

Non-Department of Child Welfare employees (also known as Recruits) are expected to interview for all qualifying positions 70 miles or less from your home, one way after graduation. You are expected to obtain employment within six months after graduation.

Are the classes I take different from what the other students take?

Campus Partnership students are offered the same array of courses as other students. It is recommended that BSW recruit students take Social work 320U Introduction to Child Welfare as an elective.

Are there any classes outside the Portland area?

Yes. The School of Social Work also has a MSW Distance Option program in four areas and an Online Option program. Descriptive links on each program is following:

- [Central Oregon in Bend](#)
- [Eugene](#)

- [Salem](#)
- [Southern Oregon in Medford](#)
- [Online Option program](#)

Also, in 2021, PSU School of Social Work is starting an online Bachelor's of Social Work program. Please visit the [BSW Online program webpage](#).

How do Field Placements work for Child Welfare Education Partnership students?

For non-DHS employees:

BSW Child Welfare Education Program students must complete their internship in a public or tribal child welfare office. MSW Child Welfare Education Program students are required to complete one of their two internships in a public or tribal child welfare office.

If you are a regular full-time DHS child welfare employee, you may apply for something called an Employed Social Worker (ESW) Option. This is a DHS agreement that allows you to receive a full-time salary with benefits if your field placement is at a DHS Child Welfare branch. You would work three days a week for 24 hours, and do your field internship work two days a week for 16 hours. Your field placement has to be in a different unit than your current employment. It must cover new learning experiences and meet the educational requirements of the School of Social Work. Your supervisor cannot be your Field Instructor.

Please visit the [Child Welfare Education Partnership website](#) for more information on the program.

I haven't worked in public Child Welfare before. What do Child Welfare caseworkers do and how much is their salary?

Graduates of our program are generally hired as a Social Service Specialist 1 with the Department of Human Services Child Welfare Programs. You can find an official description and current salary schedules on the [Oregon Job Opportunities External Career Website](#).

What is my employment obligation (payback)?

Both Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Child Welfare employees and recruits (non ODHS Child Welfare employees) in the program agree to work for ODHS public child welfare or tribal child welfare for one full year (12 months) of full-time employment or its equivalent part-time for each year they received tuition support. Payback must be completed with ODHS Child Welfare in a position at or above a Social Service Specialist 1 (SSS1) level in Title IV-E eligible employment or in a comparable position with any eligible Tribal Entity.

For employee students already employed with ODHS Child Welfare or tribal child welfare, payback will begin after graduation. And, for recruits who will obtain employment in a qualifying position after graduation, payback will begin at the date of hire.

CWEP recruit graduates will have support to prepare for gaining employment (resume review, practice interviewing, and contact with ODHS recruiters.) Recruits must apply for qualifying positions up to 70 miles one-way from their home. They must apply and attend interviews for all eligible positions within their geographic region and accept an offer of employment with ODHS Child Welfare position at or above a SSS1 position or in tribal child welfare within six-month receipt of degree or until hired. Recruits must earn the job on their own merit.

If employment is not secured in a qualifying position six months after graduation, or an employee fails to remain employed with ODHS Child Welfare, monetary repayment of the tuition support will commence.

What if I decide I don't want to work in Child Welfare while I am still in the program, or after I graduate?

As part of the agreement you will sign with DHS Child Welfare, if you leave school or decide not to stay in the Child Welfare Education Program, or decide not to work for DHS Child Welfare after you graduate, you will enter into a financial agreement plan to pay back any tuition funds that have been paid by DHS Child Welfare by Portland State University.

Information regarding the Culturally Responsive Leaders (CRL) Program

This program provides a specialized MSW pathway for culturally responsive students who are emerging leaders in Child Welfare or tribal Child Welfare programs. Safely reducing the overrepresentation of African American and American Indian, Native American, Alaskan Native children who enter the foster care system at highly disproportionate rates has long been a central concern within Child Welfare. There is also a continued need to develop a Child Welfare work force that is informed and committed to serving LGBTQ youth, foster and adoptive families. Being able to understand and recognize the influential role of diversity and culture and how deeply it impacts Child Welfare practice is at the core of this program.

Who may be selected for the CRL program?

MSW, Child Welfare Education Program students who are from diverse racial, ethnic backgrounds or members of the LGBTQ community may be eligible to be selected for this program.

Students receive specialized curriculum in leadership and field placement experiences to support the development of a culturally responsive workforce in Child Welfare through a monthly seminar during the academic year.

Students selected for this program may be awarded up to \$10,000 per academic year. This stipend is not in addition to the above-mentioned Child Welfare Partnership tuition support.

Please visit our [Culturally Responsive Leaders' Webpage](#) for more information.

How do I apply for the Child Welfare Partnership?

Applicants must apply for the program by completing the "[Child Welfare Education Program downloadable application](#)." The application due date is February 15, 2022. We generally conduct interviews for the Partnership Program sometime in June or July.

For further information email: [Laurie Leasure](mailto:lleaseure@pdx.edu) at lleaseure@pdx.edu
[Jessica Schmidt](mailto:jdsc@pdx.edu) at jdsc@pdx.edu

Thank you for your interest in the Child Welfare Partnership. The mission of the Child Welfare Education Program is to strengthen outcomes for children and families through education of the tribal and public child welfare workforce. Being a student in this collaborative partnership between the Oregon Department of Human Services and the Portland State University School of Social Work provides you with a rewarding and well-supported educational experience.