



**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
DIVISION OF CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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**Manual Transmission Letter (MTL)
Family Programs Office: Statewide Child Welfare Policy Manual**

MTL # 1401-071410

07/14/2010

TO: Amber Howell, Deputy Administrator - Division of Child and Family Services – Central Office
Tom Morton, Director - Clark County Department of Family Services
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POLICY DISTRIBUTION:

Enclosed find the following policy for distribution to all applicable staff within your organization:

- 1401 Educational Stipends

This policy is/was effective: 07/01/2010

- This policy is new. Please review the policy in its entirety
- This policy replaces the following policy(s): MTL # 200-050506 Policy Name: 200 Educational Stipend Program
- This policy has been revised. Please see below for the type of revision:
- This is a significant policy revision. Please review this policy in its entirety.
 - This is a minor policy revision: (List page number & summary of change):
 -
 - A policy form has been revised: (List form, page number and summary of change):
 -

NOTE:

- Please read the policy in its entirety and note any areas that are additionally required by your agency to be in compliance with the policy enclosed.
- This is an **All STAFF MEMO** and it is the responsibility of the person listed above to disseminate the policy enclosed to appropriate staff within his/her organization and to ensure compliance.
- The most current version of this policy is posted on the DCFS Website at the following address: http://www.dcfstate.nv.us/DCFS_Policies_CW.htm. Please check the table of contents on this page for the link to the chapter you are interested in.

1401.0 Educational Stipends

1401.1 Policy Approval Clearance Record

Check one only: <input type="checkbox"/> State Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaborative Policy	This policy supersedes: ■ 200 Educational Stipend Program 05/05/06	Number of pages in Policy: 8 Date Policy Effective: 07/01/2010
TMT Recommendation Date	04/12/2010	Policy Lead: C. Freeman, SSCIII
DMG Approval Date:	06/18/2010	Policy Lead: C. Freeman, SSCIII
Review by Representative from the Office of the Attorney General:	n/a	Signature: n/a
DCFS Administrator Approval:	06/18/2010	Signature: ON FILE

1401.2 Statement of Purpose

1401.2.1 Policy Statement: All students accepted into the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) or Master of Social Work (MSW) degree program at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), including current employees of a public child welfare agency seeking either a BSW or MSW, are eligible to apply for educational stipends. However, the greatest priority is for recruitment and preparation of potential child welfare staff for employment in public child welfare agencies at the bachelor's degree level.

1401.2.2 Purpose: To provide an educational incentive to social work students who are interested in pursuing a career in the child welfare field. It is the intent of the State of Nevada, through collaboration with public child welfare agencies and the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), to prepare skilled potential child welfare workers and enhance the skills of existing child welfare employees through a comprehensive social work education program. Educational stipends are funded through Title IV-E of the Social Security Act.

These stipends support education to enhance the skills and competencies of existing public child welfare employees and create a pool of potential child welfare candidates to fill existing and future vacancies in public child welfare agencies. Training and development is essential to the provision of quality services for Nevada's children and families.

1401.3 Authority

Social Security Act, Title IV-E, Section 474 (3) (A)
 45CFR235.61; .62; .63; .64; .65; .66
 45CFR1356.60
 NRS 284.065; .155; .343; .345; .514; .518

1401.4 Definitions

1401.4.1 Decision Making Group: A group comprised of the DCFS Administrator and Deputy Administrators, the DCFS Rural Region Manager, and the Directors of CCDFS and WCDSS. The group reviews, and ultimately approves, all policy drafts, then provides oversight for the direction and implementation of all approved policies, relevant procedures and practice guidelines.

- 1401.4.2 Field Education Program Coordinator:** University employee responsible for assigning and overseeing all field practicum activities for both BSW and MSW students at the University. This individual coordinates the field application process of students interested in child welfare and collaborates with the University Training Coordinator about receipt of forgivable loans. The Field Education Program Coordinator also serves as an information liaison between the child welfare agency and the Training Coordinator in terms of any problem areas identified.
- 1401.4.3 Field Instructor:** The field instructor is the primary agency mentor responsible for on-site supervision of the BSW or MSW student in the child welfare agency field practicum. This individual is responsible for supporting the achievement of key competencies when students are in their field practicum.
- 1401.4.4 Forgivable loan:** This is the term that the University uses for stipends; meaning that the loan is considered forgiven (paid in full) when/if the applicant fulfills his or her employment obligation to the public child welfare agency.
- 1401.4.5 Persons preparing for employment:** Individuals who are not yet employed by the State or agency which provides child welfare services, but who have received financial assistance from the University, as outlined in its contract with the State, for furthering their education and have made a legally binding commitment with the State or agency which provides child welfare services for future employment under the conditions of this policy.
- 1401.4.6 Agency which provides child welfare services:** Means that in a county whose population is less than 100,000, the agency is a local office of the Division of Child and Family Services; or in a county whose population is 100,000 or more, the agency of the county, which provides or arranges for necessary child welfare services. May also be referred to as "Agency" or "Child Welfare Agency."
- 1401.4.7 Selection Sub-Committee:** A sub-committee of the Training Management Team which is appointed by TMT members to participate in regular meetings for awarding stipends at the University which holds the State Stipend Contract.
- 1401.4.8 State:** An alternate word for the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS); Family Programs Office (FPO); or the Bureau of Child Care Licensing (BCCL).
- 1401.4.9 Stipend:** The basic living allowance paid to a student, intended to assist with payment of tuition and purchase of textbooks.
- 1401.4.10 University:** An alternate word for the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR).
- 1401.4.11 Waiver with cause:** An agreement between two public child welfare agencies which allows a stipend graduate to accept employment with an agency other than that with which they had an original employment obligation.

1401.5 Procedures

The educational stipend is used as a recruitment tool to identify and support possible new social workers currently attending the University of Nevada, Reno. These students, upon graduation, would potentially be eligible for hire by DCFS, CCDFS or WCDSS. All BSW and MSW graduates who receive stipends are required to commit to one year of employment with a public child welfare agency for each academic year they receive a stipend.

1401.5.1 Stipend Selection Sub-Committee

- A. The University and each public child welfare agency shall provide recommendations for members for consideration to the TMT for the Sub-Committee by the January TMT Meeting each year.
- B. Members shall serve a one-year term on the Sub-Committee. Terms are renewable at the discretion of the TMT and DCFS Management.

- C. The Sub-Committee will be made up of one member from UNR, one member from each public child welfare agency, and will be chaired by the DCFS Manager or designee. Each member has one vote.
- D. The Sub-Committee meetings will be organized by the University Training Coordinator in collaboration with the DCFS Training Manager or designee.
- E. The Sub-Committee will meet at minimum quarterly, or more often as required by program needs.
- F. The Sub-Committee will identify vacancy needs statewide, including determination of "hard to recruit" areas, establish geographic recruitment priorities and other recruitment needs (i.e. bilingual and/or multi-cultural) applicable to the awarding of stipends.
- G. The Sub-Committee will determine the number of stipends allocated for each two year budget cycle based upon identified needs and budgetary restrictions. For recruitment and planning purposes, fixed award amounts for the contract budget cycle will be determined for BSW and MSW applicants. Stipend awards will be based on the following formula:
 - 1. Cost of tuition at the University for a full time student (12 - 16 credits); plus,
 - 2. \$1500 per year for books and supplies; plus,
 - 3. 50% of the total tuition amount to support miscellaneous expenses; plus,
 - 4. 10% of a + b to compensate bilingual applicants who may use their bilingual skills in their practicum (Note: a letter from the agency is required).
- H. The Sub-Committee and/or University Training Coordinator will report to the TMT monthly on Stipend Program Activities.

1401.5.2 University Responsibilities

- A. The University will identify potential stipend students through the development/updating of an **Annual Recruitment Plan**, submitted to DCFS management for review and approval by July 31st of each fiscal year, which will include specific strategies to attract additional students to the field and will simultaneously enable the university to meet the vacancy needs of public child welfare agencies.
- B. A standardized application format and evaluation process will be used by the University to recruit potential social work students through the University's website and other means.
- C. The application packet will include stipend program information, including a copy of this policy and general social work program materials distributed to all social work students.
 - 1. The University will utilize **FPO 1401A: Statewide Educational Stipend Application for Child Welfare** for the recruitment of Stipend Students.
- D. Develop/Update an annual **Mentoring Plan** as defined in DCFS statewide policy for stipend students in conjunction with the Stipend Sub-Committee by July 31st of each year for DCFS Management review and approval and will be updated by January 15 of each year if required for spring students.
- E. Supply DCFS Management with a bi-annual **Stipend Program Report** by December 30 and June 30 of each fiscal year for review and approval. The report shall include the following:
 - 1. An evaluation of the effectiveness of the recruitment plan.
 - 2. Collection and evaluation of stipend program data including all elements as outlined in the DCFS statewide policy and/or individual management letters.
 - 3. Reporting on stipend student progress, employment and repayment, Including, but not limited to, the impact of stipend awards on child welfare agency vacancies, the stipend students' ability to demonstrate transfer of learning on key competencies and

their application in the field placements, and the efficacy of child welfare field instructors mentoring activities.

- F. Report, to TMT on recruitment progress at the February and July TMT meetings each year.

1401.5.3 Application Procedures

- A. The University has the discretion as part of individual contract management letters negotiation to decide to host applications in the Fall Semester only, Spring Semester only or in both Fall and Spring Semesters.
- B. Students who complete an application packet must return it to the University Training Coordinator as follows:
 - 1. Stipend Award for Each Fall Semester: Due to the University Training Coordinator by June 15th of each year.
 - 2. Stipend Award for Each Spring Semester: Due to the University Training Coordinator by December 15 of each year.

1401.5.4 Selection of Stipend Recipients

- A. The University Training Coordinator will forward **FPO1401B: Child Welfare Student Stipend Applicant Selection Summary** for all stipend applicants, which includes an analysis of each applicant and recommendations, including each student's rating for acceptance into the School of Social Work, to the Stipend Sub-Committee via the DCFS Training Manager by July 30th of each year for fall stipend awards and by December 31st of each year for spring stipend awards.
- B. The Sub-Committee will meet in person or by video or teleconference call to discuss the applicants and provide other committee members verbal impressions of the candidate. A member from each partner must be represented.
- C. The Sub-Committee will consider all candidates and make selections based on budgetary restrictions, established priorities, and the selection criteria defined below:
 - 1. The Sub-Committee may interview applicants at their discretion.
 - 2. The Sub-Committee will notify all applicants, the TMT and the Field Education Program Coordinator of the University, of their final determination to award stipends by August 15 (fall awards) and January 15 (spring awards) in writing.
 - 3. Students will be assigned for field practicum in the public child welfare agency for which the stipend is awarded as soon as possible for the agency and university. (It is the responsibility of the public child welfare agency to designate a Field Instructor for each stipend student assigned to them for placement.)

1401.5.5 Selection Criteria:

- A. All Applicants for the educational stipend program must have been accepted into the BSW or MSW School of Social Work program at the University.
- B. It is preferable, but not required, that the stipend recipient worked in the child welfare field prior to applying for an educational stipend to pursue an MSW degree.
- C. **Applicants Preparing for Employment:**
 - 1. For applicants who are *preparing for employment* with a public child welfare agency, the following criteria will be used in considering the recipients:
 - Work history and resume;
 - Ability to pass a background check for misdemeanors, felonies and/or anything else that would preclude them from being hired;
 - An essay by the applicant describing educational aspirations and career goals as related to employment with a public child welfare agency;

- Two professional letters of reference for BSW stipend applicants;
 - Three professional letters of reference for MSW stipend applicants with at least one letter of reference reflecting child welfare experience where applicable;
2. Preference in awarding stipends is given to applicants who will commit in writing to work in areas where “hard to recruit” vacancies have been identified.
 3. Stipend awards will be contingent upon the applicants’ qualification for field placement in a public child welfare agency, which includes assessment of the results of a criminal history background check, at the applicant’s expense, and results of a Child Abuse/Neglect Screening (CANS), for which the applicant must sign a release.
- D. Applicants Currently Employed in a Nevada Public Child Welfare Agency:**
1. For those applicants who are *currently employed* by a Nevada public child welfare agency at the time of application, the following criteria will be used in considering the recipients:
 - Employee must have successfully completed the required probationary period;
 - Priority is given to those with experience in a Nevada child welfare agency who express a desire for advancement and whose additional training would benefit both the employee and the agency;
 - A letter of recommendation from their current supervisor, specifically addressing the benefit to the agency of an advanced degree;
 - Two additional letters of professional reference;
 - An essay submitted by the applicant that describes their career goals with the public child welfare agency and aspirations pertaining to education and continued employment with the public child welfare agency.
- E. Former BSW Stipend Recipients who wish to apply for a second stipend for an MSW Program:**
1. BSW stipend recipients who have completed their employment commitment may apply for a second stipend for the MSW program. These requests will be considered as budget constraints allow. Additional conditions apply as follows:
 - The applicant must be a current, permanent employee of a public child welfare agency in the State of Nevada.
 - The applicant’s request must be supported by the agency, as evidenced by submission of a letter of recommendation from applicant’s direct supervisor.
 - The applicant must submit one additional professional letter of recommendation from the employer.
 - The applicant must submit a written justification of the need for a second stipend and the applicability of an MSW degree for ongoing employment and promotional opportunities, as well as its benefit to the agency.

1401.5.6 Award Process:

- A. Each student awarded a stipend will enter into a written agreement of award utilizing **FPO 1401C: Stipend Student Written Agreement** in accordance with university policy in order to receive a stipend. The written agreement of award must be signed by the university, the student, and DCFS.

1401.5.7 Request to Waive or Defer Repayment

- A. The Administrator of the Division of Child and Family Services or designee has the responsibility to grant or deny any request for waiver or deferral of stipend repayments. In the event that a stipend recipient is unable to complete their employment commitment, the recipient must submit a written request for waiver or deferral that documents any

extraordinary circumstances supporting the request. Waiver requests will be processed in the following manner:

1. The waiver will be submitted to the University Training Coordinator for review.
 2. The University Training Coordinator will submit requests to the Sub-Committee for recommendation within 5 days of the request.
 3. The Sub-Committee shall meet in person or via teleconference to consider the request within 20 days of the receipt of the request. In considering the waiver/deferral request, the Sub-Committee shall:
 - Evaluate the fiscal impact(s) of non-payment or deferral;
 - Evaluate the impact on recruitment efforts;
 - Evaluate the mitigating circumstances supporting the waiver, such as health or other personal issues documented in the request for waiver.
 4. The Sub-Committee shall submit recommendations in writing, including the stipend recipient's original request, to the DCFS Administrator or designee for final approval within 5 days of meeting.
 5. The DCFS Administrator or designee will provide the stipend recipient requesting a waiver with a letter of approval or denial within 30 days of receipt of sub-committee recommendations.
- B. Other conditions may apply in the event that a stipend recipient refuses an offer of employment from a public child welfare agency. See Employment Obligation: Repayment, below.

1401.5.8 Mentoring and Site Supervision

- A. The TMT will utilize the Sub-Committee to review and provide recommendations on Stipend Field Practicum.
- B. The Sub-Committee will develop/update a plan with University staff for the purpose of mentoring stipend students, providing site supervision and identifying the key competencies and evaluation criteria to be addressed in the student's Learning Agreement with the field placement agency.
- C. The **Mentoring Plan** will be submitted to the DCFS Management for approval as outlined in University Responsibilities above.

1401.5.9 Employment Obligation

- A. **Job Search Activities:** BSW and MSW graduates are committed for one year of employment for each academic year that they receive a stipend. All stipend graduates will be required to participate in a program evaluation. Upon graduation, the stipend recipient is expected to accept employment with any of the three Nevada public child welfare agencies. Within 45 days of the initiation of their final semester, the student is obligated to initiate appropriate licensing applications and thorough job search activities with the State and/or county child welfare agencies where the student has indicated an interest to work. Employment applications must be submitted to the appropriate state or county employment office through State Personnel; Washoe County Human Resources; and/or Clark County Human Resources. Follow-up activities should be conducted with the applicable agency employment offices and documented using **FPO1401C: Documentation of Employment Search Activities Form**. These forms will be provided to the University Training Coordinator for filing with bi-annual reports as outlined in University Responsibilities above.
- B. **Offer of Employment:** The determination to extend a stipend graduate an offer of employment is entirely at the discretion of the hiring agency. The student must document all contacts, including the office contacted, name of contact person, and their phone number, instructions or information provided, and date of follow up with the agency

employment office. Lack of an offer of employment is not considered a rationale for waiver of the employment obligation unless adequate documentation is provided. Documentation must be made on **FPO1401C: Documentation of Employment Search Activities Form**. This form will be provided to the University Training Coordinator for filing with bi-annual reports as outlined in University Responsibilities above.

- C. Federal Regulations:** Federal regulations require that employment must be offered within 60 days of graduation. If a stipend student has not been offered a position within 60 days of graduation, they must submit a written summary of their efforts to secure employment with a Nevada public child welfare agency to the University Training Coordinator. If these documented efforts were adequate, as determined by this policy, the stipend (loan) is forgiven and the employment obligation will be waived. Loan forgiveness can only be granted by the DCFS Administrator or designee in writing.

1401.5.10 Repayment:

- A.** If the stipend recipient refuses an offer of employment with a Nevada public child welfare agency or is unable to be licensed due to misdemeanors or felonies, the stipend repayment requirements must be met.
1. In the event that a stipend recipient who has been hired by a public child welfare agency is terminated, either voluntarily or involuntarily, from employment prior to fulfilling their commitment, they must also meet the repayment requirements, which include: the total amount of the stipend award, interest, and late fees based upon the University rate for student loans. Payments are made directly to the University.
 2. The total amount must be paid within 3 years of the date of graduation.
 - The University will develop a system for ensuring that debts are paid in the required timeframes and that recipients whereabouts are monitored during the repayment process.
 - Recipients will ensure that they maintain current contact information with the University throughout the repayment of their loan.
 3. Under certain specific conditions, the DCFS Administrator, or designee, has the discretion to waive the repayment after an employee refuses an offer of employment for significant personal reasons.
 4. University will report collected funds on monthly/quarterly invoices and will reimburse funds collected to DCFS (or the funds will be deducted from the current reimbursement request) on the same billing basis as their current contract.

1401.5.11 Stipend Program Evaluation

- A.** The University will submit an **Annual Evaluation of the Stipend Program Report** as outlined in their contracts to DCFS Management. The report, both narrative and data information, will include, but is not limited to:
1. An evaluation of recruitment strategies;
 2. The impact of stipend awards on child welfare agency vacancies;
 3. The stipend students' ability to demonstrate transfer of learning on key competencies and their application in the field placements; and
 4. The efficacy of child welfare field instructors mentoring activities.
- B.** The University will ensure a system is in place for tracking student activity that begins on the date any recipient is accepted to the stipend program of study; and tracks the educational progress, completion of the program of study, and the employment record of the recipient, and concludes three years after the date the recipient completes the program. This tracking system will be used 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. Reports will be made on forms provided by DCFS.

- C. Recipients will ensure that they maintain current contact and employment information with the University for three full years following graduation from the program and agree to participate in follow-up evaluations with the University upon request.
- D. The University will follow generally accepted accounting procedures unless otherwise negotiated with DCFS Management.

1401.6 Child Welfare Agency Action

- 1401.6.1** Child welfare agencies will work with the University to assist in procuring internships during the training phase and employment at the child welfare agency for stipend recipients upon completion of their training requirements.
- 1401.6.2** The State or local child welfare agency will offer the individual preparing for employment a job upon completion of training unless precluded by merit system requirements, legislative budget cuts, position freezes, or other circumstances beyond the agency’s control; and if unable to offer employment, the stipend recipient may apply for a waiver (as described above) to be released from his or her commitment.

1401.7 State Responsibilities

1401.7.1 Participants in Policy Development

- A. **FPO Staff** – C. Freeman, Social Services Chief III
- B. **Child Welfare Agency Representatives:** S. Shipe & C. Bidwell - CCDFS, J. Marsh, J. Bascom, J. Durand - WCDSS, R. Powell - DCFS Rural Region
- C. **External Stakeholders:** M. Gyger, J. Nutton, S. Hardy-Desmond – UNLV; S. Lowery, M. Saleh - UNR

1401.7.2 Technical Assistance

- A. **Requesting Technical Assistance:** Region IX Office of the Administration of Children and Families.
- B. **Resources:** N/A

1401.7.3 Clearance Process

Table 1401.1: Policy Clearance History

Policy Name & MTL Number	Workgroup Name & Review Dates	DAG Recomm endation Date	PART Final Recomm endation Date	DMG Final Approval Date	DCFS Admin. Approval Date	Effective Date
1401-071410	TMT – 06/08/09; 04/12/10	n/a	n/a	06/18/10	06/18/10	07/01/10
200 Educational Stipends - 102505	unknown	unknown	unknown	10/25/05	10/25/05	10/25/05

1401.7.4 Policy Impacts

- A. Title IV-E Plan
- B. Title IV-E Cost Allocation Plan

1401.8 Policy Cross Reference

N/A

1401.9 Attachments

- FPO 1401A: Statewide Educational Stipend Application for Child Welfare
- FPO 1401B: Child Welfare Student Stipend Applicant Selection Summary
- FPO 1401C: Documentation of Employment Search Activities Form