



TITLE	POLICY NUMBER	
Title IV-E BSW and MSW Program Policy	DCS 03-17	
RESPONSIBLE AREA	EFFECTIVE DATE	REVISION
Procurement & Contracts	Feb. 8, 2017	4

## **I. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Department of Child Safety (DCS) is committed to enhancing the skill development and education of staff in order to provide excellent service to children and families. Offering stipends and tuition/fee payment assistance to students engaged in the study of social work via the Title IV-E BSW (Bachelor of Social Work) and MSW (Master of Social Work) Program, in exchange for a commitment to work for DCS for a contractually specified period of time, is a mutually beneficial arrangement that helps students attain their educational goals and provides qualified, credentialed staff to DCS.

## **II. APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to current and prospective DCS employees enrolled in any of the following programs at either Arizona State University or Northern Arizona University:

- A. Bachelor of Social Work (third and fourth year with child welfare concentration);
- B. Master of Social Work Academic (two year program);
- C. Master of Social Work Advanced Standing (final year);
- D. Part-Time Master of Social Work (current DCS employees only).

## **III. AUTHORITY**

[A.R.S. § 8-453](#)

Powers and Duties

[A.R.S. § 35-214](#)

Inspection and Audit of Contract Provisions

[45 CFR § 235.63 \(b\)](#) and [235.64](#)

Administration of Financial Assistance Programs

#### IV. DEFINITIONS

Department or DCS: The Department of Child Safety.

Formal Disciplinary Personnel Action: A letter of reprimand, demotion, suspension and/or dismissal.

Title IV-E: The section of the Social Security Act that authorizes federal matching funds to states in order to improve the quality of care of children in foster care, reduce the number of children in foster care, return children to their homes as soon as conditions permit, and facilitate the adoption or permanent placement of children who cannot be returned to their homes. It also funds programs between state child welfare agencies and universities that allow students or current employees to defray the costs of their social work education in exchange for a commitment to work for the child welfare agency.

#### V. POLICY

- A. The Department shall provide funding for students to receive tuition, fees (excluding application, graduation, and late fees), and/or stipends to attain social work degrees in exchange for subsequent commitments to work for the Department.
- B. All approved students shall sign a binding contract with the Department stating that the student is entirely financially responsible for all benefits received. Students and current DCS employees who participate in the program shall work at DCS for a period of time as specified in the contract. Contracts shall be administered by:

DCS Contracts Manager  
Arizona Department of Child Safety  
3003 N. Central Ave, P.O. Box 6030  
Site Code C010-20  
Phoenix, AZ 85005  
**Fax (602) 255-2872**

### C. Default of Contract

Students shall be liable for repayment of the tuition, stipend, and other required fees in accordance with their contract if they fail to abide by any of the terms and conditions established in the contract.

1. DCS shall make all reasonable collection efforts. For more information on repayment and collection, refer to [DCS 03-18 Title IV-E BSW and MSW Program Repayment and Collection](#) policy.
2. The Department shall offer the student a job upon completion of the educational program unless precluded by merit system requirements, legislative budget cuts, position freezes, or other circumstances beyond the Department's control. If unable to offer employment, the Department shall release the student from the obligations of his or her contract.
3. Students who default on their contract with the Department are not eligible to re-enter the program.

### D. Fingerprinting

All BSW, MSW Academic, and MSW Advanced Standing students shall be fingerprinted for a criminal history background check and obtain a Level I Fingerprint Clearance card. A valid Level I Fingerprint Clearance Card must be maintained at all times. The students shall complete all required Department forms, including the [Certification of Criminal Offense \(DCS-1078A\)](#) and the [Consent to Release Information for Employment Purposes \(DCS-1037A\)](#) forms. Part-Time MSW students are Department employees who have already fulfilled these requirements.

### E. Job Assignments and Length of Work Commitment

BSW, MSW Academic, MSW Advanced Standing, and Part-Time MSW students shall work full-time as a DCS Specialist for the minimum length of employment specified in the contract. For BSW, MSW Academic, and MSW Advanced students, the required months shall be calculated from the student's first day of employment with the Department. For Part-Time MSW students, the required months shall be calculated from the employee's first day of work after the posting of his or her MSW degree.

### F. Part-Time MSW Students

While in the program, both prior to and after graduation, students shall work for DCS in one of the following job classifications: DCS Child Safety Specialist, DCS Unit Supervisor, DCS Program Specialist, DCS Program Manager, DCS Program Administrator (titles subject to change) or another classification or position that contributes to core child welfare practice as approved by the DCS Deputy Director of Field Operations or designee.

Students shall carry and maintain a full DCS caseload or workload, demonstrating acceptable work performance, and shall not be given time off work for attending classes, studying, or participating in field placement assignments. Students whose job classifications are exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act are not allowed to use their exempt status to work less than full days to attend class, study, or perform field placement activities.

G. DCS shall determine the location where the student will be employed based upon the staffing needs of the Department. Students shall accept employment anywhere within the State of Arizona as determined by the Department, and shall not transfer to another area/office during their first year of employment. The Department reserves the right to make a single employment offer.

H. Status Changes

1. Students must notify the Contract Manager of any status changes referenced in the contract.
2. Status changes may include:
  - a. a request for a leave of absence from the university;
  - b. inability to maintain the grade point average stipulated in the contract, or a reduction of academic course load;
  - c. being placed on academic probation by the educational institution; and if currently employed by DCS, issued any formal disciplinary personnel actions;
  - d. a desire to switch to an educational major not eligible for stipend;
  - e. inability to fulfill the DCS work requirements after graduation;
  - f. inability to pass DCS Background, Fingerprint, or Motor Vehicle checks;

- g. a change of name, home address, e-mail address, or telephone numbers;
- h. a change of job at DCS.

#### I. Academic Requirements

Students are required to:

1. maintain a standard full-time academic schedule (except Part-Time MSW students);
2. maintain regular attendance in all classes in accordance with course syllabi;
3. maintain a minimum 3.0 grade point average;
4. maintain continuous enrollment until graduation unless a leave of absence is requested by the student and approved by the academic institution and the Department;
5. obey all codes of conduct, both academic and non-academic, delineated by the university;
6. complete the required semesters of field instruction and placement with a Department site or unit, if applicable;
7. submit to DCS Human Resources a certified transcript within fifteen (15) days of graduation or as soon as it is available.

#### J. Confidentiality

Students shall observe and abide by all applicable state and federal statutes and regulations regarding the use of disclosure information, including but not limited to information concerning applicants for and recipients of services provided by the Department.

- K. In accordance with [A.R.S. § 35-214](#), students shall retain all data, books and other records relating to their contract for a period of five (5) years after completion of the contract. All records shall be subject to inspection and audit by the state at reasonable times. Upon request, the student shall produce the original of any or all such records.

- L. The grant is taxable income and students are solely responsible for the tax implications of the program benefits and for reporting the benefits to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service and State of Arizona Revenue Departments.
- M. A student's termination in the program shall be effective the date the program benefit is repaid by the student either through the completion of the work obligation to DCS after graduation, or through the financial repayment of the program benefit.
- N. The continuation of this program is subject to the availability of funds. The DCS Director shall have the sole discretion in determining the availability of funds.

## **VI. PROCEDURES**

### **A. Admission to Program**

1. BSW, MSW Academic, and MSW Advanced Standing students shall apply for admission to the program directly with their academic institution.
2. Part-Time MSW students shall be full-time DCS employees who are in good standing with no formal disciplinary personnel actions for twelve (12) months prior to date of application. Additional eligibility criteria may be added by the DCS Deputy Director of Field Operations or designee at any time.
  - a. Applications for a limited number of openings are accepted annually for the program among eligible full-time employees of the Department. A Department-wide e-mail announcement will be sent from DCS Human Resources to notify employees of this opportunity. Eligible employees will be required to comply with the instructions contained in the e-mail.
  - b. Each applicant must meet with his/her direct supervisor and express interest in the program and receive permission, complete and sign the application form that is attached to the e-mail notifying employees of this opportunity, and submit an essay.
  - c. All applications will be screened by DCS Human Resources for eligibility prior to being sent forward for review by a DCS selection committee.

- d. All applications deemed eligible for consideration shall be maintained by DCS Human Resources and each essay will be separated from the application and submitted to a selection committee without identification of the author.
- e. The selection committee shall use a selection rubric methodology to evaluate and score student essays.
- f. Candidates shall be informed of their selection by e-mail and participation in the program will be contingent upon acceptance into the Graduate Level Social Work Program.
- g. It is the responsibility of the selected student to pay all university application fees and notify DCS Human Resources upon their successful acceptance to the academic institution.
- h. Students must complete their MSW degree within four (4) years unless a contract extension has been granted by the Deputy Director of Field Operations or designee.

B. Student Responsibilities:

- 1. maintain a full or part-time academic schedule to obtain the applicable social work degree, including course work and field placements;
- 2. enroll in every required social work course offered as recommended by the academic advisor, and not drop, add, or change sections in any class without notifying the academic advisor and DCS Contracts Manager;
- 3. enroll in all necessary lower-division general studies courses and prerequisites;
- 4. enroll in other additional courses as required for graduation, as recommended by the academic advisor;
- 5. submit to DCS Human Resources a copy of their Motor Vehicle Record (MVR) thirty (30) days prior to the start of each semester while enrolled in the program. Eight (8) or more points in a thirty-nine (39) month period disqualify the student for employment consideration;
- 6. notify DCS Human Resources in writing of any changes in driving record, clearance card, or any criminal offense within five (5) working days of occurrence;

7. complete a Confidentiality Statement form as required by the Department;
8. give consent for the educational institution to communicate with DCS about the student's academic progress, and to release all student evaluations completed by instructors or field placement supervisors;
9. submit to DCS Human Resources a certified transcript within fifteen (15) days of graduation or as soon as it is available.

C. Application for Employment

Students shall submit an application for employment to DCS Human Resources between seventy-five (75) and ninety (90) calendar days prior to graduation.

D. Offers of Employment

1. Students shall be available for employment after their degree has been posted.
2. The Department shall offer employment within ninety (90) days after the posting of the Student's degree.
3. Students shall be available for employment anywhere within the state of Arizona.

E. Acceptance of Employment

1. Students shall notify the hiring authority in writing of their decision to accept or decline any offers of employment within three (3) working days of the offer for employment. DCS HR will notify the Contract Manager of the student's decision.
2. Students shall commence employment with the Department after acceptance of employment.

## VII. FORMS INDEX

[Certification of Criminal Offense \(DCS-1078A\)](#)

[Consent to Release Information for Employment Purposes \(DCS-1037A\)](#)