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I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

* The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) makes child welfare internships available to child welfare staff selected to participate in the Child Welfare Employee MSW Educational Support Program and to prospective staff selected to participate in the Child Welfare Scholars Program for BSW and MSW students (formerly known as the Title IVE Stipend Program). When requested and possible consistent with workload responsibilities, DCFS may make child welfare internships available to additional DCFS staff and non-staff persons, with highest priority extended to current child welfare staff.

II. PROCEDURES

A. INTERNSHIPS FOR NON-EMPLOYEE CHILD WELFARE SCHOLARS (FORMERLY KNOWN AS TITLE IVE STIPEND RECIPIENTS)


Non-employee students selected to participate in the Child Welfare Scholars Program at their respective university are required to complete two semesters or one block child welfare internship with DCFS in a Title IV-E child welfare service program. The internships are to help the social work student understand the complexities of child welfare and prepare them for future employment with DCFS in child welfare professional roles.

Child Welfare Scholars must sign an agreement committing to meeting and maintaining certain requirements and working for DCFS in a child welfare position for a minimum of one year for each year for which they receive financial support through the Child Welfare Scholars Program. A copy of the agreement can be found on the Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy/University Alliance website at www.lcwta.org.

B. INTERNSHIPS FOR DCFS STAFF PARTICIPATING IN THE CHILD WELFARE EMPLOYEE MSW EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAM

Employees selected to participate in the Child Welfare Employee MSW Educational Support Program will be provided the opportunity to participate in at least one child welfare internship within DCFS and, subject to university internship requirements and department agreement and capacity, may participate in two child welfare internships within DCFS. Employees participating in the program may utilize educational leave and, as needed, personal leave to support completion of MSW internships outside DCFS that are related to child welfare and further child welfare professional development. The employee's appointing authority in consultation with the Louisiana Title IV-E Program Manager and applicable university liaison are responsible for determining if an outside internship meets child welfare criteria.

Child welfare internships completed within DCFS must advance the work of DCFS as well as the professional development of the employee. Employees must request authorization to complete an MSW internship, whether internal or external, through their supervisory chain at

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least 90 days in advance of the internship beginning. This includes any requests for educational or personal leave in order to complete the internship.

Employees participating in the Child Welfare Employee MSW Educational Support Program must sign an agreement committing to meeting/maintaining certain requirements and working for DCFS in a child welfare position for a minimum of two years subsequent to their attainment of the MSW for each full-time equivalent year for which they receive financial support through the Child Welfare Employee Educational Support Program. A copy of the agreement can be found on the Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy/University Alliance website at www.lcwta.org.


C. CHILD WELFARE INTERNSHIP SUPERVISOR QUALIFICATIONS, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND ROLES

Internship supervisors play a vital role in advancing the development of staff and prospective staff through child welfare internships. Internship supervisors are expected to meet the qualifications and responsibilities outlined below and to receive on-going support from DCFS child welfare managers/leaders and respective university field liaisons. An outline of expected supervisory roles is also included. Internship supervisors will receive priority consideration for professional development opportunities provided through the LCWTA/University Alliance. Contingent on available funding and fulfillment of supervisory responsibilities, internship supervisors will also be eligible to receive additional compensation pursuant to DCFS' Rewards and Recognition Policy.

1. Qualifications

- ❖ For MSW Internship Supervisors: Possession of a master's degree in social work from an accredited school of social work and at least three years of post-master's professional child welfare experience;
- ❖ For BSW Internship Supervisors: Possession of a bachelor's or master's degree in social work or a related bachelor's or master's degree from an accredited school¹ and at least 5 years of professional child welfare experience. Possession of the following qualities and/or skills:
 - Professional competence in the field;
 - Interest in teaching;
 - Demonstrated skills in practice;
 - Identification with the social work profession;
 - Support of the Social Work Code of Ethics;
 - Independence, creativity, and flexibility in the use of professional self;
 - Knowledge of local community and resources, whenever possible.
- ❖ Knowledge of and capacity to deal with the following:


¹ Where permissible consistent with university policy and Council of Social Work Education standards, BSW and MSW internship task supervisors may possess qualifying related master's or bachelor's degrees from accredited schools.

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- The authority inherent in the role of an educator;
- Professional boundary setting;
- Working with students with a wide range of backgrounds, experiences, and interests;
- The structure and function of the child welfare agency and its relationship to the community;
- The organization and implementation of agency resources in meeting the educational needs of the student.
- ❖ Potential for teaching demonstrated in:
 - An ability to conceptualize and apply the relationship between theory and practice;
 - An interest in designing and organizing varied content in the field instruction course;
 - A willingness to partner with the school's field education department in designing and implementing curriculum and working collaboratively with the student toward achieving learning objectives.
- ❖ Capacity for the position, including:
 - Time management skills to ensure provision of weekly student supervision, including planning, preparation, review, and evaluation of student learning objectives.
 - General weekly time requirements include:
 - One to two hours per week planning for and conducting individual supervision.
 - Additional time as needed for providing feedback on student assignments, preparing evaluations, attending meetings with university field faculty, facilitating supplemental learning activities including shadowing other interns, etc.

2. Responsibilities

- ❖ Provide agency orientation and the equivalent of weekly administrative and educational supervision to the student intern;
- ❖ Work closely with the intern and university liaison to understand and continue to develop essential child welfare competencies;
- ❖ Develop and monitor relevant field-based learning agreements and activities;
- ❖ Ensure field-based educational tasks are completed satisfactorily;
- ❖ Complete the student evaluation, including helping track student progress on the Learning Agreement and Field Experience Inventory;
- ❖ Actively participate in university-agency partnership activities relating to creating and supporting high quality child welfare field experiences, including supervisor workshops, contributions to on-going improvements in the child welfare field internship program, and regular evaluation activities;
- ❖ Contribute to on-going development of child welfare field curriculum;

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- ❖ Oversee other mentors/task supervisors providing opportunities for shadowing and other diverse experiential learning experiences for students.

3. Roles of Internship Supervisor


- ❖ **Teacher:** The supervisor encourages acquisition of broadly applicable knowledge related to working with clients and also provides a “big picture.” This may involve giving information related to general casework policies or social work skills, child welfare theories, child and family development, the necessary myriad of paperwork, agency policy, ethical standards, procedures and protocols, and self-care that will assist the intern to do excellent work.
- ❖ **Administrator:** The supervisor focuses on intern’s compliance with the professional, ethical, legal, and other standards that guide the practice of child welfare. The supervisor also ensures that standards are met in the intern’s performance of duties in order to protect clients, interns, and the agency.
- ❖ **Mentor:** In this role, the supervisor focuses on the development of each intern as a growing professional. The supervisor helps the intern identify and address his or her own contribution toward building a working relationship with clients, while helping the intern develop and maintain their role as a competent member of the agency and of the professional community at large.
- ❖ **Coach:** The supervisor assists each intern’s direct work with cases and all tasks that are related to work with clients. The focus is on the direct provision of services to help clients achieve their casework goals. The supervisor helps the intern apply and refine clinical skills, as well as develop special areas of expertise and improve overall functioning in the organization and the community.
- ❖ **Team Builder:** Team building is crucial to teaching and nurturing interns. The supervisor does this by recognizing and using intern’s skills as resources. New interns may be asked to seek guidance from senior staff, highlighting the knowledge and skills of veteran staff while establishing positive relationships among team members. Many interns tend to under-estimate their own influence on workers, as well as, on clients. A supervisor’s job is to bring this influence to their awareness and to teach skills around maximizing this social aspect for building a positive work environment. ²

D. OTHER INTERNSHIPS

Prior to allowing an intern to participate as such, management staff should consider whether there are tasks for student interns to complete in keeping with the learning objectives. Some objectives are as follow:

- Opportunities for professional growth;
- Opportunities for independent and group projects; and
- Opportunities for intern to develop new skills and augment present skills.

² NEW Partnership for Children and Families, 2003 (adapted by M. Seider)

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Also, in deciding on accepting non **DCFS** students as interns management staff must consider whether or not you have agency staff available to provide supervision, guidance, modeling, evaluation and feedback.

In selecting interns you may want to consider the student's motivation to intern with **DCFS**. Selection criteria should include:


- Students are interested in the child welfare field;
- Students are considering our agency as possible employment opportunity;
- Students must be participating in a BSW Program, MSW program or Human Service related **Masters Degree Program**; and
- Students have a positive recommendation from the school's Internship Director/Field Placement.

DCFS has set the following minimum standards that are to be adhered to in working with interns who are not **DCFS** employees, including Title IV-E **Child Welfare Scholar** interns. The interns must:

- Complete the agency's 32 hour **initial week of New Child Welfare Worker Orientation, including** safety training (IV-E **Scholar** interns only), if assigned to work directly with clients (per working agreement between **DCFS** and participating Universities). **The student and/or their university are responsible for covering the costs of the student's participation in the training;**
- Complete defensive driving training before driving their personal cars as part of their intern duties;
- Complete the Authorization for Driving form and send it to the State Office Safety Coordinator;
- Provide the agency with proof of insurance for personal vehicle(s);
- Complete a criminal records check and drug screen, which are paid in the same manner as **DCFS** employees;
- **Complete state central registry screen;**
- Sign the confidentiality and acknowledgement form (Form 32);
- A copy of all paperwork signed by supervising staff, student and university **shall be emailed to the attention of the DCFS/LCWTA Title IVE Scholar Liaison via the DCFS Child Welfare Training mailbox at DCFS.CW-Training@LA.GOV.**

Additionally, the interns:

- Should have an individualized task plan developed between them and the assigned Supervisor based on the intern's work experience, educational and maturity level, and strengths and needs;
- Should not be allowed to conduct any work that gives the appearance that they are **DCFS** employees (e.g., assuming the role of responsible worker); they are not to testify in court, complete court reports, home studies or assessments;
- May be allowed, by the assigned Supervisor, to write court reports, home studies and assessments for practice purposes and to assess their learning and skills; and

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- May be assigned to accompany workers to assist in client service delivery with proper introduction as a student intern and with permission of the client; may be allowed to supervise family visits and document events and impressions; gather medical information on children and summarize; participate in the development of life books; conduct educational workshops or skills training with clients.

The Child Welfare Scholars Manual and Child Welfare Scholars Supervisors Manual is available on the Louisiana Child Welfare Training Academy website at www.lcwta.org to provide guidance to interns, supervisors and university staff in creating meaningful child welfare internship experiences. Internship Supervisors are to provide adequate supervision to all interns including DCFS employees. It shall not be an assumption that DCFS employees with internships within the agency will require less supervision.

III. FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS

BSW and MSW Child Welfare Scholar Agreements are available at www.LCWTA.org/ Child Welfare MSW Employee Educational Agreement available at www.LCWTA.org/Form 32 / Instructions Intern Acknowledgment

IV. REFERENCES

[Louisiana Revised Statute 46:285](#) **