

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
Masters Child Welfare Education Program (MCWEP)

APPLICATION FAQs

Basic Information:

Why is DCF offering this program? The objectives of the program are to increase the numbers of graduate level supervisors in the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and to expand the professional skill levels of its work force. The program also aims to stabilize DCF's workforce by retaining quality staff. DCF hopes to enable staff with a strong commitment to New Jersey's vulnerable children and families to obtain their MSW and to contribute to the continual improvement of the state's public child welfare system. This program provides opportunities for supervisors, in particular casework supervisors, to broaden their perspectives on social work and child welfare, develop advanced clinical skills and enhance their supervisory skills.

Please note that students admitted to the program must attend all scheduled classes, even if they occur on a state holiday. Students do not receive comp time for attending classes.

What does the program cost me? If you are admitted to MCWEP, DCF will pay all tuition and fees. Your responsibilities include books, transportation or parking costs to get to class or to the library, as well as time and effort to prepare for and attend classes. We also expect you to participate in any evaluative activities associated with the program.

How does the commitment to give back to DCF work? Upon graduation, MCWEP graduates are required to work for a period of one year for each year of financial support put forth toward the degree.

What if am not able to fulfill the commitment? If you are not able to fulfill the commitment, you are liable to repay DCF for **all** educational costs incurred on your behalf during the time you were a student.

What if I have a pending disciplinary action? Am I still eligible to apply?

Applicants must be, and remain in, good standing with the Department of Children and Families. In the event of a disciplinary action, the situation in question will be reviewed and it is possible that you will no longer be eligible to participate in the program.

What if I am not able to finish the MSW degree? If you drop out of the program before you complete the degree, you will need to repay DCF for **all** educational costs incurred toward the degree.

What if I need to take a leave from my job for health, family or other reasons? You will be required to take a leave from the program, as DCF is unable to support your education during your leave. You **must** discuss your situation with MCWEP and your faculty advisor at the university, who can help you plan. Enrollment in the program is a serious commitment, and students should consider their ability to make a commitment to study for the duration of the program before accepting admission and during the application process. The program concentrations are designed in such a way to enable you to continue your employee while pursuing a degree, but are tight and missing part of the program can delay your completion of the program.

Preparing to apply:

How do I apply for the Master Child Welfare Education Program: The application process consists of submitting all materials required (see the application check list) including obtaining required signatures of approval. After a preliminary review by the Department of Children and Families, a final list of approved participants will be forwarded to the lead institution, Stockton University, and you will be notified of your status and instructed to apply to the graduate programs of your choice for final determination of program acceptance.

How can I best prepare myself to apply to the Master Child Welfare Education program? The best preparation is to spend some time thinking about your goals and expectations and to consider how graduate education can fit into your present life. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do I want a career in child welfare?
- Am I ready for graduate school?
- How will I balance my work, personal life and graduate study?
- Do family members and other important people in my life support my plans?
- Do I have the support of my workplace?
- What do I want to get out of an MSW degree?

I've thought it through, I really want to do this, and I think I can. What next? Read the MCWEP Fact Sheet carefully, along with any other material and documents. Follow the instructions and make sure you gather all the items required for the application. Request transcripts right away; they sometimes take time. Talk to your supervisor about your intentions. Make sure you address all the questions in the application. Write clearly and proofread what you have written, for spelling, grammar, clarity, completeness. Submit a complete application before the deadline to the Child Welfare Education Institute at Stockton University.

I did not do so well in undergrad. Will this affect my application? Admission to graduate school generally requires a GPA of 3.0. The participating schools of Social Work will consider other aspects of an application that suggest that an applicant has potential to do well in graduate school. For example, your transcripts will be examined to assess whether grades improved during the undergraduate years, or if the applicant did well in courses relevant to human services, even if an overall GPA is below 3.0. Also any graduate level courses the applicant has taken, on a matriculate or non-matriculate basis and work experience will be taken into account. The narrative and recommendation letters are looked at closely to assess the applicant's academic and professional potential.

Which Rutgers MSW programs can I apply to? MCWEP applicants are eligible for enrollment in the Intensive Weekend program. MCWEP applicants are ineligible for the On Campus Program, 100% Online Program or Blended Online program.

Do I get to choose which MSW program I attend?

No. While applicants do indicate which programs they would like to attend most, there is no guarantee that they will be admitted or assigned to their top choice. Each school will have approximately 5 students, so factors such as geography and equitable distribution will also impact which MSW program students attend.

Will I find out if I was accepted at all the schools to which I applied?

No, you will only be informed of which school you have been assigned to as part of your participation in MCWEP.

Applicants with Graduate Social Work Credits:

I have taken Professional Credit Courses (PCC) at Rutgers School of Social Work. How does that affect my application? Successful completion of PCC courses can help your application. This demonstrates to some degree that you are able to handle graduate level work.

Do those PCC credits count toward my degree? If admitted into the program, each individual school will review your transcripts and credits earned that may count towards your degree.

I have MSW credits from another college/university. Do they count toward my degree? Each school will review your transcript and any credits from another accredited Social Work program may be transferred and applied to your degree.

Applicants with Other Graduate and Certificate Credits:

I have graduate credits (or a graduate level degree) from another college/university in another field. Will these credits count toward my degree? Your transcript will be reviewed and it may be necessary to look at course descriptions. Credits from degree programs that are parallel to social work can often be applied to the degree. This usually concerns electives; in some instances, credits can replace a required course, but this is less usual. The individual school will determine which credits may be transferred for credit in the program.

I received a certificate for courses related to child welfare. Can they be counted toward my degree?

No. Only graduate credits can be considered for credit towards an MSW degree. However, do provide transcripts for any course work you have completed at a college/university. They can help assess your potential as a student, and strengthen your application.

Applicants with a BSW:

I have a BSW. How does this affect my application and graduate education? Applicants with a BSW from an accredited college or University can be considered for admission with Advanced Standing. Consideration for Advanced Standing depends upon when the degree was received, overall GPA, and grades of B or better in all social work and field education courses. BSW applicants go through the same application and interview process as other applicants.