Frequently Asked Questions about the Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Education Program

The Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Education Program (CRCWEP) is also known as The Child Welfare Partnership. Both Bachelors in Social Work (BSW) and Masters 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 Oregon Department of Human Services (ODHS) Child Welfare (CW) employees will be accepted into the MSW Partnership Advanced Standing Program. We want students to have a grounded understanding on how community and Child Welfare work together.

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.

Will a criminal history impact eligibility for enrollment?

All applicants are required to pass a background check, which will include a criminal record check and child welfare history. The background check is mandatory for anyone seeking a practicum (internship) or employment with ODHS Child Welfare.

Some criminal history can be disqualifying. Applicants can review the Potentially Disqualifying Conviction List for more information. For driving infractions, there may be an option to appeal.

For Child Welfare history, review Oregon Administrative Rules: 407-007-0000, 407-007-0060, 407-007-0070, 407-007-0430.

For questions about background checks, contact the ODHS Volunteer Services.

Am I required to have a driver license?

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

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

Yes, ODHS Child Welfare employees must be in good standing and employed with ODHS Child Welfare for two consecutive years of employment from the most recent date of hire at time of Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Education Program Application. “Limited duration positions do count, as long as the employee has been employed with ODHS Child Welfare for two consecutive years.” ODHS CW employees may receive a waiver with management approval.

What if the employee had a break in employment prior to applying?

If the employee has a break in employment with ODHS Child Welfare and has previously worked for the agency for two consecutive years or more, but does not have two consecutive years since their most recent date of hire, they may discuss with their local office leadership (direct child welfare supervisor and program manager) the child welfare supervisor and program manager will ultimately make a decision whether to support the employee to apply early and documenting any approval on the ODHS Management Approval Form.

Can an employee apply without management support?

No. An ODHS employee who intends to apply for CRCWEP must have Child Welfare Program Manager approval to apply. If the employee is not supported by their local leadership to apply, they can share their concerns with their District Manager or liaison with Human Resources.

What ODHS Child Welfare positions are eligible?

All employees of ODHS Child Welfare applying for the Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Education Program need to be in a position that falls within salary range 17 or above. This includes positions such as Family Time Coordinators and Case Aids.

Do positions connected to child welfare, but not actually in child welfare meet eligibility?

In order to be eligible to apply for the program an employee, the employee must hold a current position with ODHS Child Welfare;

however, individuals from other areas of ODHS are welcome to apply as recruits if they aspire to work in Child Welfare.

Are part time employees of ODHS Child Welfare eligible?

Yes. Employees of ODHS Child Welfare who have accumulated the equivalent of two years of full-time work, which is 4,160 hours are eligible to apply.

How much money do I actually get?

Students in the School of Social Work BSW program may be awarded up to $2,000 per term; up to $6,000 per academic year, up to $12,000 total. BSW students receive tuition support for their junior and senior year. MSW students may be awarded up to approximately $3,333 per term, up to $10,000 per academic year; up to $30,000 total. 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 educational expenses are covered through the CRCWEP tuition support?

The CRCWEP tuition support only covers the costs applied to tuition. It does not cover costs for books, university fees, supplies, nor housing or other related expenses.

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

Prospective students will sign an agreement between you and Oregon Department of Human Services, which states that you agree to work for Oregon public or tribal Child Welfare for each year you're in the Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Education Program. For example: if the student received CRCWEP tuition support for two years of their Masters' Program, they will commit to working for ODHS Child Welfare or an eligible Tribal child welfare for two years after graduation. The employment is the payback, not monetary funds. If you would like to see a copy of the agreement, please email Laurie Leasure (lleasure@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. Graduates are expected to obtain employment within six months after graduation. If the graduate does not obtain employment or remain in employment with ODHS Child Welfare in a Social Service Specialist 1 position or in a Tribal Entity with direct service in child welfare or foster care services position, repayment (monetary payment) status will begin.

Are the classes 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 Bend and Eugene and an Online Option program. Descriptive links on each program is following:

Eugene Option,

Central Oregon Option, in Bend.

Online Option Program.

Also, PSU School of Social Work has an online Bachelors of Social Work program. Please visit the BSW Online Program webpage.

Are CRCWEP students required to do a practicum (internship) within Child Welfare?

Yes. CRCWEP students must complete at least one year of internship/practicum within public or tribal child welfare.

ODHS Child Welfare employees may propose an Employed Social Work (ESW) Interest Option. This is an ODHS agreement that allows you to receive a full-time salary with benefits if your practicum is at an ODHS Child Welfare branch. You would work three days a week for 24 hours, and do your practicum for two days a week for 16 hours. It must meet the educational requirements of the School of Social Work.

MSW students who are ODHS child welfare employees who could benefit from an additional year of practicum by learning another aspect of Child Welfare work may propose a second year of practicum within Child Welfare. This has to be approved by the Director of Practicum Education at PSU. To gain this approval, students must show that the

"learning experiences provides an opportunity to become exposed to new systems, populations and approaches to practice. It must clearly demonstrate how this opportunity will provide new, different, and/or deeper learning that will with their Advanced Clinical concentration."

For further information students can consult the PSU Practicum Education Team and/or the CRCWEP team.

Does which track a participant selects in their education (Clinical or Macro) impact practicum options?

Advanced placement practicums when in the clinical track must have a direct service component. This means students within the clinical track will almost certainly, be doing their practicum in a CPS, Permanency or Certification programs. Central office practicums are very unlikely to provide the needed direct service component needed for the clinical track, but are a great fit for macro track students.

What does good standing mean in the ESW Application?

Good standing means that the applicant is meeting or exceeding performance measures and does not have any active discipline on file.

Can a part-time ODHS CW employees apply for an ESW practicum?

Part time employees cannot go over their hours for part-time employment and therefore would not meet the practicum hours.

What if a student falls below the 3.0 GPA requirement needed to be considered in good academic standing?

A student has one term following the term in which their GPA dropped below a 3.0 to return to good academic standing.

Can a student defer acceptance?

Yes. A student who was accepted can defer starting the program for one year.

What if I decide I do not 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 ODHS Child Welfare, if you leave school or decide not to stay in the Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Education Program, or decide not to work for ODHS Child Welfare or tribal child welfare after you graduate, you will enter into a financial agreement plan to pay back any tuition funds that have been paid by ODHS Child Welfare by Portland State University.

What are the Culturally Responsive Leaders (CRL) component of our 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 have 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 attend the CRL component of the program?

All incoming MSW CRCWEP students are to participate in the Culturally Responsive Leaders (CRL) component of our program. Additionally, this opportunity is open to all continuing MSW CRCWEP students, including those in the BSW Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Education Program. Participants receive specialized curriculum in leadership and practicum experiences to support the development of a culturally responsive workforce in Child Welfare through a monthly seminar during the academic year. These seminars are generally held on the third Thursday of every month from 5:30 pm to 7:30 pm.

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 an application which can be found on the CRCWEP Application webpage. The application due date is usually mid-February. We generally conduct interviews for the Partnership Program sometime in April or May.

For further information email: Laurie Leasure at lleasure@pdx.edu
Radhika Niles at rniles@pdx.edu

Thank you for your interest in the Child Welfare Partnership. The mission of the Culturally Responsive Child Welfare Education Program is to strengthen outcomes for children and families through social work education of the public child welfare and tribal child welfare workforce, as well as those aspiring to work in child welfare. 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.