Colorado State University
Behavioral Health Workforce
Education and Training (BHWET)
for Professionals Stipend
Student Commitment Letter

The stipend program is part of an effort to invest in the education of selected students in order to attract qualified social work professionals into the substance abuse, mental and behavioral health workforce. The students, following their training, will focus on serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder. Students who are awarded stipends agree to commit themselves to employment in this area. They will be required to complete a specified term of “payback” employment in exchange for receiving the BHWET Stipend. The program is available through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training for Professionals grant program. SAMHSA awards the University funds to provide the stipends and other benefits of the program. Students whose first priority meets the needs of the State of Colorado will be given preference in the selection process.

The 2015 - 2016 contracts for stipends will begin Fall, 2016. Stipends will be awarded to students from the School of Social Work at Colorado State University at Fort Collins (CSU) and the Department of Social Work of the Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver). Financial support (stipends) will be provided to Graduate Social Work students who agree to accept, or continue, payback employment in approved Colorado agencies that serve children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder. All students applying for and accepting this award must have legal status to work in the USA, as required by 8 U.S.C. § 1324a. The following sections detail the nature and terms of the award.

Nature of the Award

Students at either institution will receive cash stipends in the amount of $10,000 for the 2015 – 2016 academic year. The manner in which these funds will be paid out will be determined by MSU Denver or Colorado State University in Fall 2016. The students who are selected for stipends for 2016 – 2017 must be entering the Master of Social Work program during the 2016 - 2017 academic year as either: 1) full-time Concentration Year students (this includes Advanced-Standing students); or 2) part-time Advanced Standing students in the final year of the program. In all cases, stipends will only be available as long as grant funds are available. An award may be cancelled in its entirety or funds may be partially distributed with subsequent payments being cancelled if grant funds are withdrawn.
Student Eligibility and Selection

Students, who meet the above stated standards, are eligible for funding if they meet the following conditions:

1. Current approved agency employees must commit to returning to their agency position serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder for a period of time equivalent to 12 months of work for the 10 months for which they receive funding. Should they leave their agency (at the time of the allocation of the stipend award) prior to the completion of the work payback, they will be required to secure employment in another approved agency within two months. They must complete their field placement in an approved agency serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder, complete all required courses in the MSW program, and complete the BHWET Stipend Program interprofessional training seminar program.

2. Persons in preparation for hire (students not currently employed in an approved agency) must complete their field placement in an approved agency serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder. They must complete all required MSW courses, must commit to completing the BHWET Stipend Program interprofessional training seminar program, and must commit to accepting employment in an approved serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder for a period of time equivalent to 12 months for every 10 months for which they receive funding.

MSW students in both categories listed above will be eligible to apply. The selection of students will be made by the program and a selection team comprised of partnering community agencies. Applicants must maintain legal status to work in the USA and must meet agency requirements for hire based on a background check.

Selection Criteria: Selection will be based on academic history, demonstrated writing ability, experience, and demonstrated commitment to serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder. Preference will be given to candidates demonstrating a commitment to providing services to culturally and linguistically diverse communities.
Academic Requirements

Students must complete the entire Master of Social Work Program, which includes the required agency field placement. Specific requirements are determined by each school. Master of Social Work students will not be allowed to complete a work payback unless they have successfully completed the required coursework and field placement.

Field Requirements

All students must accept a field placement in an approved agency serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder. Concentration Year students must complete a total of 600-675 hours of field work in their concentration year of the program, as set forth by the requirements of each program. Students must complete the BHWET Stipend Program interprofessional training seminar program, and a Qualtrics survey about their Agency experience. The survey will need to be completed for Fall 2016, and at the beginning and end (post-graduation) of Spring 2017. Master of Social Work students will not be allowed to complete a work payback unless they have successfully completed their field placement in an approved agency and completed the complete the BHWET Stipend Program interprofessional training seminar program.

Failure to Graduate

A student who does not satisfactorily complete his/her education (including fieldwork) during the normative period of full-time study must repay the amount of the award plus any interest and collection cost.

Delay of Graduation

A student who cannot complete graduation requirements because of personal hardship or disability may request a postponement for up to one year. These requests must be approved by the University. Hardship postponements may be extended for one additional year. At the end of the postponement period, the student must return and complete his/her education or repay the amount of the award. Waivers of repayment may be made in the case of permanent disability or death.
**Work Requirements**

Students accepting the BHWET Stipend agree to accept a position in an approved agency serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder, and to work a full year for each 10 months of stipend support.

Students must accept interviews for jobs within Colorado. Students must accept an offer of employment within two months of graduation.

If a graduate cannot locate a job within two months of graduation, payback may be delayed for up to one year, in increments up to three months, upon approval of the University. The graduate must demonstrate efforts to secure employment within that year, participating in all offered interviews, and accepting employment, if offered. Payback may be waived upon approval of the University in the event that no agencies are hiring due to hiring freezes or budget limitations.

**Work Interruption**

A graduate who terminates employment before the required work period is completed must repay the pro-rated, remaining amount of the award. However, the graduate may be granted a hardship postponement of up to one year, in three-month increments, with permission of the University. Hardship postponements may be extended for up to one additional year. At the end of the postponement period, the graduate must return and complete his/her work requirement or repay the amount of the award. Waivers of repayment may be made in the case of permanent disability or death. If the graduate is laid off because of agency budget cuts and cannot secure employment in an agency in Colorado, payback may be waived at the discretion of the University.
Payback Requirements

Students are responsible for payback of the total amount of the award, interest and any costs of collection under the following circumstances:

1. Failure to complete the Master of Social Work program within the normative period, except for hardship or disability.

2. Failure to successfully complete the field placement, including the BHET Stipend Program interprofessional training seminar program, in an approved agency serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder.

3. Failure to meet security clearance screens for work with children. These include, but are not limited to, background checks from: the C.B.I., Division of Records and Reports (Child Abuse Registry), F.B.I. for students who have been in Colorado less than 2 years, driving records, and any other background checks required by the agency to which the student applies for employment.

4. Failure to meet the legal requirements for employment within the USA as defined by 8 U.S.C. § 132a.

5. Failure to accept employment in an approved agency serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder, within two months of graduation in the State of Colorado (unless a waiver for up to one year is granted).

6. Failure to gain employment in an approved agency serving children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder within one year of graduation in the State of Colorado, in spite of having participated in interviews. Forgiveness of the repayment requirement is at the sole discretion of the University.

Students who have paid back a part of their work requirement will pay a prorated amount under the following circumstances:

1. Voluntary termination of employment before completion of the work requirement (unless a hardship extension is granted).

2. Termination of employment before completion of the work requirement due to poor work or improper conduct.
Terms of Repayment

Students who do not fulfill the terms of their agreement are responsible for the total or prorated award as described above, interest and collection costs. Terms of repayment will be negotiated with the University, and will include interest. Collection procedures, should they be needed, will be undertaken by the State of Colorado, Central Collections Department.

Date: ______________ I have read this program announcement, I understand and agree to the terms described. I am committed to providing services in Colorado to children, adolescents, and transitional-age youth at risk for developing, or who have developed, a recognized behavioral health disorder.

I, ______________ agree to accept a BHWET Stipend in the amount of $10,000, with the understanding that I must complete the above outlined work payback post-graduation.

_________________________________  ____________________________
Student Signature                      Date

_________________________________  ____________________________
Signature of Representative of          Date
BHWET Stipend Program