
CA Title IV-E Education Program Student Handbook

2025-26

The CA Title IV-E Education Program (Title IV-E) Student Handbook contains important information about the Title IV-E Program for Title IV-E students. This handbook is meant to supplement the Title IV-E Student Contract. In the event of discrepancies between this handbook and your signed student contract, the terms of the student contract will take precedence.

Please review the handbook thoroughly. This should be your first stop if you have any questions about the program. For additional information or support, please contact your school's Title IV-E Project Coordinator.

CA Title IV-E Education Program

Student Handbook 2025-26

Instructions to Navigate the Student Handbook

- To view the document outline / table of contents in a static toolbar on the left of your screen, click on “View,” then “Show document outline.”
- In either the document outline or the table of contents, click on a heading to be taken to that section.
- To find a specific keyword / topic, type “Ctrl+F,” and type the keyword / topic in the search box.

Table of Contents

Instructions to Navigate the Student Handbook	1
Table of Contents	1
1. Welcome Letter from Title IV-E Program Directors	3
2. About the Program	4
Participating Schools	4
Program Goals	5
Student Contract and General Program Requirements	5
Curriculum	7
Title IV-E-Specific Courses	7
Practicum	7
Stipulations of Monetary Support	8
Disbursement of Funds	8
Renewal of Monetary Support	8
Taxation of Title IV-E Monetary Support	8
Service Requirement	9
Monetary Repayment	10
Student/Graduate Petition Process	11
4. Participant Data	13
Cal IV-E Portal	13
5. Title IV-E Summit, Job Fair, Student Representatives	14
Title IV-E Job Fair	14
Title IV-E Summit	14
Student Representatives	14
Student Planning Committees	14
Appendix: Job Search Resources	16
Qualifying Job Titles by Agency	16
Employment Search Log	16

Employment Search Information and Tips	16
Networking	16
Targeting and Applying for Positions	16
The STAR Method	17
Civil Service Job Application	17
Oral Examination	18
Written Examination	20
Hiring Interview	21

1. Welcome Letter from Title IV-E Program Directors

Dear Title IV-E student:

Congratulations and welcome to the California Title IV-E Education Program! You are joining over 10,000 students who have received Title IV-E stipends and tuition support since 1992, many of whom have pursued impressive and fulfilling careers serving the children and families of California.

The California Title IV-E Education Program (Cal IV-E) is located at two sites, the University of California, Davis (UC Davis) and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), each of which support 10 of the 20 participating universities in California. The intent of the California Title IV-E Education Program is to increase the number of specially trained social workers in public child welfare agencies serving California's most vulnerable children and families. For more information about the Title IV-E Program, please visit [our website](#).

As a Title IV-E student, you will be signing a detailed contract with the requirements and terms of participation in the program. You also have access to the [California Title IV-E Program Student Handbook](#), which contains comprehensive information and supportive resources for each stage of the program. Please take the time to review the student contract and the Student Handbook thoroughly. Throughout undergraduate and/or graduate school and your service requirement period, please reach out to the cadre of support at your program, including your dean/director, project coordinator, classroom and field instructors, and administrative staff, both proactively and responsively to ensure your successful completion of the program and transition to the public child welfare workforce.

Another unique opportunity that may be available to you as a Title IV-E student is participation in the [Title IV-E Summit](#). Sponsored by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) California Chapter and the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), this event will provide opportunities for California Title IV-E students to attend workshops on current practices and policy in child welfare and to network with professionals and other students from around the state. We will also offer professional development opportunities to Title IV-E students who are interested in helping plan and execute the Summit. If you are interested in becoming involved in the planning process and/or attending the event as a participant, please reach out to your Project Coordinator for more information.

UC Davis and UCLA each have a staff of professionals who work together to manage, administer, and evaluate the program on behalf of the state. You may receive communications and requests from some of these staff during and after your time in the program. We thank you in advance for your timely responsiveness.

UC Davis and UCLA also work closely with California's regional training academy system (CalAcademies), which coordinates and maintains California's common core curriculum for public child welfare in-service training in partnership with the California Department of Social Services (CDSS). As you enter the public child welfare workforce upon graduation, your relationship with the continuum of child welfare education in California will continue with opportunities for professional development through your RTA.

With that, we join with all the voices wishing you the best of luck in pursuing your degree and thank you for your commitment to the profession of social work and the field of public child welfare.

Sincerely,
Cal IV-E Program Site Team

2. About the Program

Created in 1990, a consortium of social work graduate schools, public social services agencies, social work advocacy organizations, and foundations was created to provide professional education, student support, in-service training, and workforce evaluation research to develop effective, culturally competent public service delivery to the people of California. In collaboration with its partners, the California Social Work Education Center (CalSWEC) at the University of California (UC), Berkeley, founded the Title IV-E Social Work Training Program to develop a diverse and qualified workforce for the fields of child welfare. In 2024, the Title IV-E Program transferred host sites from UC Berkeley to two program sites, UC Davis for northern region schools and the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) for southern region schools.

The CA Title IV-E Education Program provides professional education and monetary support to undergraduate and graduate social work students who intend to pursue or continue a career in the field of public child welfare. The program is funded by federal Title IV-E funds, administered by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) [Training Support Unit \(TSU\)](#), UC Davis, UCLA, and participating universities. Table 1 outlines which schools are supported by the UC Davis or UCLA program site.

Participating Schools

Table 1.

School / Program Site	MSW		BASW		Pathway/ DE	SERVE
	FT	PT	FT	PT		
UC Davis Northern Program Site						
Cal Poly Humboldt	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★
CSU Chico	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CSU East Bay	✓					✓
CSU Monterey Bay		✓				✓
CSU Stanislaus	✓	✓				✓
Fresno State University	✓	✓	✓	✓		★
Sacramento State University	✓	✓	✓			✓
San Francisco State University	✓					✓
San Jose State University	✓	✓				✓
UC Berkeley	✓					✓
UCLA Southern Program Site						
CSU Bakersfield	✓	✓				✓
CSU Dominguez Hills	✓					✓
CSU Fullerton	✓	✓				✓
CSU Long Beach	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CSU Los Angeles	✓	✓	✓			✓

CSU Northridge	✓	✓				✓
CSU San Bernardino	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
CSU San Marcos	✓	✓				✓
San Diego State University	✓	✓	✓			★
UC Los Angeles	✓					✓

★ *SERVE Regional Office*

Program Goals

- To increase the number of public child welfare (PCW) workers in California with BASW and MSW degrees
- To prioritize the enrollment of current state/county/Tribal social services staff
- To provide specific program support through the provision of monetary support to Students
- To provide specific program support through a specialized competency-based child welfare curriculum

Student Contract and General Program Requirements

Students must read, acknowledge understanding of, and sign the Title IV-E Social Work Education Student Contract, and adhere to all terms and conditions therein. The Title IV-E Social Work Education Student Contract must be signed prior to receiving funding. Students must complete all program elements (classroom and field education, service requirement, and/or monetary repayment) within normative time frames. Students must provide copies of student enrollment requirement supporting documents to the School.

The Title IV-E Program Student Contract includes the following information:

- Requirements for program participation
- Details of monetary support
- Requirements for service requirement
- Requirements for monetary repayment
- Distinctions between full- and part-time student requirements
- Distinctions between MSW, BASW, AA, and Pathway student requirements
- Conditions for program termination, interruption / delay of program participation
- Requirements for updates, disclosure, and release of information

Students must maintain communication with their School at least once a year after Student completes or withdraws/is terminated from the Title IV-E program, until Student completes service requirement and/or monetary repayment. For Students with exceptional circumstances, more frequent communication is required. Students must provide Schools with updated contact information for a minimum of five years following graduation and/or separation from the Title IV-E program.

Table 2 outlines program requirements for each of the Title IV-E Programs. Students should refer to their individual student contracts in the event that deviations from the table occur.

Table 2.

Program Name	Degree Type	Enrollment Status	Employment Status While in School	Monetary Support	service requirement
MSW	MSW	Full-Time	Must not be active Qualifying Agency employees during the regular academic year	Stipend of \$25,000 per year for up to two years	Twenty-four months
		Part-Time	Priority given to current employees of a Qualifying Agency	Reimbursement of, or payment of education expenses for, up to \$19,141 per year for up to three years	
BASW	BASW	Full-Time	Must not be active Qualifying Agency employees during the regular academic year	Stipend of \$20,270 for final year of study	Twelve months
		Part-Time	Priority given to current employees of a Qualifying Agency	Reimbursement of, or payment of education expenses for, up to \$19,141 per year for up to two years	
CSULB Distance Education*	MSW	Part-Time	Priority given to current employees of a Qualifying Agency	Reimbursement of, or payment of education expenses for, up to \$19,141 per year for up to three years	Twenty-four month
Pathway**	MSW	Part-Time	Priority given to current employees of a Qualifying Agency	Reimbursement of, or payment of education expenses for, up to \$19,141 per year for over two, up to three years	Twenty-four months
	BASW				
	AA			Reimbursement of, or payment of education expenses for, for up to \$12,162 per year for up to two years	Twelve months
Advanced Standing	MSW	Full-Time Part-Time	Per part-time or full-time enrollment	Per part-time or full-time enrollment up to one year	Twelve months

*CSU Long Beach has two distance education sites - Santa Rosa Junior College and Ventura County Community College - that deliver a part-time MSW program to current county employees in those regions.

**The Pathway Program is a part-time distance education program for current public social services employees delivered at three Schools (CSU Chico, CSU San Bernardino, Cal Poly Humboldt) to develop the workforce in rural and remote regions of the state, including Tribes and Indigenous communities. Although the universities offering the Pathway Program use distance education technologies, the primary purpose of the program is for the campuses to offer distance education opportunities to students living within their own region.

Curriculum

Students must complete the course of instruction as required by their School's degree program. Students will receive specialized Title IV-E content as defined by the [Curriculum Competencies for Public Child Welfare](#) in the classroom and in field placement. Students are encouraged to actively work with their school and field placement agencies to ensure the linkage between classroom and field instruction for integration of the PCW Competencies.

Title IV-E-Specific Courses

Check with the School and/or see the Student Handbook Addendum for details.

Practicum

Students must spend the equivalent of at least one practicum year in child welfare services at a public child welfare agency engaged in direct service and/or administrative tasks, consistent with the Student's specialization and past experience. This public agency must receive IV-E funding and provide child welfare services to IV-E children and families. Examples include county public child welfare agencies, Tribal agencies providing child welfare services, and California Department of Social Services Adoptions Unit.

Students who require an additional year of practicum may be placed in schools, other public social services agencies, probation agencies, behavioral health agencies, public health agencies, and public or private nonprofit agencies.

In all practicum placements, Students' caseloads must consist of IV-E eligible cases. IV-E eligibility is determined by the following:

- Income: Would have been eligible for AFDC prior to TANF
- Services: Receiving Title IV-E eligible, child welfare related services
- Risk: In the absence of such services, would be at risk of placement
 - Evidence of risk
 - Court process regarding removal
 - Case plan includes possible placement, absent services

All Learning Agreements must indicate how the [Curriculum Competencies for Public Child Welfare](#) will be included in the practicum experience and how the Behaviors for Specialized Practice in Public Child Welfare will be incorporated.

Stipulations of Monetary Support

Disbursement of Funds

Check with the School for details.

Renewal of Monetary Support

Renewal of monetary support is not automatic. The School will review the progress of current Students and contract with Students on a year-by-year basis. Students and Schools must retain signed copies of Student contracts and any other required documents for each year of program participation. Students who are out of compliance with program requirements should not receive additional monetary support. Students who are out of compliance and placed on probation or equivalent from the Title IV-E program must work closely with their Project Coordinator to determine if a Title IV-E petition is required to be reinstated and receive continued monetary support, or be officially terminated from the program and begin monetary repayment.

Taxation of Title IV-E Monetary Support

No schools should be issuing a 1099 form. ACF and the Children's Bureau do not require schools to report IV-E stipends via 1099s. Reporting stipends this way can create tax burdens for students and misclassify their relationship with the institution. Issuing a 1099-MISC implies the student is an independent contractor, which does not align with the purpose or structure of the IV-E program.

Students should consult their own tax advisors and/or current IRS publications regarding the taxability of their stipends or other forms of support. Some relevant codes and regulations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 45 CFR 235.61: A stipend is the basic living allowance paid to a Student.
- IRS Publication 970 (Tax Benefits for Education): Stipend funds that are used for certain qualifying expenses, such as tuition, may be excluded from tax.
- Title 11 of the US Code (11 US Sec. 523): Indebtedness resulting from non-repayment of Student educational benefits or stipends funded in whole or in part by a governmental unit or nonprofit institution will not ordinarily be discharged in the event of bankruptcy.

Service Requirement

- Upon graduation from the degree program, Students are required to fulfill a service requirement for monetary support received. The required lengths of time for each degree program are outlined in [Table 2](#).
- Students must secure employment within one year of graduation:
 - in a position engaged in direct service and/or administrative tasks;
 - at a Qualifying Agency. A Qualifying Agency includes public or Tribal agencies in California receiving Title IV-E funding and delivering child welfare services to eligible children and families. This includes county child welfare agencies, juvenile probation departments with Title IV-E placement activities, Tribal child welfare programs, and CDSS Children and Family Services Division.
 - *For Native American/American Indian Students.* Native American/American Indian Students may complete service requirement at a reservation/Tribal agency providing child welfare services in another State.
 - Click [here](#) for lists with service requirement qualifying job titles and agencies. These lists are meant for general reference and are not meant to be exhaustive. Students are responsible for securing qualifying employment, including positions that may not be represented on this list.
 - Refer to the Student Contract for details.
- Schools are expected to provide job search support to Students as needed. Students may contact their School's Title IV-E Project Coordinator for support.
- Students must maintain satisfactory documentation of a comprehensive employment search during the entire search period. Please create a copy of [this Employment Search Log](#) to document the following details of each job to which you apply.
 - Agency name; job title; application date; method of application submission; agency contact person (telephone number, email address)
 - Interview/exam dates and outcomes
 - Copies of written and/or electronic correspondence are necessary as supporting documentation.

Share the Employment Search Log spreadsheet with your Project Coordinator.
- If a Student does not obtain qualifying employment within one year, Student may use the [Student/Graduate Petition](#) process to request additional time to obtain qualifying employment.
- *For Title IV-E BASW Students who directly enter a Title IV-E MSW program.*
 - The BASW service requirement may be completed after Student completes the Title IV-E MSW program.
 - If more than one School is involved,
 - both Schools must be notified and agree to the delayed BASW service requirement, and
 - each School is responsible for tracking the service requirement associated with that School.
 - BASW service requirement must be completed prior to MSW service requirement.

- *For Title IV-E Pathway BASW Students who directly enter a Title IV-E Pathway MSW program.* Student may fulfill their Pathway BASW service requirement concurrently with participating in the MSW degree program. All other part-time service requirement terms and conditions apply.
- *For Title IV-E Pathway AA Students who directly enter a Title IV-E Pathway BASW program.* Student may fulfill their Pathway AA service requirement concurrently with participating in the BASW degree program. All other part-time service requirement terms and conditions apply.
- *Early Hiring Policy.* In the event that a full-time Student receives a qualifying employment offer with a start date prior to the Student's graduation date,
 - Prior to starting employment, Students must notify School of the days/hours they anticipate will be spent in employment. School will calculate stipend deductions/refunds on a per diem basis. Per diem amount may be calculated by dividing the total stipend amount by the total number of school days in the program.
 - Any stipend funds scheduled to be received when Student is in School AND employed will be deducted from the Student's total stipend amount on a per diem basis.
 - If full stipend funds have already been paid to the Student, they must refund any stipend funds paid during the period of pre-graduation employment to School on a per diem basis.
 - In most cases, Students are required to complete the degree program prior to beginning the service requirement.
- *Overtime.* Overtime cannot be counted toward time to complete service requirement.
- *Temporary Leave from Employment.* If medical, parental, and/or other extended leave of absence that is not part of the employer's routine vacation/sick leave benefits is approved and granted by the service requirement agency, the leave time may not be included in time toward service requirement completion. This type of leave will extend the service requirement by the same number of days as leave taken. Students must notify the School of the duration and description of the leave. The Program will use this information to re-calculate the Student's expected service requirement completion date. Routine absences taken as paid sick leave or paid vacation may be included in time toward service requirement completion.

Monetary Repayment

Students are expected to stay in contact with their School to make arrangements for and complete monetary repayment, if needed. Eligible reasons for monetary repayment include the following.

- Student does not complete the School portion of the Title IV-E program and/or degree program (i.e., withdraws or is terminated)
- Student does not obtain a qualifying position for service requirement
- Student is terminated from service requirement position (not due to reasons outside Student's control) (For reasons that are outside of the Student's control, see the [Student/Graduate Petition Process section](#).)

The monetary repayment process includes the following:

- The Student must notify their School as soon as there is any deviation from the normative expectations of the program.
- The School will provide information about the petition process and petition link prior to arranging a monetary repayment agreement. If deemed appropriate, the Program may use the [Student/Graduate](#)

[Petition](#) process to determine whether the Student is exempt from a duty to make monetary repayment or may qualify for delay of monetary repayment.

- If monetary repayment is required, the Student and the School must work together to establish a Monetary Repayment Agreement (MRA).
 - Student and School may renegotiate terms of the Monetary Repayment Agreement as necessary. A new MRA form must be completed for each renegotiation.
- Collection activities by the School or designee shall be ongoing until such time as funds are repaid in full or until such time as further collection efforts are prohibited by law.
- If a repayment plan is not established or if, at any time, Student in monetary repayment stops making payments and becomes unresponsive, School shall make and document reasonable collection efforts, which may include the following actions.
 - Collections. The School may contract with an external collection agency to recoup outstanding monetary repayments from Students who are out of compliance with Student contractual obligations.
 - Tax Intercept. In the event collection cannot be made by the usual collections process, the university may implement the [Interagency Intercept Collections \(IIC\) process](#) from the State of California Franchise Tax Board.
 - Reporting. The School may report delinquent repayment status to the IRS and available credit bureaus.
 - Student Records
 - Effective January 1, 2020, per Assembly Bill 1313, Schools shall not do any of the following:
 - Refuse to provide a transcript to a current or former student on the grounds that the student owes a debt to the University;
 - Refuse to provide a transcript unless the student pays the outstanding debt first;
 - Campuses may continue to assess the normal fee for issuing a transcript.
 - Charge a higher fee for obtaining a transcript, or provide less favorable treatment of a transcript request, because a student owes a debt to the University; and
 - Use transcript issuance as a tool for debt collection.
 - The AB1313 regulations specified that the provision of grades and diplomas may be withheld from a student in order to collect a debt.

Student/Graduate Petition Process

Students and/or graduates may engage in [the petition process](#) to be granted exceptions to normative completion of the Title IV-E program. Students must meet with the Project Coordinator to discuss the issues pertaining to the petition. If any of the below reasons pertain, the Project Coordinator will provide the student with a link to the petition form.

Per 45 CFR Sec. 235.63 (b) (1): *Employees in full-time, long-term training make a commitment to work in the agency for a period of time equal to the period for which financial assistance is granted. A State agency may exempt an employee from fulfilling this commitment only if failure to continue in employment is due to death, disability, employment in a financial assistance program in a public assistance agency in another State, or other emergent circumstances determined by the single State agency head to be valid for exemption*

Reasons for filing a petition include the following:

- For Students who have not completed the degree portion of the Program
 - Requesting reinstatement into the Title IV-E program (for Students who withdrew, were terminated, or were placed on probation from the Title IV-E program while in School)
 - Requesting temporary leave from school
- For Students who have completed the degree portion, but not the service requirement requirement
 - Requesting extension of job search period
 - Requesting delay in beginning service requirement
 - Requesting delay in completing service requirement (except for agency-approved [temporary leave from employment](#))
 - Requesting release from service requirement and monetary repayment
 - Requesting re/-instatement into service requirement status (for Students who were in monetary repayment)
- For any Student, regardless of status in program or School
 - Requesting delay in beginning monetary repayment
 - Requesting a pause in monetary repayment of more than six months
 - Requesting release from monetary repayment

If students have questions regarding eligibility for the Petition process that are not resolved through discussion with their School's Project Coordinator or Principal Investigator, students at Schools served by the Northern site at UC Davis may contact titleive@ucdavis.edu, and students at Schools served by the Southern IV-E site at UCLA may contact contactcalwise@ucla.edu.

4. Participant Data

Cal IV-E Portal

The Cal-IV-E Portal is a secure, one-stop platform where program participants and staff can view, track, and manage participation in the Cal IV-E program. The Cal IV-E Custom Student Information Systems (CSIS) Team created this portal to streamline data collection for all involved, improve data governance, and ultimately empower Cal IV-E partners and participants with access to relevant real-time information.

Portal URL: <https://calwise.my.site.com/calive/s/>

- [Cal IV-E Portal 2.0 Release Resources](#)
- [Cal IV-E Webinar Q&A](#)
- Cal IV-E Portal Tutorials

Topic	Tutorial Slides	Video Tutorials
Setting up your account	Setting up your account slides	Setting up your account video
Overview and standing	Overview slides Standing slides	Overview and standing video
Academic enrollment	Enrollment slides	Enrollment video
Repayment and payment	Repayment and payment slides	Repayment and payment video

- Portal 2.0 includes enhancements to Academic Enrollment and introduces new features for updating Repayment Obligation.
- Program participants (students and graduates) will also have access to their program participation information in the Portal starting August 1st.
- Petition and service requirement workflows will be on hold until August 1st.
- Participants will no longer receive email reminders prompting them to verify their employment, establish a monetary repayment agreement, or update their contact information.

Students must provide updated contact information through the Portal for a minimum of five years following their graduation and/or separation from the Title IV-E Program, per the Student Contract.

Students are encouraged to maintain files of all program related documents and completed forms for their own records.

5. Title IV-E Summit, Job Fair, Student Representatives

The Title IV-E Summit is an annual educational conference that convenes Title IV-E Students, and university and agency partners around a relevant child welfare theme.

Title IV-E Job Fair

The Title IV-E Job Fair is a virtual networking event for IV-E students and PCW agency partners to share and learn more about upcoming IV-E qualifying employment opportunities. The 2026 Title IV-E Job Fair will be held on February 20, 2026 over Zoom.

For more information on how the Student Planning Committee supports the Title IV-E Job Fair, please read the Student Planning Committee Descriptions below.

Title IV-E Summit

The Title IV-E Summit is the California Title IV-E Education Program's largest event, convening 200-350 attendees hailing from Title IV-E schools and public child welfare agencies. The goals of the Summit are for attendees to:

- learn from a variety of statewide perspectives
- hear from a spectrum of PCW agencies
- gain a richer understanding of the PCW landscape

The 2026 Title IV-E Summit will be held in person in San Francisco on April 23 & 24, 2026, with virtual participation options available as well.

For more information on how the Student Planning Committee supports the planning of the Title IV-E Job Fair and Summit, please read the Student Planning Committee Descriptions below.

Student Representatives

Each School may elect up to two Student Representatives (one incoming, one outgoing) to participate in the Student Planning Committee to help conceptualize and coordinate a virtual Title IV-E Job Fair and the Title Summit. Schools are not required to select two Student Representatives if Student interest and/or ability to fulfill the minimum qualifications is insufficient.

Participation in the Title IV-E Summit and Title IV-E Job Fair Student Planning Committee is optimal for students who enjoy collaborative projects and events that bring ideas and people together. Student Representatives will need skills (or be interested in developing skills) in problem solving, designing programming for child welfare stakeholders, networking, and information sharing. Specific Student Planning Committee descriptions are below. To learn more about becoming a Student Representative on the Student Planning Committee, reach out to your Title IV-E Program Coordinator.

Virtual Student Planning Committee meetings are typically 1 hour - 2 hours a month, and as needed.

Student Planning Committees

Workshop Committee

Ideal for students who enjoy designing child welfare programming and consulting on workshop content, flow, and structure.

The Workshop Committee partners closely with Title IV-E Program staff to recruit and select engaging workshop presenters and panelists. This committee is ideal for individuals interested in content development, teaching modalities, and ensuring that workshop sessions align with the event theme. Members will use strong communication skills - and tools like voting forms or other consensus-building methods - to make thoughtful, and sometimes difficult, decisions about the event's content and structure. This year's workshop proposal deadline is January 22, 2026. After the deadline, the committee will review and select workshops by January 29, 2026. During the Summit, Workshop Committee members serve as student hosts - introducing presenters, keeping time, and supporting any on-the-ground needs to ensure workshop sessions run smoothly.

Title IV-E Job Fair and Media Committee

Ideal for students who enjoy helping others build connections and developing incentives to build excitement and promote networking. Also good for students who enjoy community engagement through social media, branding, design, and information sharing.

Throughout the planning cycle, this committee promotes both the Title IV-E Job Fair and the Title IV-E Summit by creating and sharing updates on social media. This committee also plays a vital role in organizing and hosting the virtual IV-E Job Fair, scheduled for early 2026. This online networking event provides a space for county and Tribal agency representatives to showcase job opportunities and engage with Title IV-E students. Following the Job Fair, the committee shifts its focus to Summit promotion. Key responsibilities include designing event collateral, developing a branding strategy, and posting content to Instagram - particularly with an emphasis on promoting livestream options for broader accessibility. During the Summit itself, committee members manage the YouTube chat and provide support to virtual attendees. This committee is a great fit for students who are enthusiastic, tech-savvy, and enjoy working within clearly defined roles and deadlines.

Welcome Committee

Ideal for students who enjoy designing icebreakers, hosting events, and running operations in a fun and fast-paced environment.

The Welcome Committee is responsible for managing and facilitating day-of-event operations during the 2026 Title IV-E Summit. As the most front-facing committee, members work closely with Title IV-E Program staff and play a key role in ensuring a smooth and welcoming experience for all attendees. Leading up to the Summit, the committee focuses on gathering donations and gift card incentives, planning and facilitating networking activities, developing content for Summit breaks, and drafting scripts for emceeing. On the day of the event, Welcome Committee members manage registration tables, assist with activity setup and breakdown, direct attendee traffic, provide information and directions, and serve as MCs - delivering housekeeping announcements and supporting session transitions. Of all the committees, the Welcome Committee will be the most active in managing day-of operations and logistics.

Appendix: Job Search Resources

Qualifying Job Titles by Agency

A list with qualifying BASW and MSW service requirement qualifying job titles is accessible [here for counties](#), [here for Tribes](#), and [here for juvenile probation](#). These lists are meant for general reference and are not meant to be exhaustive. Students are responsible for securing qualifying employment, including positions that may not be represented on these lists, and for confirming that the actual positions they secure qualify for Title IV-E service requirement.

Employment Search Log

An employment search log template is accessible [here](#). Create a copy and document every qualifying job applied for during the search period. Share your log with your Project Coordinator. For more information, please go to the [service requirement section](#).

Employment Search Information and Tips

From application to hiring, the process can take approximately three months or longer.

Networking

- In this digital age, many of us are increasingly uncomfortable with the idea of networking, especially with strangers or acquaintances. It is important to try to overcome that discomfort because networking works and will put many applicants on the fast-track to landing a new position.
- Networking can take many different forms, and anyone looking for a new job should engage in some networking for advice and information on job openings. Types of networking include job fairs, informational interviews, and reaching out to your school, former co-workers, classmates, and others in child welfare.

Targeting and Applying for Positions

- Know the type of position you want and where you want it to be located. Determine your non-negotiables ahead of time. This will save you and everyone else time in the long-run.
- Title IV-E graduates must secure employment within one year of graduation to fulfill the service requirement.
 - In a position engaged in direct service and/or administrative tasks
 - At a Qualifying Agency. A Qualifying Agency is a public agency that receives Title IV-E funding and provides child welfare services to IV-E children and families in California. Examples of Qualifying Agencies are county public child welfare agencies, Tribal agencies providing child welfare services, and California Department of Social Services Adoptions Unit.
 - *For Native American/American Indian Students.* Native American/American Indian Students may complete service requirement at a reservation/Tribal agency providing child welfare services in another State.
- Qualifying county positions
 - Visit Counties' Websites to view current openings.
 - Submit "Job Interest" cards via counties' websites.

- A sample list of qualifying job titles at public child welfare agencies is included in the [Qualifying Job Titles by Agency](#) section.
- Prior to applying for a job, research job descriptions, specifications, and applications. Call or email job posting contact if you have questions.

The STAR Method

- Purpose
 - To speak about strengths and skills with real-life examples
 - To give hiring managers concrete evidence of fit-for-job
 - To avoid generalities and vague responses
- Method
 - **Situation** - Set the stage for the story by sharing context around the situation or challenge you faced. Share any relevant details.
 - **Task** - Describe your responsibility or role in the situation or challenge.
 - **Action** - Explain how you handled the situation or overcame the challenge. If the action was carried out by a team, focus on your efforts.
 - **Result** - What was the outcome you reached through your actions? If possible, quantify your success or provide concrete examples of the effects of your efforts.
 - Try to conclude a STAR by bringing it back to the question and/or how it relates to the position for which you are applying.
- STAR can be used in resumes, cover letters, and interviews/oral exams.
- Additional STAR resources
 - [How to Use the STAR Interview Response Technique](#)
 - [Answering Questions: The STAR Technique](#)
 - [How to Answer "Behavior Based Interview Questions"](#)

Civil Service Job Application

Application Form

- Complete all fields and sections of the application as directed. You may attach a resume, but DO NOT write "PLEASE SEE RESUME" in the application fields.
- Explicitly state your participation in and relevant experience through the Title IV-E Program wherever possible.
- Use applicable language and terminology from the job description to describe your responsibilities from previous positions.
- Include relevant paid employment, volunteer, and internship experience.
- Some applications will include a supplemental questionnaire consisting of additional questions regarding your experience with and knowledge of typical job duties. Review the job description thoroughly, and tailor your responses to align with the duties outlined. Use STAR examples. Consult with your field instructor, PC, and or other faculty for support.
- Have someone proofread your application.
- Thoroughly review and edit your application prior to submitting.
- If necessary, ask your school to provide a "Letter of Good Standing."
- Submit your application by the stated deadline.
- Ensure that you complete the application process via electronic signature, submission verification, and/or other methods as specified.

Resume Writing and Tailoring

- Review the job description thoroughly. Integrate information that is relevant and important for each position and agency, and delete extraneous and irrelevant items.
- Keep your resume under two pages. The average hiring manager spends 30 - 60 seconds on a resume.
- Focus on skills, metrics, and passion for the work.
- Use bullet points and STAR examples whenever you can. Keep bullets to 1-2 lines.
- Do not use “I” in your resume. Use action verbs to describe skills, duties, and key accomplishments.

Cover Letter Writing and Tailoring

- Review the job description thoroughly. Integrate information that is relevant and important for each position and agency.
- Keep your cover letter under one page. The average hiring manager spends even less time reading cover letters than they do resumes.
- Focus on skills, metrics, and passion for the work.
- Elaborate on your fit for the position by incorporating 1-2 STAR examples.
- Hiring managers are screening for well-written, well thought out, and organized cover letters.

After You Submit Your Application

- The agency will notify you whether your application did or did not meet minimum qualifications.
- If you meet minimum qualifications, you will usually be asked to take an Oral Exam and/or a Written Exam.
 - The agency will send you a notification indicating the date, time, location, length of examination, and materials for you to bring to the examination. Please pay close attention to the tentative examination dates on the job announcement.
- If you do not meet minimum qualifications, you will typically have appeal rights for 30 days. During this time, you may be able to submit additional written information demonstrating how you meet minimum qualifications.

Oral Examination

Oral Exam Purpose

- To assign rankings and establish an eligible list of potential hires.

Before the Oral Exam

- Review the job description thoroughly.
- Research the agency. Review the website, talk to current or former employees to learn current methods of practices, resources, initiatives, etc.
- Practice interviewing with a friend, field instructor, PC, or someone who can provide honest, relevant feedback.
- Prepare 3-5 questions to ask at the end of the interview. They should have depth and show deep reflection for the work and agency.

What to Wear to the Oral Exam

- Dress professionally. A good frame of reference is to dress as you would for court.
 - Appropriate clothing includes suits, button down shirts, blouses, dress pants/skirts/dresses, blazers.
 - Avoid wearing anything that could cause distraction.
- Ensure proper grooming and hygiene.

At the Oral Exam

- Timing
 - Arrive 10 minutes early.
 - The exam is usually 20-40 minutes and consists of 5-9 standard questions.
- Panel
 - Interview panels typically consist of three or more people.
 - Shake the hand of each panelist. Smile and make direct eye contact with each panelist.
 - Panelists may be expressionless during an interview. Stay focused on the questions/ instructions.
 - Panelists may take notes during the exam. If you notice they are not writing, this may mean you are not addressing the question/prompt adequately.
 - Look at each of the panelists throughout the exam, not just the person who asked the question.
 - The panelists usually are not prepared to answer specific questions about the position.
- Answering Questions
 - Before you answer any question STOP-THINK-PREPARE ANSWER-SPEAK
 - Explicitly state your participation in and relevant experience through the Title IV-E Program whenever possible.
 - You may be given a vignette to discuss and debrief with the panel. Be prepared to develop a case plan.
 - You should understand the memorandum format for the written portion.
 - Use your own Title IV-E and other case experience to give STAR examples.
 - Explain your thought process.
 - Project confidence, enthusiasm, and problem-solving skills.
 - Look alert and attentive, but comfortable and calm.
 - Keep your responses between 2-4 minutes.
 - When interviewing with an unfamiliar county, you can say “I would find out how this county handles the situation but in my experience I would do X,Y,Z”.
 - If you do not know the answer to a question, describe how you would go about finding the answer.
 - If you find yourself going off topic, or if you answered a question incorrectly, you can redirect your answer by saying
 - “That’s not the experience I really wanted to share. This is a better example...”
 - “That situation does not illustrate what I wanted to share. This is a better example....”
 - When answering questions about conflict or challenges, do not name specific individuals.
 - At the end of the exam, the panel may ask, “Is there anything else you would like to add?”
 - If you haven’t already done so, you should mention you are a Title IV-E graduate and explain how that experience has made you a better candidate for the position.
 - You can mention any other experiences you may have forgotten.
 - You can add to previous questions you may not have answered fully.
 - You can give a summary of your qualifications.
 - At the end of the exam, the panel may ask if you have any questions.
 - Ask the questions you prepared before the interview.
 - You can ask about next steps in the process.
- Key Themes and Topics for Oral Exams
 - Risk and safety assessment
 - Reunification and permanence
 - Court experience

- Cultural humility - how do you work with people different from yourself?
- Time management - how do you prioritize tasks?
- Overcoming challenges
- Working with interdisciplinary teams
- If possible, send thank you emails to the interviews as soon as possible.

After the Oral Exam

- Results are usually emailed two to four weeks after the oral board exam. The results will include a numerical score (%) and a ranking based on the cohort.
- If you received at least a passing score, this result will place you on the eligible list.
- If you believe the oral board exam was unfair you may appeal BEFORE they announce the results.
- You may receive a certification notice, which may have additional instructions to continue the hiring process. Read all communications thoroughly and follow all instructions.

Written Examination

Some agencies will require a written exam as part of the hiring process.

Written Exam Purpose

- To assign rankings and establish an eligible list of potential hires.

Before the Written Exam

- Written examinations vary in their format and content. Some agencies will administer tests that measure specific knowledge, such as child development, psychology, and social work principles, while other agencies may test general knowledge, not related specifically to the field of social work. Talk to your field instructor, peers and project coordinator about their knowledge of the specific test for the county you are applying for. In general, tests are multiple choice exams.

At the Written Exam

- Read all of the directions carefully.
- Read each question completely before answering it.
- The test items are multiple choice. They are designed to have only one answer. More than one answer may seem correct, but only select the best of the choices offered.
- It is in your best interest to answer all of the questions, even if you have to guess. Your score will be based on the number of correct answers.
- If you have the option of choosing what section you want to begin with, consider which would be the best for you. Would it be better to begin with the section you find the most difficult or to begin with the easiest? For some people, answering the easy questions first is a time saver and a confidence builder.
- Periodically check to make sure your answer sheet is correct and corresponds to the question you are on.
- Periodically check the time and do not spend too much time on any one question.
- Interpret words according to their generally accepted meanings.
- The process of elimination can help you choose the correct answer in a multiple choice examination. Start by crossing off answers that can't be correct. Then spend your time focusing on the possible correct choices.

- When you are finished and have extra time, don't stop! Go back to review your answers where allowed, making sure you didn't make any careless mistakes, such as putting the right answer in the wrong place.

Additional Application and Exam Resources

- [Merit System Services Information](#)

Hiring Interview

Before the Hiring Interview

- The agency will invite you to schedule an interview with the hiring committee when they are ready to hire.
- Typically, candidates will be interviewed in rank order per the number of positions available (i.e., if there is one position available, the candidates with the top five rankings are eligible; if two positions are available, the top 6 candidates; for three positions, the top seven candidates, etc.)

What to Wear to the Hiring Interview

- Dress professionally. A good frame of reference is to dress as you would for court.
 - Appropriate clothing includes suits, button down shirts, blouses, dress pants/skirts/dresses, blazers.
 - Avoid wearing anything that could cause distraction.
- Ensure proper grooming and hygiene.

At the Hiring Interview

- Hiring interviews may be an individual interview, group interview, or a set of interviews. Hiring interviews are more open format than oral board exams.
- Sell Yourself – Use STAR examples from child welfare, talk about Title IV-E, if you're bilingual, say so.
- Bring resumes, certificates, letters of recommendation.
- Use language from the job description and current practice in the field. Talk like a child welfare worker.
- Convince them that you want to work for their agency. Show that you have done your research.
- Show your understanding of diversity and equity issues, and strengths-based practice.
- Hiring interviewers can answer questions about the position.
- Refer to the [Oral Exam section](#) above for additional interviewing tips.