

Memorandum

CD25-31

ISSUED DATE: November 21, 2025

TO: ☒ Children's Division ☐ Contracted Staff

FROM: Sara Smith, Children's Division Director

SUBJECT: **Part-time Master of Social Work Title IV-E Program**

The Children's Division remains steadfast in our commitment to support the professional growth of our workforce. I am excited to announce we have opened the application process for the Title IV-E funded Master of Social Work (MSW) cohort for the **Fall 2026** semester. This is an incredible opportunity for individuals interested in furthering their education and leadership skills.

The Title IV-E program does not come without challenges. Title IV-E recipients must have the skill to balance their full-time job, family responsibilities, and graduate school. Divisional leadership understands the challenges associated with this undertaking and we are committed to providing flexibility to selected staff. Up to six hours of weekly leave is granted to recipients to aid in their pursuit of this degree.

The Children's Division works in partnership with the following schools: University of Missouri Kansas City, University of Missouri Columbia, University of Missouri St. Louis, and Missouri State University. These programs are funded by both Federal Title IV-E and State funds. (*Missouri State's part-time MSW program is for advanced standing.*)

Part-Time Master of Social Work Title IV-E Program

All Children's Division employees are eligible to apply. Employees with two years of experience, by the start of the **Fall 2026** semester, will be given preference. Allocations for tuition assistance are based on available funding.

Selected employees will remain employed full-time while attending classes, either in person or on-line, on a part-time basis. The part-time MSW program provides payment for tuition, books, and course related fees, for a maximum of four (4) years. Each student selected will be required to make a commitment to work for the Division after graduation, one year for every academic year attended (an academic year is a rolling Fall, Spring, and Summer session, starting with the Fall semester). Required courses and class schedules are available on the website of each university, listed under *University Application Process*.

University Application Process:

Choose a university and apply directly to their Master of Social Work program. Each university has unique admission processes and deadlines, though most programs have a January deadline for application.

- University of Missouri, Columbia (MU) - <https://healthprofessions.missouri.edu/social-work/masters-degree/>

- University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC) <https://cas.umkc.edu/areas-of-study/social-work/admissions.html>
- University of Missouri, St. Louis (UMSL) - <https://www.umsu.edu/socialwork/Apply/apply-MSW.html>
- Missouri State University, Springfield (MSU)- <https://www.missouristate.edu/swk/Graduate/>

Children's Division Application Process:

1. Complete the Children's Division application attached to this memo including the following:
 - Current resume
 - Three letters of reference
 - Signed release of Information for the Children's Division and University to verify acceptance into the MSW Program (please check with University for their required releases).
2. Return the CD application by January 30, 2026, to Christine.E.Steele@dss.mo.gov
3. Upon acceptance for admission by the University and recommendations from all levels of supervision, the Children's Division Central Office representatives and/or Children's Division Regional Liaisons (listed below) will conduct interviews.
4. Upon completion of the interview, the interview team will make recommendations for final approval to the Children's Division Director, and you will be notified of your status.
5. Staff accepted into the program will be required to sign an agreement/contract with the Children's Division which outlines the benefits and conditions.
6. Staff will be expected to maintain employment with the Children's Division post-graduation, or will be expected to pay the calculated, prorated cost of their education, in full, at the time of departure.

For more information, please contact Christine Steele at Christine.E.Steele@dss.mo.gov



Missouri Department of Social Services – Children’s Division

MSW IV-E Application – Beginning 2026 School Year

Applicant Information

Full Name: _____
Last First M.I.

Address: _____
Office Street Address P.O.Box

City State ZIP Code

Phone: _____ Email _____

Hire Date: _____ Circuit/County: _____ Job Classification: _____

Bachelor’s Degree /
Year Obtained: _____

University: _____

Are you eligible for Advanced Standing? YES NO
☐ ☐

Which University or Universities are You Considering?

University of Missouri, Columbia	YES ☐	NO ☐
University of Missouri, Kansas City	YES ☐	NO ☐
University of Missouri, St. Louis	YES ☐	NO ☐
Missouri State University, Springfield	YES ☐	NO ☐

Application Questions – Please Answer Below

1. Briefly describe why you are interested in pursuing a Master of Social Work.
2. Briefly describe your vision on utilization of your MSW degree to improve your work with children and families served by the Division.
3. If accepted into the MSW IV-E program, what do you believe will be the most difficult part for you?

Highlights of the MSW Title IV-E Agreement with Applicant (if recommended)
and the Division:

- Student will be expected to continue working for the Children's Division one year for every year of school attendance.
- If the student leaves employment with the Children's Division before completing their commitment, the student's time served will be calculated and the student will be expected to pay back the full amount, in one payment, upon demand.
 - Student must notify the IV-E Liaison immediately should they leave employment with the Children's Division any time within the contracted dates.
 - Student must notify the IV-E Liaison immediately of requests to shorten or extend their contract.
- The Department shall provide the Student/Employee six (6) hours per week partial reduction of work activity to be used for travel to the University, attendance in classes, study time and/or other activity associated with the coursework.
 - This time will be entered into leave track under LWPED and must be approved by your leadership/supervisor
- The Student/Employee agrees to commit any additional time per week necessary, before or after normal work hours, or on weekends, to attend class, with the understanding that this is the Student/Employee's own time and no compensatory time shall be earned.
- The Department shall pay the Student's tuition, fees, books, and other course related expenses as approved by the Department. All payments for tuition, fees, and expenses charged by the University shall be paid directly to the University.
 - a. All lodging, travel, meals and other expenses associated with the Student/Employee's course of study at the University are the sole responsibility of the Student/Employee and shall not be reimbursed by the Department.
 - b. All courses beyond the required for the degree or any courses failed that need to be re-taken will not be reimbursed by the Department.

Applicant and Approval Signatures

Applicant
Signature: _____

Date: _____

Direct
Supervisor's
Signature: _____

Date: _____

Additional
Supervisor's
Signature: _____

Date: _____

Regional
Director's
Signature: _____

Date: _____