

MSW Frequently Asked Questions

1. What programs do you offer and how long is the program?

A: We offer Three (3) Options for the MSW programs:

- I. The 11-month MSW Advanced Standing Program (ASP) is only for qualified applicants with a BASW degree.
- II. The Full-time Two (2) year program and
- III. The Three Year (3) year program.

The Two (2) year program is a four-semester, 60-semester unit program which includes internship. Classes are held all day on Tuesdays and Thursdays and require 16 hours per week of internship in the first year and 20 hours per week in the second year.

The Three (3) year program is a six-semester, 60-semester unit program, including internship. Classes for the 3-year program are held one evening a week, usually Tuesdays and all-day Saturdays. The internship starts in the second year of the program and requires 16 hours per week. The last year (year 3) requires 20 hours per week.

The ASP program is offered at the Downtown Los Angeles (DTLA) campus and is an 11-month, 33-semester unit program (3 semesters) including internship. Classes are held on Mondays and Tuesdays all day (fall and spring semesters) and the internship is completed Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays for a total of 24 hours per week. Summer semester classes are three days per week for four weeks.

2. Is the program accredited?

A: Yes, our MSW program has been accredited since 1999 by the Council on Social Work Education https://www.cswe.org/accreditation/directory/?pg=&program_state=CA&program_level=Master%27s.

3. What is the cost of the program?

A: The costs listed below are approximate and reflect the current academic year. Tuition is subject to change upon approval of the Board of Trustees.

The cost of the Advanced Standing Program (ASP) is currently \$17,325.00,

The cost of the Two (2) year program is \$18,228.00, and

The cost of the Three (3) year program is \$27,432.00.

4. Do I need to have a degree in Social Work to apply to the 2-year or 3-year MSW program?

A: As long as you have a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university and satisfy the three prerequisites you may apply to the MSW program. Please note, that your degree must be conferred for you to begin a graduate program. You will need to submit official transcripts to the Office of Enrollment Services to verify that your bachelor's degree has been conferred.

5. What is the minimum GPA?

A: The minimum GPA requirement for the Two (2) year and Three (3) year programs is 2.75, in the last 60 semester units or 90 quarter units.

For the ASP program, the GPA requirement is 3.0 cumulative.

GPA Calculator (<https://www.registrar.iastate.edu/students/grades/gpa-calc>)

6. What are the academic prerequisites required for admissions?

A: There are three (3) prerequisites for the Two-year and Three-year programs that must be passed with a "C" grade or better. The prerequisites are research methods and statistics, which can be met with any elementary or introductory statistics course. The remaining two prerequisites are two (2) upper-division social science courses. Upper-division refers to junior and senior-level classes.

CSULB has an extensive list of approved statistics courses, please click the link below to see if the course you took is listed there. https://www.csulb.edu/sites/default/files/document/elementary_statistics_f.20_a.pdf

If the course you took is not included on the posted list, you may submit a course description and syllabus to the admissions coordinator (mswadmissions@calstatela.edu) to find out if it satisfies the requirement.

There are no prerequisites for the ASP program as all prerequisites are met with the required BSW degree.

7. Do I need to have completed all the requirements and/or prerequisites before applying for the MSW program?

A: Applicants need to have 2 of the 3 prerequisites completed at the time their application is submitted. Please note, that all requirements and/or prerequisites must be completed before starting in the program.

8. Do I need to take the Graduate Record Exam (GRE)?

A: No, the GRE is not required.

9. Do you have an online MSW program?

A: No, we do not have an online program.

10. Do you offer tracks or concentrations?

A: No, Cal State LA, School of Social Work no longer offers concentrations. We have an advanced urban generalist focus that prepares students to provide service across the spectrum of practice. Capitalizing on CSLA's location, this focus offers students the opportunity to learn effective and responsive strategies for working in any urban environment at the micro (individual/family), mezzo (group/community), and macro (policy/societal) levels.

11. When is the deadline for admission?

A: The deadline for application submission is January 15, 2026, for the traditional 2-year and 3-year programs. The filing period for the ASP program is February 1 to 28, 2026, with the deadline being February 28, 2026.

Applicants are accepted on a rolling admissions basis, which means applications will be reviewed on a first-come, first-served basis until spaces are filled. Please note that your application must be complete, and all required documents must be submitted and received by the application deadline of January 15, 2026, or February 28, 2026, for the ASP program to be reviewed for admission.

12. Can I apply in the Spring or Summer semester?

A: No, we admit students only once per year. The traditional 2 and 3- year MSW program admits students only for the Fall semester and, Summer semester matriculation for ASP only.

13. How many recommendations do I need? Do I need an academic and a professional reference?

A: Yes, three (3) references are required to apply to the MSW program. For the Two (2) year and Three (3) year programs, one reference must be from an academic source (i.e., a professor or instructor), and one reference must be from a professional source (i.e., a supervisor in a volunteer or paid position), and the third reference can be either an academic or professional source. **Personal references are not appropriate and will not be accepted.** Examples of a personal reference include a family friend, therapist, pastor, or coworker.

Please note, that if you graduated more than eight years ago, you could submit a professional reference in place of an academic reference. However, you must provide a brief explanation as to why you were unable to submit an academic reference. Regarding your references please be aware that you will be submitting the names and email addresses of the people who will be completing the reference form. Once you submit their names, they will be emailed the reference form to complete.

For the ASP program, you need three references: one academic, one from your integrated seminar instructor, and one from your internship instructor.

If you or your recommender are having problem with your reference, please contact the application hotline 857-3042087.

14. What is the deadline to apply to the university?

A: The university application deadline for the Two (2) year and Three (3) year programs is January 15, 2026. The ASP university deadline is February 28, 2026. Please note that the ASP program begins summer semester and is only offered at the Downtown Los Angeles (DTLA) campus.

15. Can I apply to the ASP and either the Two (2) year or Three (3) year program?

A: Yes, however, you will be applying for two separate start terms and campuses. The ASP program begins in the summer semester, and classes are held at the DTLA campus. The Two (2) year and Three (3) year programs begin in the fall, and classes are offered at the main campus.

16. Do you offer Financial Aid, Stipends, or Grants?

A: Yes, our program offers seven stipends for students with specific interests. More information is available at <https://www.calstatela.edu/hhs/sw/stipend-programs> . ***Please be aware that you must first be admitted to the MSW program to apply for a stipend.***

- I. **CA Title IV-E Program (formerly CalSWEC)** is for students with an interest in Public Child Welfare. The program offers a two-year stipend for students in the 2-year and 3-year programs and a 1-year stipend for ASP students. The stipend is \$25,000 per year and requires a two-year commitment to work for LA County DCFS or any of the 58-county public child welfare agencies in the state of California.
CA Title IV-E funds are also available to County Public Child Welfare employees in the Three (3) year program. Students are reimbursed up to \$19,141 for tuition and fees, books, mileage, parking, and educational supplies.
- II. **Los Angeles County Title IV-E DCFS Internship Program** is a 2-year internship program for student interested in public child welfare. MSW students receive a stipend in the amount of \$26,000 per year. Students are selected in their first year of practicum and will be placed at an agency that works with the DCFS population or those at risk. In the second year, students will be placed with DCFS. The DCFS office will be selected by DCFS, however it may be at the Glendale, Belvedere, Corporate, or Monterey Park office. If selected for the DCFS stipend students are required to attend mandatory specialized seminars that are held throughout the school year in both 1st yr. and 2nd yr. of practicum. Upon graduation, students are required to work at L.A. County DCFS for two years (or 1 year for ASP recipients).
- III. **Los Angeles County Mental Health** *At this time, we are uncertain if this program will be available. For incoming students (AY 2026-2027) you are not eligible until the Fall of 2027. If it is offered, as of now, students receive \$18,500 if they are matched with a qualifying agency in their **FINAL** year of your respective program.* Students awarded a stipend will need to commit to one-year employment post-degree in a clinical capacity at either a directly operated or agency contracted by LAC DMH. If your 1st yr. internship was in a DMH-operated or contracted agency or in a community setting (including schools) that provided public mental health care, you may qualify to apply for the stipend. You also have the option to select qualifying.
- IV. **Geriatric Social Work (GSWEC)** The Geriatric Social Work Education Consortium (GSWEC) is a collaboration among eight graduate schools of social work and fourteen community agencies specializing in services for older adults in the Greater Los Angeles area. GSWEC was established in 1999 to provide aging-focused second year practicum placements and

competency-driven geriatric social work practicum education. GSWECE practicums are structured to provide social work graduate students with a well-rounded experience serving older adults. Students in their final year of the MSW program are eligible to apply and can only be placed in a participating GSWECE agency (e.g. must be placed at one of the 14 partnering agencies). Stipend is open to both Two (2) year and Three (3) year program students. This is a one-year stipend, available in the last year of the program provides \$4,000 to \$6,000 for students interested in working with the older adults.

- V. **The Cal State LA MSW HCAI SWECE* *HCAI SWECE:** Behavioral Health Training Fellowship is for students interested in and committed to working in the fields of behavioral health (mental health and/or substance use) as clinical social workers, serving children and youth through age up to 25 years old and their caregivers in underserved/unserved communities. In the upcoming academic year (2026), incoming ASP students are eligible to apply. Selected fellows will receive \$15,000 per academic year during their program length in addition to attending behavioral health training sessions.

*Health Care Access and Information Social Work Education Capacity Expansion.

- VI. **Public Behavioral Health (PBH) MSW Training Program** - Funded by the California Office of Health Care Access and Information (HCAI), the PBH stipend is for students interested in working in California's public behavioral health care systems, programs and settings. PBH stipend recipients receive funding of up to \$25,000 per training year and will commit to providing the equivalent of 12 months of full-time service in publicly funded behavioral health programs and settings in the state of California after graduation. PBH is open to eligible students enrolled in MSW programs in all options (2 yr., 3 yr., or ASP) who are in publicly funded behavioral health practicum placements.

- VII. **The Aging and Adults Services (AAS) MSW Training Program** - Funded by the California Department of Social Services (CDSS), the AAS program is for MSW students who are committed to careers providing social work services to aging and vulnerable adults in California's publicly funded systems, programs, and settings. It focuses on specialized field intended to enhance understanding of the needs of this vulnerable population and the agencies that serve it. Each MSW student participant will be awarded a \$25,000 stipend, and it requires a one-year commitment upon graduating to work at an eligible agency serving older adults. This program is open to eligible students in all three options of our MSW program (2 yr., 3 yr., or ASP) who are in placements serving older adults.

Each stipend program has its own set of criteria, application process, and terms associated with the stipend award. Stipends are competitive and require a separate application and an interview. Please note that stipend availability is contingent upon external funding. As such, stipends cannot be guaranteed in any admission cycle or program year.

17. Do I need a car and valid auto insurance to enroll in the MSW program?

A: Although car is not required; not having one will limit where a student can be placed and will disqualify from specific stipends (e.g., Child Welfare/Title IV-E stipends require students have a vehicle). Students are expected to spend between 16-24 hours a week in a community-based fieldwork agency and many agencies require that student interns have a car and valid driver's license, and auto insurance as they are expected to travel between sites or conduct field visits. **Please note:** There is no guarantee that your placement will be near your home. If a student does not have reliable transportation, this may impede the field placement process, and that will limit where they are placed.

18. I have a misdemeanor and/or felony on my record. Can I still apply?

A: Yes, you may apply. Be aware, that if you do not successfully match with an internship agency after three (3) attempts, your MSW acceptance may be rescinded. Applicants should be mindful that they are required to pass a Live Scan and/or complete a background check. If you have ever been arrested or convicted of a crime (e.g., misdemeanor and/or felony) please consider getting your record expunged before applying to the MSW program, as it may preclude you from entering a field internship.

There are certain practicum and professional social work settings that will not allow persons on-site if they have certain misdemeanors or felonies in their background. Students should consult with the Practicum Director immediately with concerns about their ability to be placed with an agency, or their future employability in the social work field.

19. What is considered Social Work experience?

A: Experience in working in the social work field, case management, health, and human services, and/or has been supervised by a credentialed social worker (B.S.W., M.S.W., L.C.S.W., Ph.D., or D.S.W.).

20. Does CSLA have services available for veterans?

A: Yes, CSLA Veterans Resource Center provides veterans with information about applying for admissions to CSLA. Check out their website for more information <http://www.calstatela.edu/vets>

21. Does CSLA offer services for students with disabilities?

A: Yes, The Office of Students with Disabilities assists students with disabilities as they secure their university degrees at CSLA. Check out their website <http://www.calstatela.edu/osd>

22. What can I do with a social work degree?

A: For more information please check out the National Association of Social Workers link <https://www.socialworkers.org/Careers/Career-Center/Explore-Social-Work/Why-Choose-the-Social-Work-Profession>

23. What is the application process for international students?

A. Applicants are considered international if they have completed academic coursework or earned degrees outside the United States. <https://www.calstatela.edu/admissions/international-graduate-admission>

- Please note the following: **English Language Proficiency** Test is a Foreign Language (TOEFL) is a **university admission requirement** for all international applicants. The MSW program does not waive this requirement.
- **Foreign Credential Evaluation:** Cal State LA requires a foreign credential evaluation report for advisory purposes. International graduate applicants must submit non-U.S. academic records/transcripts to one of the following approved agencies for evaluation:
 - International Education Research Foundation (IERF)
 - World Education Services (WES)
 Beginning with the Fall 2024 admission term, evaluations from **any NACES-member agency** will also be accepted, provided the evaluation report is accompanied by official transcripts.

For additional campus Information please see the links below.

Cal State LA Admissions Deadlines: <http://www.calstatela.edu/admissions/deadlines>

Admissions Office – Submitting Documents: <https://www.calstatela.edu/admissions/submitting-documents>

Financial Aid and Scholarships: <https://www.calstatela.edu/financialaid>

Cal State LA English Language Proficiency Requirement for Admission (TOEFL): <http://www.calstatela.edu/admissions/english-language-proficiency>

Admissions Office – IERF/WES: Foreign Credential Evaluation Reports
<http://www.calstatela.edu/admissions/ierfwes>

If you are having a problem with your application, please contact the university admissions office or the Application Hotline **857-3042-087**. Please be aware that the hotline is on eastern standard time which is 3 hours ahead.

For more in-depth information about our MSW program, we invite interested applicants to attend one of our **MSW Information Meetings**. Information sessions are offered monthly and are offered from October through January. The information sessions offer prospective applicants an opportunity to learn more about the program, and the application process. There will be an opportunity to ask questions and meet others who are interested in the social work field.

- **Virtual Meetings:** Please RSVP using the following link: [MSW Information Meeting RSVP](#).
- **In-Person Meetings:** No RSVP is required—simply attend on the listed date.

Saturday, September 27, 2025,	10:00 to 11:30 A.M	In-person Main Campus in SH 162
Tuesday, October 14, 2025,	6:00 to 7:30 P.M.	Virtual
Saturday, October 25, 2025.	9:00 to 10:30 A.M.	Virtual
Saturday, October 25, 2025,	11:30 to 1:30 P.M.	Virtual ASP Option only
Saturday, November 1, 2025,	9:00 to 10:30 A.M.	In-person Main Campus in SH 162
Saturday, November 1, 2025,	11:00 to 12:30 P.M.	In -person for DCFS employees only in SH 162
Saturday, November 22, 2025,	9:00 to 10:30 A.M	Virtual
Saturday, November 22, 2025,	11:30-1:30 P.M.	DTLA Campus Open House ASP Only
Saturday, December 6, 2025,	10:00- 11:30 A.M.	Virtual
Saturday, January 31, 2026,	10:00 -11:30 A.M.	In-person DTLA Campus ASP Option only

Please continue to check the website for more information and updates. In the meantime, please visit <https://www.calstatela.edu/hhs/sw/masters-social-work> for detailed information about our program criteria and

application process. Additional questions may be emailed to the admissions coordinator, at mlichtburn@cslanet.calstatela.edu.