


CALIFORNIA EDUCATIONAL MFT STIPEND PROGRAM

Information on the 2011-12 MFT Stipend Program

The California Department of Mental Health (State) Educational MFT Stipend Program is funded through the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and its objective is to address the statewide workforce need for mental health practitioners in underserved communities.



MHSA

The mission of the Mental Health Services Act, enacted in 2005, is to transform California's public mental health delivery; in part, with mental health professionals dedicated to community service and to the care of those living with mental illness, by inspiring hope in their recovery, focusing on their personal strengths, respecting their cultural perspectives and learning from their lived experiences as consumers.

The goal of the State's Educational MFT Stipend Program consists of three objectives: 1. to recruit MFT graduates with the capacity to serve the culturally diverse needs of persons in mental health care, 2. to prepare recruited MFT graduates in the delivery of mental health services that promote wellness, recovery and resilience, and 3. to recruit into MFT academic programs individuals who have experience in the public mental health system as clients or family members of clients. Ultimately, the MFT stipend program strives to promote public mental health as a career option for those entering the MFT profession. Towards that end, the stipend program promotes curriculum development in MFT graduate institutions that prepares MFT graduates for public mental health practice.

Phillips Graduate Institute and the MFT Consortium of California

Phillips Graduate Institute (Chatsworth, CA) is the administrator of the statewide stipend program. To effectively implement this program, has partnered with regional consortia of MFT educational institutions and the MFT professional associations (CAMFT and AAMFT-CA). The majority of MFT schools are members of one of the eight regional MFT consortia across the state. These regional MFT consortia have facilitated the implementation of the stipend program for the MFT schools in their region by identifying a stipend representative in each school that promotes its school's efforts to recruit, inform and advise students on the stipend program and to assemble a Stipend Awards Council responsible for reviewing applications and selecting recipients. Each regional MFT Consortium represents the MFT graduate institutions in the counties within its region; some regional consortia include as members agencies that provide practicum training to MFT students. Each MFT Consortium has a host school that schedules regular meetings for its members. For a list of host schools and contact information go to www.pgi.edu/ca_169.aspx.

Stipend Amount and Stipends Awarded

The amount of each educational stipend will be \$18,500 for use by recipients to defray the cost of their graduate education. Stipends will be awarded statewide with each of the eight regional MFT Consortium slated to receive a specific number of stipends. See page four for a list of the regional consortia.

Employment Commitment

Recipients of the State stipends will be required to commit one year paid employment or volunteer placement at a mental health service agency operated by or affiliated with a county entity to provide mental health care. Employment may be in a paid or unpaid position as a mental health clinician that qualifies for MFT Internship. The MFT Stipend Program at Phillips Graduate Institute, along with the regional MFT Consortium, determines if the agency and position qualify to fulfill the employment or volunteer placement obligation.

Applicants should use the application form for the region they intend to fulfill their employment or volunteer placement obligation. Each regional application form (Part II, number 5) lists the county or counties represented by that regional consortium. Applicants awarded a stipend must fulfill the employment obligation as explained above by serving the workforce needs of the county or counties represented by that regional consortium.

Eligibility Requirement

Applicants eligible for the 2011-12 state stipends complete their degree between July 1, 2011 and June 30, 2012. Completion of degree refers to the conferral date posted on the official transcripts. The degree must be from a graduate program that is an active member of a regional MFT Consortium. (For a list of qualifying schools go to www.pgi.edu/ca_266.aspx.) The degree obtained must qualify the students for registration as an MFT Intern with the California Board of Behavioral Sciences. Students must also qualify for employment in California.

Qualifications

A list of qualifying capacities is provided on the next page to assist students in deciding if they are good candidates for the State Stipend Program. Students should also know that consistent with the objectives of the State Stipend Program, applicants with practicum training in the treatment of serious mental disorders in underserved communities and to culturally diverse populations will weight greater in the selection process. As well, selection priority will be given to students with bilingual / bicultural capacity that best serves the needs of these communities. The second language capacity needed in each region is included in the application form.

In general, students qualify for a state stipend if they are willing to provide services in underserved communities or specialized programs that have been designated by local counties as high need areas for mental health practitioners. This would include geographic areas (rural or urban) and delivery programs within county mental health system that are funded through the MHSA (Full Service Partnerships, Wellness Centers, etc.). Academic knowledge or training in the principles espoused by the MHSA will contribute to a candidate's strong qualifications. These principles include recovery, wellness, client-driven care, outcome-driven services and consumer self-help support.

Application Information

The application form and guide will be available September 13, 2011 through the website of Phillips Graduate Institute (www.pgi.edu) under "MFT Consortium of California, State Stipend Program." Each region's application form is slightly modified to include the region's counties and threshold languages. The application process includes submission of the three parts of the *2011-12 Application Form*, and the *W-9 Federal Tax Form*.

Application Deadline:

November 4, 2011

Applications postmarked after November 4, 2011 will not be accepted. There are no exceptions. Applicants will be notified via email of the receipt and eligibility of their applications after the application deadline.

MFT students/graduates interested in applying for the State Stipend Program must contact the school representative of their MFT academic program. Applicants need to receive advisement from their school on the student/graduate's eligibility and qualifications for the stipend program. The faculty advising the student must sign the application form to verify the student's eligibility and good academic standing.

Selection of Stipend Recipients

All eligible stipend applications will be anonymously scored by a Stipend Awards Council established by each regional MFT Consortium. The Stipend Awards Council includes members representing public mental health such as county and state personnel familiar with MHSA, county contracted agencies, community-based centers, MFT professional organizations, and mental health consumers.

The level of qualification of each applicant is based on the categories listed below. Applicants are advised to adequately demonstrate their qualification in each category when completing Parts II and III of the application form. A highly qualified candidate should be able to convey in the application submitted her/his capacity in most, if not all, of these categories.

1. Public mental health service. Applicant has practicum training or employment experience in the public mental health delivery system of a county.
2. Second Language capacity. Applicant has the capacity to provide mental health services in a second language identified as a threshold language for that region. California Department of Mental Health defines "threshold language" as the primary language, other than English, for a high percentage of the population in a geographic region.
3. Bicultural / Multicultural capacity. Applicant has personal and/or employment experience in communities of diverse cultures, social economic statuses, and geographical settings.
4. Community orientation. Applicant has personal, employment and/or volunteer experience which conveys a high degree of commitment towards community service, especially in low-income and socially disadvantaged areas.
5. Career in public mental health. Applicant conveys a commitment to public mental health as a professional which is evident by practicum training in or prior employment at a public mental health agency and by articulating specific career goals in public mental health.
6. Public mental health preparation. Applicant has academic knowledge and clinical competence in providing services to the population served by the public mental health system.
7. Personal capacity. Applicant has personal strengths and skills which will enhance applicant's ability to integrate and apply knowledge and training to work in public mental health settings; such as personal experience with mental health stigma and the delivery of mental health care.

Upon review of application scores, each regional Stipend Awards Council will rank applications and award the stipends for its region. Phillips Graduate Institute will notify the stipend recipients using their primary email address and they will be required to respond by accepting or declining the stipend.

Orientation Session Requirement of Applicants Awarded a Stipend

Applicants awarded a stipend will be required to attend a two hour orientation session. The orientation session will describe the stipend program, explain the administration of the program through Phillips Graduate Institute, and review employment requirements in California. The stipend program's Payback Agreement will be reviewed in detail and recipients will be required to sign the payback agreement. Failure to attend the orientation or to arrive on time, will result in forfeiture of the stipend. Stipend recipients will be provided with the date and time of the orientation session when informed that they have been awarded a stipend.

State Stipend Administrator for the MFT Consortium of California:

Phillips Graduate Institute

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