

# SWOSU Receives Grant to Help Students Interested in Social Work Careers

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Southwestern Oklahoma State University and Debbi McFarlin recently received a \$58,838 grant from the Oklahoma Department of Human Services through the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma to support students who are interested in pursuing a career in child welfare.

The Child Welfare Professional Enhancement Program is available to students majoring in social work.

The program provides cash stipends to students who are interested in a child welfare career. The Department of Human Services is seeking social work students that aspire to work in this area.

McFarlin said SWOSU is able to place students in DHS offices and they are frequently hired upon graduation. SWOSU is currently recruiting students that are eligible for the DHS-CWPEP. The students attend a child welfare orientation/training day provided by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services to assist them in understanding the nature and demands of child welfare services. Students are contracted to work for the Oklahoma Department of Human Services after attending classes.

The Social Work program at SWOSU allows students to earn a degree in social work by attending classes on the Weatherford campus or through the distance learning program which reaches Sayre, Altus, El Reno and surrounding communities. The bachelor level graduate is prepared to step into numerous positions.

"The career possibilities are a real plus for students choosing social work as a major," McFarlin said. "The social work profession is a field that offers diverse opportunities for students."

Social workers work in such settings as child and juvenile services, aging, mental health, child welfare, cancer, adolescent health, criminal justice, HIV/AIDS, family violence, school social work substance abuse treatment, legal services, adoptions, mental health services, crisis intervention programs, family service agencies, public health agencies, hospitals, aging services, domestic violence programs, hospices, schools, developmental disabilities services, immigration service and community action agencies.

Social workers provide most of the country's mental health services. According to government sources, 60% of mental health professionals are clinically trained social workers. Federal law and the National Institutes of Health recognize social work as one of five core mental health professions.

Anyone interested in the CWPEP program and the BSW degree should contact McFarlin, principal investigator and director of the program, at 580.774.7087 or by email at [debbi.mcfarlin@swosu.edu](mailto:debbi.mcfarlin@swosu.edu).