

FALL 2025 CWEL NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION

AGENDA/TOPICS TO BE COVERED

Welcome/Introduction of Staff-H. Cahalane

Purpose of CWEL-H. Cahalane

Student Responsibilities-A. Johnson

Systems/Important Documents-Y. Hamm

Reimbursements-J. DiPasqua

County Connections-L. Borish

FAQ's and Student Wisdom-CWEL Graduates & M. Williams

Closing/Contact Information

WHO'S WHO

Dr. Helen Cahalane-
Principal Investigator

Dr. Alicia Johnson-
Academic Coordinator;
Course/School-related
concerns

Professor Laura Borish-
County Agency
Coordinator; Work-
related concerns

Professor Melissa
Williams-Child Welfare
Program Manager;
Coordination
CWEB/CWEL

Dr. Marlo Perry-
Associate Research
Professor/Director

Ms. Yvonne Hamm-
Senior Program
Administrator-Forms
and Systems

Mr. Joseph DiPasqua-
Program Administrator;
Reimbursement related
questions

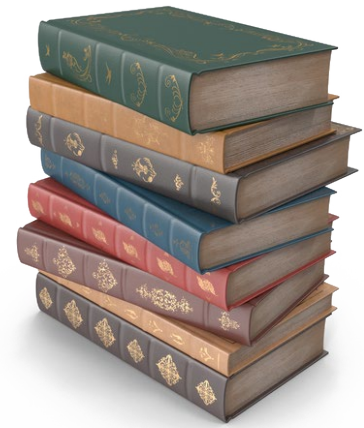
Mr. Tyler Verin-Asst.
Director; Finance,
Human Resources, and
Administration

PURPOSE OF CWEL

- The CWEL program is designed to strengthen public child welfare services in Pennsylvania by providing educational opportunities at the graduate level for public child welfare personnel.

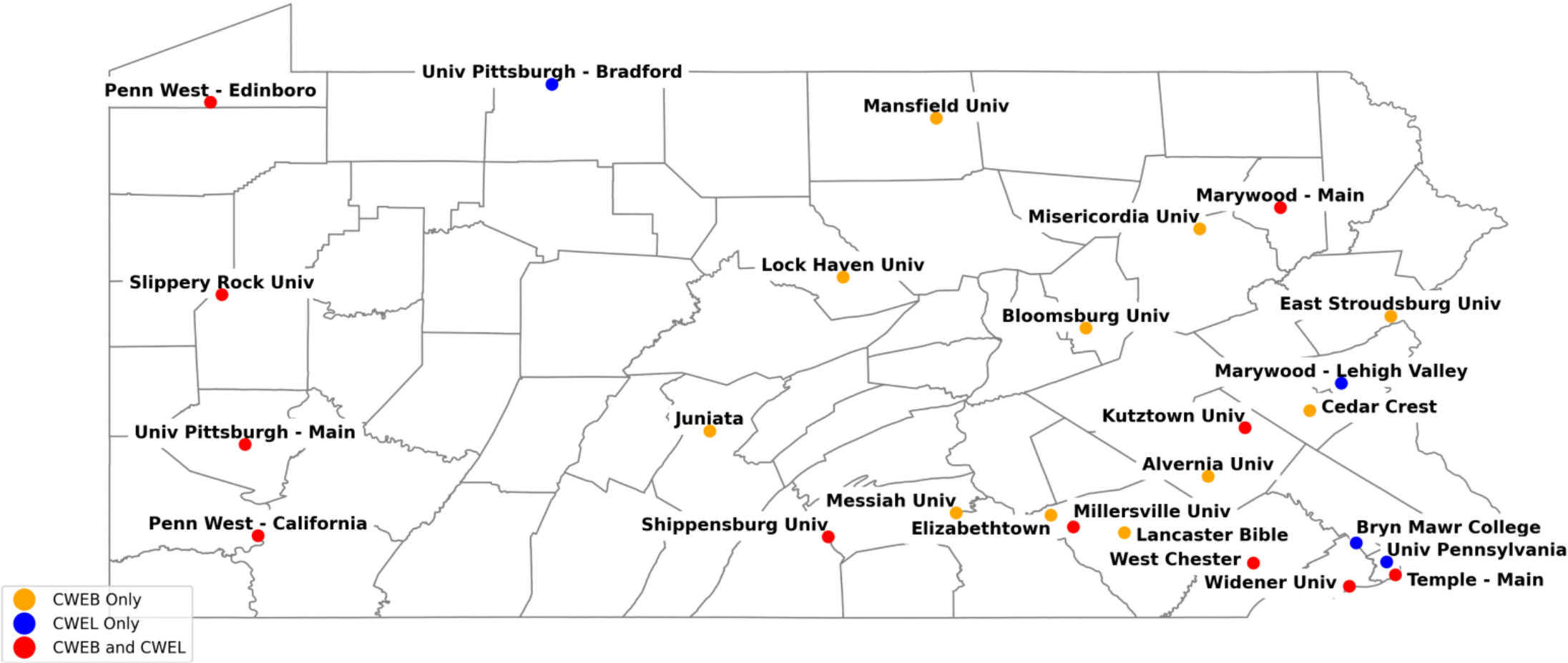
GRADUATES OF THE PROGRAM

- **As of May 2025**
 - 1,783 CWEL Graduates
 - Approximately 23% of all county child welfare positions occupied by a CWEL graduate, a CWEL graduate, or current CWEL student.
 - 99% of counties in the Commonwealth participate in CWEL and CWEL.
 - Overall total graduates since 1996 (CWEB + CWEL) = 3,204
- **Enrollment of CWEBs in CWEL**
 - Approximately 15% of CWEL admits over the past ten years were also CWEB graduates...an investment in the workforce!



Child Welfare Education and Research Programs Participating Schools

Updated: 07/30/2024



STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Course of Study *
- Certificate Programs/Dual Degrees/Foreign Travel
- Practicum Placements
- Enter Courses into CWERP
- Rectify Grad Date and other Discrepancies/Respond to Emails Quickly
- In-State Tuition and Payments
- Refunds
- Student Account Holds
- Student Information Updates in Database (incl. No Courses)





PRACTICUM REQUIREMENTS

- Graduate social work programs require two practicum placements, one during the first year and the other in year two.
- One placement is typically required for students with advanced standing from an accredited baccalaureate social work program
- At least one placement must be a child and family focused placement in a public or private program serving Title IV-E eligible clientele.
- In collaboration with your school, we will work with you in determining whether a potential placement meets this requirement.
- For students with two placements, the child and family focused placement should be the second, advanced year placement.
- There are no exceptions granted for completing practicum placements based on work experience.

SPECIALIZATION PRACTICUM PLACEMENT EXAMPLES



- Substance Use Treatment Facilities
- Mental/Behavioral Health Care Agencies
- Domestic Violence Shelters
- Prison Reintegration Programs
- Foster/Kinship Care Agencies
- Adoption Agencies
- Planned Parenthood/Parenting Education/Support Groups
- Child Advocacy Centers
- County Child Welfare Agencies

*Not Hospitals or Schools unless a relevant program is housed inside of the facility

LIFE HAPPENS

- Students are not permitted to register for additional classes while they have incomplete grades on their transcript. All incomplete grades must be rectified before the student can move on in their program.
- Students must notify Dr. Johnson if they are in danger of receiving incomplete/failing grades.
- Your CWEL team will help you navigate difficulties to ensure that you get back on track.





RESPOND TO ALL MESSAGES
PROMPTLY!

SYSTEMS/IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

- Required forms (FERPA, W9, Peer Communication Form, Contract)
- Student Information Form (SIF)
- www.cwerp.pitt.edu
- Please contact me with issues re: entering courses, submitting documents, issues accessing CWERP, etc.



Books & Supplies



mileage



School deposits and graduation fees



LSW Exam



Navigating through CWERP

REIMBURSEMENT

COUNTY CONNECTIONS



- Agency Coordinator=Liaison for all things county related
- CWEL participation begins on the first day of classes and ends at graduation
- Counties determine full-time or part-time CWEL participation
- Educational leave along with salary/benefits reimbursement for new full-time CWEL students begins on the first day of classes
- Return to work letters are sent in November and March
- Contact Agency Coordinator with any work-related concerns
- Commitment is calculated after graduation

FAQS

1. Where can I go if I have additional questions about the CWEL program?
2. Where can I go if I have additional questions about reimbursements?
3. What happens if I need to take a leave of absence from school/work?
4. Can I participate in a paid fellowship/internship?
5. Can we increase our options for CWEL-approved electives?
6. Does CWEL pay for accident or health insurance required by the university?
7. Can CWEL pay for tuition or costs related to prerequisite courses?
8. What additional questions do you have?

STUDENT WISDOM

CWEL GRADUATES

- How do you explain your job to someone who doesn't know anything about child welfare?
- How do you maintain your professionalism when your work/profession is challenged by others?
- What do you wish you knew at the start of this program?
- What creative ways have you juggled school/work/life to create balance?
- What hacks have you found to make navigating requirements easier?



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