

Forensic Social Work Certificate Program

Day 1 11:00 PT / 12:00 MT / 1:00 CT / 2:00 ET

Day 2 11:00 PT / 12:00 MT / 1:00 CT / 2:00 ET

Agenda

Day 1

1. Orientation to the FSW Certificate - History and Foundations 11:00 PT / 12:00 MT / 1:00 CT / 2:00 ET

The opening session welcomes attendees, orients them to participation expectations, and builds a foundation for exploration and learning. Participants will learn the professional benefits and limitations of the FSW certificate, history of the Forensic Social Work Alliance (FSWA), and an overview of FSWA's mission, vision, and principles. The session concludes by examining the cross-cultural nature of social work and the law and identifying emerging topics shaping the future of forensic social work.

John Maheras

2. Court Systems and Expert Testimony 12:00 PT / 1:00 MT / 2:00 CT / 3:00 ET

Testifying in court is often a daunting proposition. Yet, advocates, investigators, and mental health professionals, are regularly subpoenaed and hired independently as expert witnesses. Many times, individuals are unprepared for testifying even if they have previously testified. Anticipating that a social worker may be a witness in a case begins from opening a file to the investigation, note taking, and report writing. Aggressive cross-examination can be intimidating for those called to testify and a poorly organized direct examination can be as much of a problem. Often, social workers are faced with expectations and demands from judges and lawyers that may conflict with their professional standards or ethical codes. This session provides strategies to minimize anxiety and enhance effective expert and forensic testimony.

Viola Vaughan-Eden and Dana Prescott

1:00 PT / 2:00 MT / 3:00 CT / 4:00 ET Break

3. (In)justice in the Juvenile Justice System 1:15 PT / 2:15 MT / 3:15 CT / 4:15 ET

Covers the history, structure, and goals of the United States juvenile justice system including legal, extra-legal, and sociopolitical factors and differentiates the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems. Examines recent policy reforms and national forensic social work advocacy efforts. Provides in-depth analyses of the School-to-Prison Pipeline, Racial and Ethnic Disparities (previously Disproportionate Minority Contact), and a national age of majority.

Susan McCarter

4. Law Enforcement and Social Services: Intentional & Reciprocal Partnerships 2:15 PT / 3:15 MT / 4:15 CT / 5:15 ET (day ends at 3:30 PT / 4:30 MT / 5:30 CT / 6:30 ET)

This module examines the structure, function, and organizational components of law enforcement as they intersect with forensic social work practice, as well as multiple models of intentional, reciprocal partnerships between police and social service systems designed to address complex social issues. This session will also focus on ethical decision-making, legal compliance, and interprofessional collaboration as core competencies. Participants will develop the knowledge and skills necessary to navigate power dynamics, resolve value conflicts, and advance just outcomes through ethical and lawful partnerships.

David McLeod and Anjali Buehler

Day 2

5. Trauma-Informed Service Provision for Justice-Involved Populations **11:00 PT / 12:00 MT / 1:00 CT / 2:00 ET**

Explores common sources and the neuroscience of trauma, the foundation for trauma-informed care, and keys to successful trauma-informed service delivery within the criminal and juvenile justice systems. Ethics, diversity, collaboration, and advocacy are integrated into a discussion on restorative practices for engagement, assessment, intervention, and evaluation strategies for the direct service provider and leadership in forensic settings.

Ali Winters

6. Tools for Successful Offender Reentry **12:00 PT / 1:00 MT / 2:00 CT / 3:00 ET**

Explores the main barriers people face when exiting incarceration and attempting their reintegration into the community. Focus is paid to the disparate mental health and substance use rates among this population, as well as the psychological, social, and personal consequences of incarceration and criminal legal involvement. Participants will be provided with tools to improve outcomes for the people they work with individually, as well as suggestions for ways to address challenges at the mezzo and macro levels through interdisciplinary and/or collaborative efforts. The dignity and worth of persons engaged in services is foundational throughout this session.

John Maheras

1:00 PT / 2:00 MT / 3:00 CT / 4:00 ET Break

7. Public Defense Mitigation: Telling the Story **1:15 PT / 2:15 MT / 3:15 CT / 4:15 ET**

Provides a step-by-step approach to the forensic social worker's role in sentencing advocacy; core social work skills are translated into the special needs for working effectively with a defense team.

Emily Abili

Wrap-Up **2:15 PT / 3:15 MT / 4:15 CT / 5:15 ET**

(day ends at 2:30 PT / 3:30 MT / 4:30 CT / 5:30 ET)