Family and Community Services
Student Handbook
Master's Degree and Graduate Certificate Program

The Family and Community Services Program focuses on the development and implementation of public, private, and voluntary support services for individuals, families, and localities, and prepares individuals to function in a variety of occupations promoting family life, and family/community development. The program includes instruction in family systems, human development, social services, community social and economic development, social policy, voluntary sector activities, and outreach and community education.

There are six IDEA institutions participating in the Family and Community Services program. Degree titles vary by institution.

Partner University	Degree Title	Human Services Administration Graduate Certificate
Kansas State University	Master of Science in Family and Community Services	Yes
Michigan State University	Master of Arts in Family and Community Services	Yes
Oklahoma State University	Master of Science in Family and Community Services	Yes
University of Missouri	Master of Arts in Human Development and Family Science with an emphasis in Family and Community Services	Yes
University of Nebraska-Lincoln	Master of Science in Child, Youth, and Family Studies with a specialization in Family and Community Services	
South Dakota State University*	Master of Science in Human Sciences – Family & Community Services	

South Dakota State University is no longer accepting new students into their program.

Course descriptions, a course planner, and contacts for participating universities can be found on the Family and Community Services webpage: https://www.idea.edu/program/family-community-services

How the Alliance Works

IDEA students apply and are admitted to one university, which becomes your home university.
- You enroll and pay tuition at your home university; however, courses are taught fully online by faculty from each of the partner universities.
- Each degree or certificate includes courses taught by multiple universities who partner together to offer degrees they could not offer alone.
- Each university uses its own learning management system to deliver online course content, and students use the LMS to complete coursework.
- When you complete your coursework, the degree or certificate is awarded by your home university.

For more information, please watch the video located on the IDEA website:
https://www.idea.edu/how-it-works

Program Requirements

Master of Arts or Master of Science in Family & Community Services (36 credits)

Upon successful completion of the master's degree program in Family and Community Services, students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a research-based perspective to understand individual, family, interpersonal and community dynamics across the lifespan.
2. Demonstrate knowledge and skills related to the design, implementation, and sustainability of family and community service programs.
3. Demonstrate essential knowledge and skills for leadership and management of family and community service programs.

To accomplish these goals, students must successfully complete all the following:

- Be admitted to the master's degree program at a participating university, complete the necessary coursework, and meet the master's degree requirements of their admitting/degree granting institution.
- **All students are required to complete 36 credit hours including the ten core courses (30 credits).** All required courses are offered twice a year.
  - ○ *It is critical that the Foundations and Principles course be taken early in your program of study, preferably in the first two semesters of the program.*
- **An additional 6 credits must be taken to meet the degree requirements.** These credits may come in the form of pre-approved electives, thesis, capstone project, internship, research projects, or additional coursework depending on the degree requirements of the university you are enrolled in. Students should consult their academic adviser to identify appropriate courses for the remaining six credits of course work.

Suggested Course Sequence

The following is a suggested course sequence for specific classes. Please talk to your home institution for further input on course sequencing and selection.

- Semester 1 or 2: Foundations and Principles of Family and Community Services

- Parenting Education and/or Interpersonal Relationships and/or Lifespan Development prior to taking Family Dynamics

- Final 2 semesters: Program Design, Evaluation, and Implementation, and Program Administration and Management (suggested to take at end of program, one in each of your final two semesters)

- Final semester: Capstone project. Please review the policies of your home institution.

Course Descriptions

Course descriptions are also located on the IDEA website:
https://www.idea.edu/programs/curriculum/family-community-services/masters-degree-in-family-and-community-servic

Understanding Families in Community Context (18 credits–required)

Foundations and Principles of Family and Community Services (3 credits)
An introduction to the field of family studies and related professions that involve working with families and communities.

Family Resource Management (3 credits)
Survey course of personal finance and family resource management literature to provide an overview of how individuals and family members develop and exercise their capacity to obtain and manage resources to meet life needs. Resources include the self, other people, time, money, energy, material assets, space, and environment.

Family Dynamics (3 credits)
An examination of theories of family function and dysfunction, techniques of assessment, and models of family intervention.

Lifespan Development (3 credits)
Human development from both lifespan and bio-ecological perspectives focusing on major theories of development and current research on micro-macro relationship.

Interpersonal Relationships (3 credits)
In-depth examination of interpersonal relationships, including theoretical perspectives, research methods, relationship forms, relationship processes, and how context affects relationships.

Resilience in Families (3 credits)
Exploration of resilience approaches to the study of families and human development across the life cycle.

Delivering Family Service Programs (6 credits–required)

Parenting Education (3 credits)
An examination of theories, models, research, and skills related to parenting and parent education.

Crises across the Lifespan (3 credits)
The purpose of this course is to provide students with resources related to managing stress and coping with crises across the lifespan that can be utilized in both their own lives and the lives of those families they serve. Students will be introduced to the bio psychosocial nature of stress; methods of coping with stress, anxiety, and conflict; models of effective family functioning in the presence of stress and crises; and the current literature on how families cope with a variety of life transitions and crises.

Manage Family and Community Service Programs (6 credits–required)

Program Administration and Management (3 credits)
This course is designed to introduce students to the development, administration, and management of youth, family, and community service organizations.

Program Design, Evaluation, and Implementation (3 credits)
This course is an overview of the program development process and outcome evaluation of community, children, and family programs. Modes of outcome scholarship and their implications for community-based programs are discussed. Students will develop knowledge through participating in a community-based project involving the practical application of program design and evaluation methods.

Graduate Certificate – Human Services Administration (12 credits)

The graduate certificate is an excellent option for those already working in human services agencies and looking to advance in their career while developing their administration and management skills. This certificate is also a great addition to other master's programs, for example, human development and family science, social work, public health, early childhood education, and community development.

The certificate includes three core courses and a choice of one elective.

Core Courses (9 credits–required)

Program Administration and Management (3 credits)
Program Design, Evaluation, and Implementation (3 credits)
Grant Development & Management (3 credits)

Elective Courses (3 credits–required)
Choose one of these recommended courses.

Resilience in Families (3 credits)
Family Dynamics (3 credits)
Crises Across the Lifespan (3 credits)

Who to Contact for Help

Academic Adviser
Your academic adviser is the faculty member/staff person there to help you as you make your academic decisions and as you progress through the program. You should consult your academic adviser for assistance with the following:
- Course planning and selection, including elective approval.
- Transfer credit questions
- Plan your internship/practicum work (if applicable)
- Help with research interests

Campus Coordinator
Campus Coordinators are available to help students navigate their home institution. Campus Coordinators are available at every institution to help with questions regarding courses taken from other teaching institutions. Coordinators serve as a first point of reference for general questions and the following information:
- Enrollment processes:
  - Step-by-step instructions on how and when to register for a course
  - How to pause your program of study or unenroll from the program
  - *Refer to adviser for course planning
- General policy information at your home institution
- General IDEA information and policies
- Assistance with the Learning Management System

A list of campus coordinators can be found on the [Family and Community Services webpage](#) in the University Contacts section.

Anti-virus Software
Students are strongly encouraged to install and maintain anti-virus software on the devices used in this academic program.

Academic Integrity
Academic honesty is essential to the existence and integrity of an academic institution. The responsibility for maintaining that integrity is shared by all members of the academic community. All students are expected to be familiar with and comply with their home and teaching institutions' academic integrity policies. Academic dishonesty includes (but is not limited to): cheating, fabrication and falsification of work, plagiarism, abuse of academic materials, complicity in academic dishonesty, falsifying grade reports, and misrepresentation of academic work. Students who engage in academic dishonesty may be penalized to the full extent allowed by the home university.

In the case of academic dishonesty, the members of the consortium agree to following procedures:

1. Teaching faculty members have the authority to determine the academic assessment of the work where there has been academic misconduct within their classes and other instructional contexts. The academic assessment will be based on the academic standards stated in the course syllabus, catalogs, handbooks, and other materials notifying students of academic requirements. The procedure for appeal of the academic assessment in the course shall follow the policies and procedures of the teaching institution.
2. The instructor is responsible for notifying the program administrator (chair, head, or director) at the teaching institution of the misconduct and course sanction. The program administrator is responsible for notifying the dean for graduate or undergraduate studies or other appropriate teaching institution administrator, who will, in turn, notify his/her counterpart at the student's home institution.
3. The student's home institution may administer remedial action and institutional sanctions. These sanctions would be administered using the policies and procedures of the student's home institution. If the student chooses to appeal the home institution sanctions, final adjudication is at the student's home institution.

You can read more about IDEA's academic integrity policy here: https://www.idea.edu/student-success-center/academic-integrity

Expectations for the Quality of Student Work
All assignments must be completed individually and to the quality expected of graduate students. It is not acceptable to collaborate or work with classmates in any manner on an assignment, unless otherwise specified by the professor and assignment instructions. Students are expected to follow APA formatting and style. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the most current edition of the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (APA). Please visit the APA's website for guidelines: https://apastyle.apa.org/.

Home Institution's Policies and Procedures
Students are expected to familiarize themselves with their home institution's policies and procedures regarding graduation requirements, registration, tuition and fees, academic integrity, etc. Please reach out to your adviser if you have any questions about policies and procedures.