**Social work trainee program**

The social work trainee program offers expansive clinical training for Master of Social Work (MSW) candidates. VA Bedford Healthcare System has 17 paid stipend positions annually for second year MSW interns from accredited graduate schools of social work placed in various settings throughout the system.

The social work trainee program offers clinical placements in community and facility-based treatment programs, including inpatient, residential, and outpatient care. The MSW training coordinator organizes and oversees the program while individual preceptors/supervisors are assigned to each student for one-on-one mentoring and supervision.

In addition to the clinical work done within a student’s program, the internship opportunity offers student education series (SES), a weekly didactic series held on Mondays. SES consists of social work case consultation and skill building, navigating the field, and a social work group intern project. These didactics include case presentations, guest speakers addressing a variety of topics, group process, and the opportunity to share learning experiences with peers. VA Bedford also offers a host of trainings available to social work interns including psychiatric grand rounds, geriatric grand rounds, and Schwartz Rounds®, to name a few.

Field placement hours vary based on the requirements of the school you attend with a minimum of 20 hours per week. Monday is a requirement day for field placement.

**Training tracks**

There are two tracks within the MSW intern program: the comprehensive second year track and the interprofessional education (IPE) track. The MSW intern’s peer cohort in the comprehensive track consists of other social work interns. As a whole, the group will complete a group project to present to Social Work Service and potentially, to other disciplines throughout the healthcare system. Social work trainees in the IPE program are placed alongside psychology, nursing, and family medicine trainees, giving interns the opportunity to work collaboratively and professionally to enhance patient care by providing Veterans with treatment from a multi-disciplinary and interprofessional approach. The IPE program offers didactics in interprofessional care and coordination. Students will be asked to complete group projects within their own IPE teams.

**Interprofessional education (IPE)**

Interprofessional work can be described as the relationship between various disciplines as they purposefully interact with each other to work and learn together to achieve a common goal to provide patient centered care. This is different from interdisciplinary, which means two or more disciplines work or learn together to solve a problem or gather information. The IPE program offers didactics in interprofessional care and coordination. VA Bedford’s IPE vision is to be a national leader in patient-centered, whole-person, team-based healthcare through interprofessional collaboration in every interaction.

**MSW training program coordinator**

The program coordinator develops and implements the educational program, manages the application and interview process, and meets individually with students as needed. The coordinator also collaborates with the supervisor in evaluating student progress and learning needs, serves as a consultant to the student supervisor and field affiliates, evaluates the quality and effectiveness of the training received, and analyzes the quality and effectiveness of the social work intern program.

**Field preceptor**

The preceptor, or student supervisor, is the major educational resource to the student in field placement. Preceptors formulate and evaluate student learning needs and develop an educational contract. Supervisors select and assign cases appropriate to the social worker’s learning needs, are responsible for the daily teaching of the intern, and are required to meet with them for at least one hour of weekly individual supervision (or as required by each school). The preceptor works collaboratively with the coordinator of graduate student training in reviewing and evaluating the educational objectives and progress and reviews social work goals and the progress in achieving them monthly. In addition, the supervisor reviews and signs off on student documentation.

**Application process**

Prospective candidates should speak with their school’s field education faculty for eligibility requirements.

Complete the [Declaration for Federal Employment and the application for health professions trainees](https://www.va.gov/oaa/hpt-eligibility.asp), along with the internship application (below), and submit them with your resume to Erika.Reitz@va.gov by **Jan. 27,2022**.

Students should be prepared to provide two professional references and must be U.S. citizens by the start of field placement.

**Once accepted students must be willing to:**

* Complete a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) and fingerprint background check
* Provide a Tuberculin (TB/PPD) skin test within three months of start date
* Provide flu and COVID-19 vaccination documentation or medical/religious exemption
* Complete an on-line introduction and privacy training for trainees prior to the start of placement

