

# 2023

INFORMATION  
PACKET



# PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP

## Erie VA Medical Center

*The internship program at the Erie VAMC emphasizes fostering effective clinical practice that is built upon the critical application of theoretical and empirical literature. We train interns to implement and promote established, efficacious treatment and encourage the use of theoretical and empirical literature to enhance their professional skills over time.*

*This document may contain links to sites external to Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA).  
The DVA does not endorse and is not responsible for the content of the external linked websites.*

# Table of Contents

Erie VA Medical Center	1
Psychology Internship Program Erie VA Medical Center	3
Introduction	3
Accreditation Status	3
Application & Selection Procedures	4
Other Selection Considerations	6
Diversity & Inclusivity	6
Application Information:	6
Selection & Interviews	6
Psychology Setting	7
Program Aim and Philosophy	8
Training Experiences	10
Rotation Settings	10
Seminars	12
Training Structure	13
Administrative Policies and Procedures	14
Training Staff	16
Living in Erie, PA	17
Relevant Websites	18
COVID-19 Impact	19
Internship Admissions, Support, & Initial Placement Data	20
Additional Information Regarding Eligibility Requirements	23

# Psychology Internship Program

## Erie VA Medical Center

135 East 38th Street Boulevard  
Erie, PA 16504  
814-860-2038 | 800-274-8387  
[www.erie.va.gov](http://www.erie.va.gov)

**MATCH Number:** 246611  
**Applications Due:** December 1, 2023

## Introduction

The Health Service Psychology Internship Program at the Erie VA Medical Center (VAMC) will prepare interns for professional practice in a medical center or health services setting that serves adults. Alumni will be prepared for employment or post-doctoral fellowships within Veterans Affairs, other medical centers, or the military, as well as in academic positions or independent practice. VA training staff will be guided by the VA mission to serve and honor America's Veterans, a mission and value that interns will increasingly grow to appreciate throughout their internship training.

The Internship Program at the Erie VAMC strives to offer a valuable and rewarding training experience in an atmosphere respectful of individual and cultural differences. As such, the EVAMC Psychology Internship Training Committee is represented on the Erie VAMC's Diversity & Inclusion Committee, and together work to:

- Grow a diverse, high-performing workforce that reflects all segments of our society and values all aspects of our human diversity.
- Cultivate an inclusive work environment and create an engaged workforce that feels empowered and safe in expressing ideas aimed at promoting diversity, inclusion, and equity.
- Create and grow both informal and formal leadership opportunities and embolden leadership to promote and invest in the personal and professional growth of the workforce.
- Create partnerships within the communities we serve through collaboration and engagement in multiple civic social, public, academic, and government entities.

## Accreditation Status

The Erie VAMC's Psychology Internship Program is **accredited** by the American Psychological Association's Commission on Accreditation (CoA) with an initial date of accreditation of April 7, 2019. The program is due for its next site visit in 2025. The psychology internship program has been a member of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Centers (APPIC) since December 2018.

*\*Questions related to the program's accredited status should be directed to the Commission on Accreditation:*

## **Office of Program Consultation and Accreditation**

American Psychological Association  
750 1st Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002

**Phone:** (202) 336-5979

**E-mail:** [apaaccred@apa.org](mailto:apaaccred@apa.org)

**Web:** [www.apa.org/ed/accreditation](http://www.apa.org/ed/accreditation)

*All other questions about the internship program may be directed to:*

**Kelly Gerhardstein, PsyD**

Training Director

814-860-2318

[Kelly.Gerhardstein@va.gov](mailto:Kelly.Gerhardstein@va.gov)

# **Application & Selection Procedures**

## **Basic Application Criteria**

Applicants must meet the following prerequisites to be considered for our program:

1. Doctoral student in an APA or CPA Accredited Ph.D. or Psy.D. Clinical or Counseling Psychology program.
2. Approval for internship status from the applicant's graduate school program Training Director with successful completion of qualifying exams.
3. Three years of pre-internship graduate training are required and the individual should be admitted to Doctoral Candidacy.
4. U.S. Citizenship. Health Profession Trainees who receive a direct stipend (pay) must be U.S. citizens. Trainees who are not VA paid (without compensation-WOC) who are not U.S. citizens may be appointed and must provide current immigrant, non-immigrant or exchange visitor documents.
5. U.S. Social Security Number. All VA appointees must have a U.S. social security number (SSN) prior to beginning the pre-employment, on-boarding process at the VA.
6. Selective Service Registration. Federal law requires that most males living in the US between the ages of 18 and 26 register with the Selective Service System. Male, for this purpose, is any individual born male on their birth certificate regardless of current gender. Males required to register, but who failed to do so by their 26th birthday, are barred from any position in any Executive Agency. Visit <https://www.sss.gov> to register, print proof of registration or apply for a Status Information Letter.

## **Appointment Criteria**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adheres to all Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies. Psychology interns are considered Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Health Professions Trainee (HPT), who will receive a Federal appointment. Prior to receiving an appointment, HPTs must meet all federal eligibility requirements found here: <https://www.va.gov/files/2022-04/2021HPTInstructionsv4.pdf>

HPTs unable to meet all requirements will not be permitted to train at VA. HPTs will be asked to show documented proof for each eligibility requirement identified below and must maintain eligibility for the duration of the VA appointment.

**1. US Citizenship:** HPTs who anticipate receiving direct VA-pay (direct VA-paid by bank deposit, VA paycheck) must be citizens of the United States (US). Interns in the Erie VA Psychology Internship Program receive direct VA-pay.

**2. US Social Security Number:** All HPTs must have a US social security number (SSN) prior to beginning the VA pre-employment, onboarding process. Do not fingerprint or complete paperwork until an SSN has been issued. HPTs not eligible to apply for an SSN will not be permitted to train at VA.

**3. US Selective Service System Registration:** Federal law requires that most males living in the US between the ages of 18 and 26 register with the Selective Service System (SSS). Male, for this purpose, is any individual born male on their birth certificate regardless of current gender. Males required to register, but who fail to do so by their 26th birthday, may be ineligible for VA appointment. Visit <https://www.sss.gov> to register, print proof of registration or obtain a Status Information Letter.

**4. Proof of Identity:** Onboarding requires two source identification documents (IDs) to prove identity. Documents must be unexpired and names on both documents must match. For more information visit: <https://vaww.oicam.va.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/PIV-Credential-Identity-Verification-Matrix.pdf>. States have begun issuing Secure Driver's Licenses. Be sure yours will be accepted as a Real ID <https://www.dhs.gov/real-id>.

**5. National Practitioner Data Bank (NPDB):** HPTs who are currently licensed, or who previously held a license in the same or a different discipline, must be screened against the NPDB. Visit the site to perform a self-query and confirm you are eligible for VA appointment. <https://www.npdb.hrsa.gov>

**6. List of Excluded Individuals and Entities (LEIE):** The Department of Health and Human Services Office of the Inspector General has compiled a list of individuals excluded from participation in Medicare, Medicaid, and all other Federal healthcare programs. Visit the site to confirm you are NOT on this list <https://exclusions.oig.hhs.gov/>

**7. Health Requirements:** As a condition of appointment, HPTs must: furnish evidence or a self-certification that they are physically and mentally fit to perform the essential functions of the training program have up-to-date vaccinations for healthcare workers as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/adults/rec-vac/hcw.html>; and have undergone baseline tuberculosis (TB) screening and testing per CDC health care personnel guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/tb/topic/testing/healthcareworkers.htm> (for direct VA-paid HPTs, this means within 90-days of Offer and Acceptance.). Required vaccines include: COVID-19, Hepatitis B, Flu (influenza), MMR (Measles, Mumps, & Rubella), Varicella (Chickenpox), Tdap (Tetanus Diphtheria, Pertussis), and Meningococcal. Approvals for declinations are EXTREMELY rare.

**8. Fingerprint Screening and Background Investigation.** HPTs will be fingerprinted and undergo screenings and background investigations. A VA Human Resources Security Specialist will determine suitability. Additional details can be found here: <http://www.archives.gov/federal-register/codification/executive-order/10450.html>.

9. VA Onboarding Forms: Additional pre-employment forms include the:

- [Application for Health Professions Trainees \(VA 10-2850D\)](#)
- [Declaration for Federal Employment \(OF 306\)](#)
- [HPT Random Drug Testing Notification and Acknowledgment Memo](#)

Falsifying any answer on any Federal document will result in the inability to appoint or immediate dismissal from the VA

**10. Drug Testing.** Per Executive Order 12564, the VA strives to be a Drug-Free Workplace. HPTs are not drug-tested prior to receiving an appointment; however certain HPTs are subject to random drug testing throughout the entire VA appointment period. HPTs sign an acknowledgement form stating awareness

of this practice (see form in the link above).

**11. Affiliation Agreement.** To ensure shared responsibility between an academic program and the VA there must be a current and fully executed Academic Affiliation Agreement on file with the VHA Office of Academic

## Other Selection Considerations

Although not required, applicants who have a strong interest or background in rural mental health or in working with Veteran populations will be a particularly good fit for this internship program. The Erie VAMC is well-suited to provide broad generalist training to interns interested in contributing to the expansion of mental health services in rural areas, which are often underserved and under-resourced. Interns will have the opportunity to work creatively with a relatively small staff to meet the varied and critical needs of a Veteran population who often suffer with complex medical and mental health conditions amid a myriad of psychosocial stressors. Common mental health diagnoses among the Veterans served in the Erie VAMC include PTSD and substance use disorders. The Erie VAMC also serves a large geriatric population via treatment by interdisciplinary healthcare teams. Despite the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth remains a substantial portion of the available service delivery experiences.

## Diversity & Inclusivity

Erie VAMC encourages all qualified candidates from diverse backgrounds to apply. Applications from people of historically underrepresented groups are strongly encouraged. Our goal is to maximize our reach to potential applicants interested in culturally responsive, evidence-based care. Furthermore, our program appreciates the benefits of recruiting trainees and staff who represent diverse groups in a variety of domains. We are committed to non-discrimination in employment of our staff on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, membership in an employee organization, parental status, military service, or other non-merit factor.

The selection of psychology interns must be consistent with the equal opportunity and non-discrimination policies of Erie VAMC as well as the guidelines and policies of APPIC and APA's CoA.

## Application Information:

- The deadline for filing applications and required documentation is **December 1**
- The Erie VAMC Psychology Internship is an APPIC Member participant in the APPIC Matching Program (2466) and utilizes the "APPIC APPLICATION FOR PSYCHOLOGY INTERNSHIP." This form should be completed online through the APPIC website: <http://www.appic.org/>

**Apply to the program by including all the following information in the online APPIC application:**

- Completed APPIC online application - APPI; which can be accessed via the APPIC Web Site: <http://www.appic.org/>
- Cover letter included with APPI
- Three (3) letters of recommendation
- Graduate school transcript(s)

## Selection & Interviews

Erie VA Medical Center is offering two internship slots for the 2024-2025 internship class. Applications for the Psychology Internship Program at Erie VAMC will be reviewed for completeness and goodness of



fit. The internship training faculty will review applications and invitations for interviews will be extended to qualified applicants. The program seeks intern applicants whose training goals match sufficiently the training that is offered in our geographically rural and Veteran-focused training site. Previous VA experience is a plus, although not necessary. We are seeking candidates who have strong academic backgrounds and are skilled in diagnostic assessment and interventions. Selection of candidates for our psychology internship program will come from different kinds of programs and theoretical orientations, geographic areas, ages, ethnic backgrounds, and life experiences.

Interviews: In an effort to reduce barriers in accessing our program and encourage diversity in applicants, the Erie VAMC offers tele-video interviews to qualified applicants. An interview is required of all applicants who make the final selection round.

**Note:** After receipt of the initial application package all communication will be accomplished via the e-mail address provided on the APPIC application unless otherwise specified.

## Psychology Setting

The Erie VAMC was established in 1951 as WWII was ending, and the country's commitment to serve war Veterans strengthened. Erie VAMC is now recognized as a top-performing medical center in the delivery of high-quality health care to Veterans living in 8 counties in the tri-state area of northwestern Pennsylvania, northeastern Ohio, and western New York. Erie VAMC earned a 5-star rating as one of VA's Highest Performing Hospitals in Healthcare Quality based on the VA Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning (SAIL) Model. The facility's Behavioral Health Clinic (BHC), ranked #1 in the Nation in 2016 and 2017 based on these analyses, has regularly been in the top 10 in overall mental health care performance, typically ranking #1 in the "experience of care" metric since the inception of the model in 2012. Indeed, the Behavioral Health service line is a close-knit department that aims to foster a warm, welcoming environment, valuing cultural and individual differences. The staff appreciate living a well-balanced life that effectively integrates friends, family, community and work. The small size of the facility allows for collegial and supportive interprofessional collaboration that promotes high-quality Veteran care and enhances job satisfaction.

The Behavioral Health program consists of specialized interprofessional and interdisciplinary outpatient and residential treatment for Veterans with care needs related to a variety of mental health and psychosocial stressors, including, but not limited to, PTSD, substance use disorders, Military Sexual Trauma (MST), homelessness, and chronic pain. Intensive recovery-oriented group therapy and psychoeducation is offered in the clinic's Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC). Behavioral Health services are also integrated into various programs hospital-wide, including Primary Care, Pain Clinic, Community Living Center/ Short-Term Rehab, and Home-Based Primary Care, where behavioral health providers work as part of the Veteran's interprofessional care team. To provide services to the largely rural population, tele-mental health services are available. In addition, the Behavioral Health service employs providers in the Rural Access Network for Growth Enhancement (RANGE) program and offers Behavioral Health Lab services for Veterans with less intense care needs.

The Psychology Internship program at the Erie VAMC is located within the Behavioral Health service. Training opportunities take place in the main hospital, and adjacent buildings dedicated to behavioral health services and the community living center. Psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, nurse practitioners, nurses, peer support specialists, vocational rehabilitation specialists, physician assistants, and master's level mental health professionals work alongside each other in meetings, leading groups, collaborating on the care of individual patients, and in developing treatment offerings. In the behavioral health service line, interns work next to and collaborate with other mental health disciplines on a daily basis. As a result, interns regularly consult with other staff and participate in interprofessional teams as a routine part of professional practice.

# Program Aim and Philosophy

The primary objective of the training program is to provide broad, general doctoral internship training aimed at developing intermediate to advanced competencies in Professional Psychology, to prepare psychology interns for post-doctoral or entry-level Health Service Psychologist (HSP) positions. Training will build upon the intern's competencies in all areas with science, ethics and diversity at the core. Generalist skills and competencies will be developed via didactic and supervised experiential training in varied areas of clinical emphasis (i.e., rotations), involving assessment, therapy, and consultation. The training team will work in cooperation with interns to devise a training schedule that builds on the interns' knowledge and experiences, to strengthen areas of growth, and further develop areas of interest. Supervision will be guided by the interns' needs using a developmental model, such that opportunities for increasingly independent practice will be offered as competency is established. Interns will begin the internship with a clear understanding of the expectations for the training year, with more detailed, rotation-specific guidance offered prior to the start of each rotation by their individual supervisors.

The internship program emphasizes fostering effective clinical practice that is built upon the critical application of theoretical and empirical literature. Interns are trained to implement and promote established, efficacious treatment and encourage the use of theoretical and empirical literature to enhance their professional skills over time. In addition, the program promotes the notion that knowledge, skill development, self-reflection, and interdisciplinary collaboration are integral to improving the treatment process.

The training program emphasizes the psychosocial model of recovery and the empowerment of Veterans to recover from mental health difficulties. When indicated, the use of empirically supported therapies is emphasized. These include, but are not limited to Cognitive Processing Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Depression, CBT for Insomnia, and Interpersonal Therapy for Depression.

The program incorporates experiential and didactic training to develop the following profession-wide competencies:

1. Research – Interns will be able to integrate current research and literature into their clinical practice and demonstrate critical thinking skills when presenting and discussing relevant research.
2. Ethical and legal standards - Interns will demonstrate knowledge of ethical and legal principles including the APA Ethical Principles and Code of Conduct. They will demonstrate an awareness of ethical dilemmas as they arise and apply ethical principles in decision making processes.
3. Individual and cultural diversity – Interns will demonstrate an awareness of their own personal/cultural background that may affect their case conceptualizations and subsequent treatment planning. They will show an understanding of current theoretical and empirical knowledge related to individual and cultural diversity, and independently apply this knowledge in working effectively with a range of diverse individuals, groups, and communities.
4. Professional values, attitudes, and behaviors - Interns will conduct themselves across settings and contexts in a professional manner with staff and patients, consistent with the values and attitudes of psychology. They will show openness and responsiveness to feedback from supervision. They will demonstrate the ability to manage work load and administrative tasks, as well as complete timely documentation. Interns will demonstrate professional judgment and responsibility with increasing independence and autonomy commensurate with increasing competency development throughout the training year.
5. Communication and interpersonal skills – Interns will communicate effectively verbally, nonverbally, and in writing. They will communicate psychological information to other professionals as well as patients and their families in a manner that is organized, concise, and understandable.
6. Assessment - Interns will be able to assess patients with a broad range of problems using a variety of psychological assessment instruments. They will gain proficiency in selecting assessment



measurements, conducting clinical interviews, and integrating information from multiple sources to formulate accurate DSM diagnoses and develop clear case conceptualization that lead to appropriate treatment plans and recommendations tailored to answer referral questions.

7. Intervention - Interns will be able to establish and maintain therapeutic rapport in the context of individual or group psychotherapy. They will demonstrate the ability to collaborate with patients and interdisciplinary teams in developing appropriate treatment plans and therapeutic goals addressing the patient's presenting problem(s). Interns will utilize evidence-based psychotherapies as appropriate and demonstrate an awareness of process/relationship issues occurring within the therapeutic relationship. Interns will be able to identify and manage crisis needs and/or unexpected or complex situations. They also should be able to effectively coordinate their interventions with other members of the inter-professional and interdisciplinary teams involved with the patient's care.
8. Supervision - Interns will develop knowledge of supervision models and apply this knowledge in direct or simulated practice. Interns will provide effective supervised supervision to trainees (when available) or peers in typical cases appropriate to the service setting.
9. Consultation and inter-professional/interdisciplinary skills – Interns will demonstrate knowledge and respect for the roles of other professions. They will apply knowledge of consultation models and practices to contribute to team planning within interdisciplinary teams and gather appropriate data in order to answer the consultation need. Interns will show an awareness to consult with psychologists and professionals from other disciplines in the care of their patients.

Successful completion of the internship training program requires that interns demonstrate developmentally appropriate competency in all nine profession-wide competency areas through the completion of the training activities and experiences outlined below.

The program will also adhere to the five training requirements described below.

**Consistency with the professional value of individual and cultural diversity:** Training and attention to diversity will be incorporated into each of the profession-wide competencies. Interns will have the opportunity to provide clinical services to a diverse patient population in a variety of settings and in collaboration with professionals from various disciplines. Supervision will include discussions about the role diversity plays in guiding the dynamic work of a Health Service Psychologist.

**Consistency with the existing and evolving body of general knowledge and methods in the science and practice of psychology:** Experiential and didactic training will be grounded in existing empirical literature and in a scientific orientation toward psychological knowledge and methods. The program will stress critical review and conscience consumption of traditional empirical literature, as well as information found in the popular press. Empirically-based treatment will be emphasized on all clinical rotations and will be highlighted in didactic training.

**Level-appropriate training:** The program will offer broad and general preparation in all 9 profession-wide competencies that is concomitant with entry-level independent practice and licensure.

**Level-appropriate expectations:** Interns will be expected to demonstrate each profession-wide competency with increasing levels of independence and complexity as they progress through the program. Upon completion of the program they will be expected to demonstrate knowledge, skill, and competence on par with entry-level independent practice and licensure.

**Evaluation of trainee competence.** Interns will be evaluated in each of the 9 profession-wide competencies over the course of the program and during each rotation. The expectations will be made clear at the start of the program, and the evaluation criteria will be referenced frequently and routinely so that interns have the opportunity to address areas of growth.

# Training Experiences

Interns matching with the EVAMC Psychology Internship Program will be assigned to the Erie VA Medical Center. The internship is a 12-month full-time program. Training experiences include both didactic instruction and experiential training, which is offered through clinical work in the 6 rotations outlined below. Each rotation is built around services already being offered by licensed staff at the facility, and is supervised by a licensed psychologist who is providing evidence-based mental and behavioral health care practices at the facility. The aim is to structure each intern's training year in such a way that they have the opportunity to provide long-term therapy, conduct comprehensive full-battery assessments, and fully implement an empirically based treatment. Training experiences are offered in both outpatient and residential mental health settings, as well as on acute medical and nursing home units.

Please note that rotation offerings may change from year to year, as a result of staffing changes. Due to being a program based in a largely rural area, there is often only one psychologist in each setting. As such, if there are staffing changes, this may impact rotation offerings. Consequently, the program prides itself on achieving the program aim and intern competencies through the combination of varied clinical experiences and rotations. We advise interns to view their own growth in this broad way, as opposed to being attached to one particular rotation offering to meet their training needs. The following is a list of rotations that have been offered.

## Rotation Settings

All rotations are available on the main campus of Erie VAMC in Erie, PA.

### Behavioral Health Clinic

**Supervisor:** Teri Connelly, PhD & Adam Ripley, PhD

The Behavioral Health Clinic (BHC) provides outpatient clinical training in the provision of a broad range of psychological services to Veterans experiencing a wide range of presenting concerns. The rotation is intended to provide interns with generalist training, as well as the opportunity to follow therapy patients on a more long-term basis. Additionally, interns may conduct comprehensive assessments and provide telemental health services with increasing independence, commensurate with their acquired knowledge and skill. A major or minor rotation in BHC would offer clinical training in a variety of traditional psychotherapy, as well as evidence based individual and group treatment that may also include collaboration with the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center and the Homeless Care and Suicide Prevention Teams, and exposure to the process of completing Compensation and Pension (Disability) Examinations.

### Geropsychology – Community Living Center (CLC)

**Supervisor:** Heidi Maxwell, PsyD

Interns on this rotation will be assigned to the Community Living Center (CLC), which is comprised of multiple admission specialties that include various lengths of stay. Veterans are admitted to the CLC for long-term care, hospice care, rehabilitation services, respite care, short-stay medical management, and acute medical services. On this rotation, interns will gain an understanding of the psychological issues common to this group and learn assessment and treatment strategies that specifically address the needs of the geriatric population. A biopsychosocial approach to treatment is emphasized, wherein the interrelationships

between physical and emotional problems are acknowledged and an interdisciplinary team is utilized to provide a more holistic and individualized plan of care. Interns will perform assessments, provide individual psychotherapy, provide group reminiscence/cognitive rehabilitation, develop behavior management plans, provide staff education, and participate in interdisciplinary treatment team meetings for individuals with a wide range of medical and psychological problems. Inpatient and outpatient evaluations regarding cognition as well as decision-making capacity are conducted as requested by medical staff. Interns will have the opportunity to co-lead reminiscence groups with therapeutic recreation staff on the units as well as outpatient dementia education groups with social work. Interns will have the opportunity to attend multiple interdisciplinary committee meetings including disruptive behavior, dementia, falls, preventative ethics, cultural transformation, and medical ethics. As available and if interested, interns on the CLC rotation may be able to participate in geriatric evaluation and management (GEM) and provide brief cognitive assessment in a memory clinic.

## **Home-Based Primary Care/Tailored Care**

**Supervisor:** Anne Schwabenbauer, PsyD & Faughn Adams, PhD

The Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC) offers a blend of health and geriatric psychology. Interns participating in this rotation will have the opportunity to become familiar with the psychologist's role on an interdisciplinary primary care team that provides home-based services to chronically, medically ill Veterans. The HBPC team is comprised of two psychologists, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, social workers, dietitians, a pharmacist, an occupational therapist, and a physical therapist who meet weekly to discuss cases and coordinate care. The psychologist provides mental health consultation, individual therapy, diagnostic assessment, and caregiver support/education, as well as brief cognitive evaluations and financial, healthcare, and independent living capacity evaluations. Interns may also have the opportunity to work with Veterans facing challenges related to the cultural, spiritual, and existential concerns associated with the end-of-life. Interns will co-share their caseload with providers from the other disciplines and receive supplemental cross-supervision from these disciplines when appropriate.

## **Trauma Recovery Program (PTSD Clinical Team)**

**Supervisor:** Teri Connelly, PhD & Adam Ripley, PhD

The Trauma Recovery Program at the Erie VAMC provides evaluation and treatment to Veterans presenting with a history of both military and non-military trauma. The PTSD Clinical Team (PCT) is an interdisciplinary team comprised of psychologists, licensed professional counselors, and licensed clinical social workers who provide therapeutic services to individuals diagnosed with PTSD. Interns participating on this rotation will have the opportunity to conduct evidence-based assessments and triage Veterans to an appropriate level of care. Interns will be expected to carry an individual caseload and may be involved in facilitating groups depending on availability. Based on their goals and interests, interns will also have the opportunity to receive training in evidenced based assessments and treatments for PTSD, including the Clinician-Administered PTSD Scale for DSM-5 (CAPS-5), Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE), Written Exposure Therapy, and Skills Training in Affect and Interpersonal Regulation (STAIR). The PCT team meets weekly to discuss challenging cases, coordinate care, and engage in process improvement projects. The intern is welcomed as an active member of this team and will have various opportunities to broaden understanding.

## **Substance Use Disorders (SUD) Treatment**

**Supervisor:** Adam Ripley, PhD & Kelly Gerhardstein, PsyD

The Erie VAMC substance use disorder treatment services include detox, medication management, residential treatment, and outpatient individual, and group therapy. On this rotation, interns will learn the

role of the psychologist on the SUD Treatment Team and will have the opportunity to provide services as a member of this team. The SUD Treatment team is an interdisciplinary team comprised of psychologists, psychiatrists, licensed professional counselors, nurses, an addiction counselor, and support staff who provide Veterans with daily addiction groups, including relapse prevention and dual diagnosis groups. An Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) is also offered. Interns completing this rotation may have the opportunity to participate in evidence-based treatment protocols, including, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Substance Use Disorders (CBT-SUD), Motivational Interviewing (MI), and Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET). Interns will also be expected to provide inpatient substance abuse consultation for the Erie VAMC and provide support in the Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program (PR RTP), a residential treatment program that serves Veterans with mental health and substance use disorder diagnoses.

## **Health Behavior**

**Supervisors:** Nathan Doerr, PsyD & Heidi Maxwell, PsyD

The health behavior rotation emphasizes use of the biopsychosocial perspective in the prevention and treatment of health-related conditions. Rotation goals include maximizing the physical and psychological functioning of individuals through health promotion programs, individual goal-oriented treatment, and group psychoeducational programs. The health behavior rotation includes experiences in two main areas: Community Living Center and Specialty Evaluations. Additional experiences in Primary Care Mental Health Integration (PCMHI) are presently limited to program development. Although there is no formal major/minor rotation associated with PCMHI at this time, interns with significant interest in PCMHI experiences can consult with their supervisor about health-behavior groups. Interns' participation in each of the main areas will depend on interests and availability of clinical experiences.

**Community Living Center (CLC):** Interns on the health behavior rotation will have the opportunity to provide therapy and assessment, including capacity assessment, to those on the CLC. Experiences will likely include individual and group supportive therapy for older adults experiencing quality-of-life challenges, major neurocognitive disorder (formerly dementia), and death and dying. Opportunities will be available to collaborate with the interdisciplinary team to develop unique person-centered approaches to care for those with major neurocognitive disorder and emotional distress through STAR-VA and INSIGHT (technology assisted) interventions. Interns will also gain experience utilizing biopsychosocial perspectives and motivational interviewing techniques to support quality of life goals including treatment adherence for weight management, sleep disorders, smoking cessation, and diabetes management in collaboration with the interdisciplinary team. As available and if interested, interns on the CLC rotation may be able to participate in geriatric evaluation and management (GEM) and provide brief cognitive assessment in a memory clinic.

**Specialty Evaluations:** Interns will have the opportunity to conduct cognitive, capacity, transplant and bariatric evaluations. These evaluations require that the intern incorporate information about the Veteran from several disciplines and consult frequently.

## **Assessment**

**Supervisor:** Nathan Doerr, PsyD, Anne Schwabenbauer PsyD & Heidi Maxwell, PsyD

The assessment rotation provides opportunities to conduct a range of assessments in three primary settings: Community Living Center (CLC), Home Based Primary Care (HBPC), and within a Specialty Evaluations clinic. Work on the CLC allows interns to participate in geriatric evaluation and management (GEM) and provide brief cognitive assessment in a memory clinic. Assessments in HBPC include brief cognitive evaluations and financial, healthcare, and independent living capacity evaluations. The specialty evaluations clinic involves cognitive, capacity, transplant and bariatric evaluations, as well as exposure to compensation and pension (i.e., disability) evaluations. Interns' participation in each of the main areas will depend on interests and availability of clinical experiences.

# Didactic Instruction

In addition to the clinical rotations, interns are required to participate in two hours of didactic training each week. Didactic training is comprised of two weekly meetings. The “Lunch & Learn” didactic seminar and “Groundwork for Growth” series occur weekly, as follows:

**“Lunch & Learn” Didactic Seminars:** This meeting consists of a rotating schedule of seminar topics, that generally cover four broad areas: intervention, assessment, diversity & ethics, and professional development. Interns are asked to conduct at least one presentation during the training year.

**“Groundwork for Growth (GfG)” series:** This training series aims to provide interns the opportunity to learn, demonstrate, and practice skills associated with professional tasks that improve the capacity for lifelong professional development, and consists of four experiential training activities:

**Journal Club:** Interns work to develop their research competence by taking turns presenting and facilitating discussion of a peer reviewed journal article.

**Supervision:** Interns receive didactic instruction and participate in simulated practice associated with the provision of supervision.

**Case Presentations:** Each intern will present at least one therapy case and one assessment case.

**Catching Up With Culture:** Aims to address culturally relevant content available in the contemporary media or through experiential exercises as a means of fostering practical discussion of the intersectionality of culture while promoting empathy, self-reflection, and lifelong learning as the basic building blocks of cultural competence.

## Training Structure

The actual structure of the training year will be determined based on the interns’ training goals/needs and the resources available in the program. Following a traditional structure, interns will typically complete two 6-month major rotations and one 12-month minor rotation. Interns generally spend 3 days a week in their major rotation and 1 day a week working in their minor rotation. The fifth day each week is reserved for didactic training seminars, group supervision, and professional development. Modifications to the proposed program structure will be considered, when possible, in order to maximize exposure to desired training experiences or accommodate a trainee’s training needs. Interns will be encouraged to select rotations that best represent their training needs, career focus, or interests. An example of how a week may be structured can be found below.

**Monday:** Major Rotation Day

**Tuesday:** Training Day (group supervision, didactic seminar, journal club, team meeting)

**Wednesday:** Minor Rotation Day

**Thursday:** Major Rotation Day

**Friday:** Major Rotation Day

The Training Committee at Erie VAMC understands that the primary focus of the internship year is for training. However, because the training is experiential, there is an expectation that interns will provide direct care to Veterans which on average begin at 10 hours per week at the start of the training year and build up to at least 20 hours of direct face-to-face client care by the end of the year. A minimum requirement of direct contact hours is not formally identified as each rotation will have a different degree of client contact varying

based on the design of the rotation and the training needs of the intern. Although it is understood that it may take some time to build up a case load, toward the end of the training year, interns are expected to be proficient in organizing and managing their schedule to meet or exceed these requirements. In addition, approximately 20-25% of time will be spent in clinical supervision, didactic training, and professional development activities.

## **Supervision**

The supervision arrangement described in this section is designed to assure a minimum of four hours of structured supervision weekly to interns.

### **One-to-One Supervision**

Each intern will receive a minimum of **two hours** of required, direct, individual supervision with a licensed psychologist per week. Typically an hour of individual supervision is scheduled with the supervisors of both the major and minor rotations. Activities such as case discussion, supervisory observation, critique of assessment or consultation/psychological report writing, discussion of professional/ethical issues, and progress in clinical skill development satisfy the two-hour individual supervision requirement. Interns' supervisors will monitor their work through several methods, including case discussions, review of clinical documentation, live observation, and co-therapy. At the beginning of each supervisory relationship, interns and supervisors will discuss goals, training activities, and expectations for the supervisory experience. Interns and supervisors will also discuss the process by which emergency supervision can be obtained when needed. Supervisors provide regular informal feedback regarding training progress and a formal written evaluation at mid-rotation and at the end of the rotation.

### **Additional Required Supervision**

In addition to the two hours of weekly required individual supervision described above, each intern must receive a minimum of **two hours** of supervision per week with a licensed psychologist or qualified mental health professional present in any combination of learning activities such as individual or group co-therapy, group therapy debriefing, individual supervision, group supervision, or case conferences or discussions involving cases in which the intern is actively involved. Supplemental required supervision is not satisfied by intern attendance at didactic seminars, workshops, presentations, etc. Informal supervision is available as needed by the intern. Discussion sessions and coffee break discussions are readily available with most staff members.

At no time will the interns bear sole responsibility for the maintenance of interprofessional relationships or patient care. The proposed program is built into currently provided clinical services at the EVAMC, and each rotation is maintained even when an intern is not present, allowing the program to preserve its emphasis on training. Supervisors of every rotation will carry a panel of their own patients and will continue to serve as part of their assigned interprofessional team, modeling the role of an independently practicing psychologist. A psychologist supervisor will be available to address interns' questions or concerns at all times during regularly scheduled business hours and while interns are providing clinical care.

## **Administrative Policies and Procedures**

Health Professions Trainees (HPTs) are appointed as temporary employees of the Department of Veterans Affairs. As such, HPTs are subject to laws, policies, and guidelines posted for VA staff members. There are infrequent times in which this guidance can change during a training year which may create new requirements or responsibilities for HPTs. If employment requirements change during the course of a training year, HPTs will be notified of the change and impact as soon as possible and options provided. The VA Training Director for your profession will provide you with the information you need to understand the



requirement and reasons for the requirement in timely manner.

## Hours

The Internship year will begin August 11, 2024 and end August 9, 2025. Selected interns will report to duty on August 12, 2024. Internship appointments are for 2080 hours, which is full-time (40 hours per week) for a one-year period. Some interns may elect to work more than 40 hours; however, if the intern's supervisor is not on site, the intern may not engage in any clinical activities. The intern may, instead, write reports, do professional readings, and/or work on their dissertations while at the medical center. Unfortunately, because of VA policy, interns may not earn compensatory time or overtime for working more than 40 hours in a given work week.

## Stipend

For the 2023-2024 internship year, interns will receive a stipend of \$33,469, paid in 26 biweekly installments. Federal income tax and FICA (Social Security) are withheld from interns' checks.

## Benefits

VA interns are eligible to enroll in a Federal Employee Health Benefits (FEHB) plan, and will receive the same government contribution as full-time permanent employees. Health benefits are also available to legally married same sex partners. However, unmarried partners of either sex are not eligible for health benefits. Interns are NOT eligible for the Federal Dental and Vision Program (FEDVIP).

## Holidays and Leave

Interns receive the 11 annual federal holidays (listed below). In addition, interns accrue four (4) hours of sick leave and four (4) hours of annual leave for each full two week pay period as an intern, for a total of between 96 and 104 hours of each during the year.

- Labor Day First Monday in September
- Columbus Day Second Monday in October
- Veterans Day November 11
- Thanksgiving Fourth Thursday in November
- Christmas Day December 25
- New Year's Day January 1
- Martin Luther King Day Third Monday in January
- Presidents' Day Third Monday in February
- Memorial Day Last Monday in May
- Juneteenth June 19
- Independence Day July 4

**Authorized Absence:** Interns are also allotted up to 5 days per year for administrative absence, available for use for professional development needs such as conference participation, post-doc interviews, dissertation defense, etc. Please note that interns may be required to end the year with a leave balance to ensure that they accrue the hours required for the internship program, their graduate program, and/or the state licensing board to which they plan to apply.

## Liability Protection for Trainees

When providing professional services at a VA healthcare facility, VA sponsored trainees acting within the

scope of their educational programs are protected from personal liability under the Federal Employees Liability Reform and Tort Compensation Act 28, U.S.C.2679 (b)-(d).

## Due Process

All Interns are afforded the right to due process in matters of problem behavior and grievances. A training manual detailing all due process, grievance, and remediation policies is distributed to and reviewed with all interns during their first week of orientation. Human Resources (HR) policies and procedures may apply in different circumstances.

## Privacy policy

We collect no personal information from potential applicants who visit our website.

## Self-Disclosure

Consistent with the Ethical Code of the American Psychological Association, psychology trainees in the Erie VAMC Internship Program are not required to self-disclose sensitive topics (e.g., sexual history, history of abuse and neglect, psychological treatment or conditions, or relationships with parents/family members, peers, and spouses or significant others) during application to the program or during the course of training. The only exception is in situations in which a trainee's personal problems or condition could reasonably be judged to put patient care, the trainee, or clinical and educational operations at risk. This policy is designed to balance the importance of trust and personal privacy in the supervisory relationship with the supervisor's responsibility for care of the patient and for the safety of all staff members and trainees. In cases when self-disclosure of personal information is necessary, the required disclosure is limited to circumscribed information related to managing the specific clinical, safety, or patient care concern. It should also be noted that disclosure might be included as an optional exercise in a learning experience.

## Training Staff

**Faughn Adams, PsyD** is a clinical psychologist with the Home-Based Primary Care (HBPC) Program. Areas of professional interest include human sexuality and existential psychology. In 2022, Dr. Adams was nominated for and completed VA's Geriatric Scholar Program. Dr. Adams has served as committee member and teaching faculty of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health Global Education Initiative and as board member of the Georgia Psychological Association. Dr. Adams transferred from HBPC at the Atlanta VA to Erie in October of 2022 and managed not to turn into a human Popsicle. So far.

**Teri Madura Connelly, PhD** is a Staff Psychologist at the Erie VAMC. She earned a PhD from the University of Akron and completed a Post-Doctoral Fellowship in PTSD at the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System VA, Nashville, TN. She has substantial work experience in the treatment of PTSD, suicide prevention, and mindfulness-based care. She has worked for VHA for 8 years. Dr. Connelly has been extensively trained and certified in the delivery of Evidenced-Based Practices for PTSD, including Prolonged Exposure, Cognitive Processing Therapy and Skills Training in Affective and Interpersonal Regulation. She is also a national consultant for Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for Depression. She currently functions as the PTSD Lead Clinician at the Erie VAMC and heads our local PTSD clinical team.

**Nathan Doerr, PsyD** is a psychologist that supervises Specialty Evaluations. He earned his doctorate in Clinical Psychology from Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky. Dr. Doerr completed his predoctoral internship at the Western New York VA Healthcare System in Buffalo, New York, a postdoctoral residency in Geropsychology at the Louis Stokes Cleveland Department of Veterans Affairs, and subsequently joined the Erie VA in 2009. His current clinical duties include conducting presurgical evaluations, dementia education

consultations, and Compensation and Pension examinations.

**Kelly R. Gerhardstein, PsyD** is the Training Director for the EVAMC Psychology Internship Program and the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Treatment Program (PR RTP) Manager. Dr. Gerhardstein is a graduate of Indiana State University. She completed her internship and postdoctoral training at Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center. Dr. Gerhardstein has worked with VHA since 2012, and spent the first several years of VA service primarily as a Home Based Primary Care Psychologist. She has additional VHA experience in PCMH, consult-liaison services, and Behavioral Health Compensation and Pension evaluations. She is a certified interventionist in empirically based treatments, including Problem-Solving Training in Home-Based Primary Care (PST-HBPC) and Resources for Enhancing all Caregiver's Health in VA (REACH VA). Dr. Gerhardstein also served as a psychologist in the US Army Reserves.

**Heidi Maxwell, PsyD** is a geropsychologist located in the community living center (CLC), which provides inpatient treatment for patients admitted for short-term rehabilitation, short-stay respite, long-term, and hospice care. Dr. Maxwell earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology with a concentration in neuropsychology in 2018 from John F. Kennedy University in Pleasant Hill, California and completed a predoctoral internship with emphasis in geropsychology at the Sheridan VA Healthcare System in Sheridan, Wyoming. She also completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Geropsychology at the Salem VA Medical Center in Salem, Virginia. Dr. Maxwell has been working at the Erie VA since February of 2022 after relocating from Cheyenne, Wyoming. Dr. Maxwell provides consultation to the community living center (CLC) and outpatient providers to improve successful aging experiences. She also completes assessment of capacity as requested for those receiving CLC and outpatient care on a case-by-case basis. Dr. Maxwell is VA-trained in REACH-VA for Caregivers, Problem Solving Therapy for Home-Based Primary Care (PST-HBPC), and Cognitive Processing Therapy for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPT-PTSD).

**Adam Ripley, PhD** is the PTSD/SUD Psychologist at the Erie VAMC. He earned his doctorate in clinical psychology at the University of Wyoming, although only mention this if you want to hear all about how underrated Wyoming is as a state. He completed his internship at the VAMC in Lexington, Kentucky, moving on to a postdoctoral fellowship at Summa Health System in Akron, Ohio. He joined the Erie VA in 2022. Dr. Ripley is trained in a number of EBP interventions, including Cognitive Processing Therapy, Prolonged Exposure, Motivational Interviewing/Motivational Enhancement, and Exposure and Response Prevention. He has developed a growing interest in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy and other mindfulness- and acceptance-based interventions.

**Debra Semanscin-Doerr, PsyD** is the Lead SUD Psychologist at the Erie VAMC. She earned her Bachelor's degree in psychology from the State University of New York at Buffalo. Dr. Semanscin-Doerr earned her masters and doctoral degrees in clinical psychology from Spalding University in Louisville, KY. She completed her pre-doctoral internship at the Western New York VA Healthcare System and her postdoctoral fellowship at the Cleveland Clinic, specializing in health psychology. She has worked for the VA for 11 years. She is the Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP) Manager for treatment of substance use disorders. She is certified in Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Substance Use Disorders (CBT-SUD) and has been trained in, and implements, Contingency Management (CM). Dr. Semanscin-Doerr will offer didactic presentations and shadowing opportunities in substance use disorder treatment.

**Anne Schwabenbauer, PsyD** is a psychologist in the Home-Based Primary Care program. She earned her doctorate in Clinical Psychology from William James College in Boston, Massachusetts. She completed her doctoral internship in Health Psychology at the Central Arkansas VA and a postdoctoral residency in Geropsychology at the Puget Sound VA, American Lake Division. Dr. Schwabenbauer joined the Erie VA in 2018 from VA Boston, where she was also practicing as a Home-Based Primary Care Psychologist. She is certified in REACH VA, an educational and supportive program for caregivers. Her clinical interests include psychotherapy with older adults, provision of integrated mental health services with the goal of improving overall quality of life and health outcomes in elderly, functionally disabled, and chronically ill populations,

dementia care, and capacity evaluation.

## Living in Erie, PA

Erie is one of the largest cities in Pennsylvania, and the Commonwealth's only Great Lakes Port. On the southeast shore of Lake Erie, with a population of 99,475, Erie is located between Cleveland, OH and Buffalo, NY (about 100 miles from each) with Pittsburgh, PA about 130 miles to the south. Despite its relative size and proximity to larger metropolitan areas, the counties surrounding Erie are considered rural. The city boasts affordable housing and short commutes (average of 16 minutes).

The lake is a popular destination for fishing and boating, and Presque Isle State Park, Pennsylvania's largest state park, offers water recreation, trails for biking, rollerblading, and hiking, as well as excellent beaches. Nearby, Waldameer Park & Water World has roller coasters and waterslides. During the cold winter months, Presque Isle advertises several outdoor activities, including cross country skiing, ice fishing, wind skating, ice boating, and ice skating. Splash Lagoon, an indoor waterpark, is also a popular attraction during the winter months. The Erie Zoo offers season passes, and regularly hosts special events. Erie also has several minor league sports teams. The AA baseball team, the Erie Seawolves and the Champion Ontario Hockey League Team, the Otters, both call downtown home.

The area's 80+ inches of annual snow is the most in the state and rivals most cities in the country. The cool lake breezes, which may reach several miles inland, temper summer heat waves, and days with temperatures above 90 degrees are infrequent, making for gorgeous summers. Erie's autumn days are characterized by long dry periods and abundant sunshine.

Consistent with its history in heavy industry, Erie's manufacturing sector remains prominent in the local economy. Indeed 22% of all jobs are still in the manufacturing sector, which is double the national rate. However, with five colleges and universities located in the region, higher education is emerging as one of the greater economic drivers, along with healthcare and tourism.

Erie is known as the "Flagship City" because of Oliver Hazard Perry's flagship Niagara, one of the remaining ships from the War of 1812, which floats just offshore. Other cultural assets within the city include the Erie Land Light, the historic Warner Theatre, its several Philharmonic orchestras, the Bicentennial Tower and the Blasco Library. In addition, the Erie Maritime Museum, traces the history of Lake Erie, and the Erie Art Museum's art collection features 20th-century works.

## Relevant Websites

- VA Medical Center, Erie, Pennsylvania  
[www.erie.va.gov](http://www.erie.va.gov)
- National Center for PTSD  
<http://www.ptsd.va.gov/>

- Erie, PA  
<http://www.erie.pa.us/>
- Local Attractions and Events:  
<http://www.presqueisle.org/>  
<http://waldameer.com/>  
<http://www.splashlagoon.com/>
- Local News  
<http://www.yourerie.com/news>  
<http://www.goerie.com/news>

# Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Erie VA Medical Center suspended many face-to-face services and increasingly relied on various technologies to allow for continued training and the safe delivery of healthcare services. As the tools to mitigate the risks associated with COVID-19 have expanded so too has the delivery of face-to-face services; however, the reliance on technology to allow telework and to deliver care and supervision have continued to exceed pre-pandemic levels. The extent to which these options are available within the Erie VA Psychology Internship Program will be contingent on the status of the infection control efforts,, as well as the policies, guidance, and requirements of the various stakeholding institutions including, but not limited to governmental bodies, the VA, the local facility, accrediting organizations and licensing boards.

## Telehealth & Telework

The Erie VA behavioral health department is following local and regional guidance regarding the use of telehealth and telework. Incoming interns should expect telehealth to be a major component of training at the Erie VA Medical Center. Some training experiences are more likely to be impacted by the increasing reliance on telehealth. The training program will ensure that interns receive training and an opportunity to demonstrate competence in all 9 profession-wide competencies.

The option for telework may also be afforded to interns when approved by local and departmental leadership, and as deemed appropriate by the training committee. Typically, interns are being allowed to telework in a manner consistent with their supervisor's telework schedules; however, in the post-pandemic era, telework is expected to occur on an occasional basis and in unusual circumstances only, and the need for telework may reviewed on a case-by-case and situational basis. For example, telework may be used in the event of a required quarantine. When providing face-to-face care, interns will be expected to follow all facility rules/guidelines, to include use of personal protective equipment (PPE) and disinfection procedures, as well as COVID-19 screening and testing.

## Telesupervision

Telesupervision has not routinely been used to deliver supervision, and under normal circumstances, is not allowed by the VA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA). Temporary allowances allowed for telesupervision in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and have continued as OAA policies are being updated. For the past two training years, the Erie VA Internship Program has participated in a telesupervision project in which OAA granted the program a waiver to permit continued telesupervision, regardless of the pandemic allowances. The internship training manual outlines procedures and processes to ensure compliance with the limits of the OAA waiver and the American Psychological Association Guidelines for Clinical Supervision for Health Service Psychology and American Psychological Association (APA), Commission of Accreditation (CoA), Implementation Guidelines (IR) C-15 I Tele-supervision. While conducting telesupervision, clinical supervisors continue to maintain full responsibility for patient care, consistent with supervision practices when not using tele-supervision.

Prospective applicants should note that in typical circumstances, telesupervision may not account for more than one hour (50%) of the minimum required (as defined in the Standards on Accreditation (SoA)) two weekly hours of individual supervision, and two hours (50%) of the minimum required (as defined in the SoA) four total weekly hours of supervision; however, consistent with the recommendations of the APA CoA, if in-person clinical practice experiences are disrupted, flexibility in the use of distance practices to minimize COVID-19 exposure is appropriate.



# Internship Admissions, Support, & Initial Placement Data

Date Program Tables are updated: 07/19/2023

## PROGRAM DISCLOSURES

As articulated in Standard I.B.2, programs may have “admission and employment policies that directly relate to affiliation or purpose” that may be faith-based or secular in nature. However, such policies and practices must be disclosed to the public. Therefore, programs are asked to respond to the following question.

Does the program or institution require students, trainees, and/or staff (faculty) to comply with specific policies or practices related to the institution’s affiliation or purpose? Such policies or practices may include, but are not limited to, admissions, hiring, retention policies, and/or requirements for completion that express mission and values.	<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO
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## INTERNSHIP PROGRAM ADMISSIONS

Briefly describe in narrative form important information to assist potential applicants in assessing their likely fit with your program. This description must be consistent with the program’s policies on intern selection and practicum and academic preparation requirements:

Applicants who have a strong interest or background in rural mental health or in working with Veteran populations will be a particularly good fit for this internship program. The Erie VAMC is well-suited to provide broad generalist training to interns interested in contributing to the expansion of mental health services in rural areas, which are often underserved and under-resourced.

<b>Does the program require that applicants have received a minimum number of hours of the following at time of application? If Yes, indicate how many:</b>			
Total Direct Contact Intervention Hours	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Amount: 300
Total Direct Contact Assessment Hours	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES	<input type="checkbox"/> NO	Amount: 50

<b>Describe any other required minimum criteria used to screen applicants:</b>
Eligible applicants are U.S. citizens from an APA or CPA accredited Ph.D. or Psy.D. clinical or counseling programs and are in good standing and have approval for internship status by graduate program training director. Applicants must have competed at least 3 years of academic study and have completed their comprehensive or qualifying exams.

## FINANCIAL & OTHER BENEFIT SUPPORT FOR UPCOMING TRAINING YEAR

Annual Stipend/Salary for Full-Time Interns	\$33,469	
Annual Stipend/Salary for Half-Time Interns	N/A	
Program provides access to medical insurance for intern?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
Trainee contribution to cost required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
Coverage of family member(s) available?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
Coverage of legally married partner available?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
Coverage of domestic partner available?	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
Hours of Annual Paid Personal Time Off	104	
Hours of Annual Paid Sick Leave	104	
In the event of medical conditions and/or family needs that require extended leave, does the program allow reasonable unpaid leave to interns/residents in excess of personal time off and sick leave?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>YES</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>NO</b>
Other Benefits (please describe): Federal Holidays (11 days, 88 hours) Professional Development Time (up to 40 hours)		

**\*Note.** Programs are not required by the Commission on Accreditation to provide all benefits listed in this table.

## INITIAL POST-INTERNSHIP POSITIONS

(Provide an Aggregated Tally for the Preceding 3 Cohorts)

2019-2022

Total # of interns who were in 3 cohorts	6	
Total # of interns who did not seek employment because they returned to their doctoral program/are completing doctoral degree	0	
	<b>PD</b>	<b>EP</b>
Academic teaching	0	0
Community mental health center	0	0
Consortium	1	0
University Counseling Center	0	0
Hospital/Medical Center	1	0
Veterans Affairs Health Care System	0	2
Psychiatric facility	0	0
Correctional facility	0	0
Health maintenance organization	0	0
School district/system	0	0
Independent practice setting	1	0
Other	1	0

**Note:** "PD" = Post-doctoral residency position; "EP" = Employed Position. Each individual represented in this table should be counted only one time. For former trainees working in more than one setting, select the setting that represents their primary position.

# Additional Information

## Regarding Eligibility Requirements

- Trainees receive term employee appointments and must meet eligibility requirements for appointment as outlined in VA Handbook 5005 Staffing, Part II, Section B. Appointment Requirements and Determinations.
- Selective Service website where the requirements, benefits and penalties of registering vs. not registering are outlined: <https://www.sss.gov/Registration/Why-Register/Benefits-and-Penalties>

### **Additional information specific suitability information from Title 5 (referenced in VHA Handbook 5005 – hyperlinks included):**

- Specific factors. In determining whether a person is suitable for Federal employment, only the following factors will be considered a basis for finding a person unsuitable and taking a suitability action:
  - Misconduct or negligence in employment;
  - Criminal or dishonest conduct;
  - Material, intentional false statement, or deception or fraud in examination or appointment;
  - Refusal to furnish testimony as required by § 5.4 of this chapter;
  - Alcohol abuse, without evidence of substantial rehabilitation, of a nature and duration that suggests that the applicant or appointee would be prevented from performing the duties of the position in question, or would constitute a direct threat to the property or safety of the applicant or appointee or others;
  - Illegal use of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances without evidence of substantial rehabilitation;
  - Knowing and willful engagement in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force; and
  - Any statutory or regulatory bar which prevents the lawful employment of the person involved in the position in question.
- Additional considerations. OPM and agencies must consider any of the following additional considerations to the extent OPM or the relevant agency, in its sole discretion, deems any of them pertinent to the individual case:
  - The nature of the position for which the person is applying or in which the person is employed;
  - The nature and seriousness of the conduct;
  - The circumstances surrounding the conduct;
  - The recency of the conduct;
  - The age of the person involved at the time of the conduct;
  - Contributing societal conditions; and
  - The absence or presence of rehabilitation or efforts toward rehabilitation.

# Our Mission

Our Veterans have sacrificed to keep our country—and everything it represents—safe. We honor and serve those men and women by fulfilling President Lincoln's promise "to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan."

We strive to provide Veterans with exceptional health care that improves their health and well-being.

## U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Erie VA Medical Center 814-868-2038

[www.erie.va.gov](http://www.erie.va.gov) 800-274-8387

**VA**



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Health Administration  
Erie VA Medical Center