



MFT/PCC Traineeship - Frequently Asked Questions

What MFT or PCC training opportunities are available through VCBH?

Ventura County Behavioral Health (VCBH) currently provides **traineeship** opportunities in outpatient public mental health for students enrolled in graduate MFT or PCC programs. The department follows all State licensing regulations and educational requirements. Preference is given to students with previous traineeship experience or prior experience in volunteering or working within a mental health setting due to the complex clinical issues in our client population. The application for all traineeship sites goes through the Internship and Workforce Development Department. **MFT or PCC Associate** opportunities are provided within the department in the form of employment. One would apply for these experiences through the Ventura County Human Resources website (<http://agency.governmentjobs.com/ventura>) – For recent graduates the job classification is a Behavioral Health Clinician I.

Do you have traineeship opportunities for first year students or students without previous mental health experience?

Typically the programs within VCBH are better suited for students with some previous mental health experience. Preference is given to more advanced students due to the severity of our population. Depending on the available openings, and the applications received, a beginning student may or may not be interviewed for a traineeship position.

Can you tell me more about Ventura County?

Ventura County is adjacent to the northwest border of Los Angeles County. There is easy access from Los Angeles County with several of the department's clinics located within a 20 minute drive from the San Fernando Valley. With a population just over 800,000, Ventura County is the twelfth most populous county in California. Racial and ethnic minorities comprise 53% of the population with 41% Hispanic/Latino American. Spanish is the primary language of 13% of the residents. Although the median household income in Ventura County is \$61,900, exceeding national and state averages, many of the department's clients are low income and/or homeless or displaced from their homes. 25% of children and 22% of those over 18 live below the federal poverty threshold. Agriculture is a major industry producing just over one billion dollars in County product annually. There are a large number of migrant workers who are homeless or in need of more secure affordable and sustainable housing options. The Behavioral Health Department provides outpatient public mental health services, throughout the County, serving approximately 5,000 clients per year addressing severe and chronic mental illness.

What are the requirements to become a trainee with VCBH?

Students must be currently enrolled in a graduate program which ultimately leads to licensure as a Marriage and Family Therapist or licensure as a Professional Clinical Counselor. Students must also have completed a minimum of 12 graduate academic units. The majority of training positions are best suited for advanced students that are in their second year of training or with some previous mental health experience. It is suggested that students have an interest in severe mental illness and specifically in public mental health.

Is there a required time commitment and when does the traineeship begin?

VCBH requires a full academic year commitment (9-12 months). Traineeships begin May 1st, July 1st, or September 1st. Students must be available for a minimum of 16 hours per week. Most of the clinic sites are open Monday – Friday 8:00 am to 6:00 pm and traineeship hours are completed during that time. Your schedule is based on the requirements of the individual clinic or program in consideration of your personal preferences. You will discuss a proposed weekly schedule during the interview process and finalize it with your supervisor once you have been accepted into the program. The initial weeks of the traineeship may require attendance on days that are different from your regular schedule due to orientation activities.

How do I apply for a traineeship?

Submit an application packet to the Internship and Workforce Development Department (vcbh.internships@ventura.com). The application packet should include the following items:

1. VCBH application form
2. Cover letter
3. Curriculum vitae (or resume)
4. Two letters of recommendation

**SEND APPLICATION PACKET VIA EMAIL TO: vcbh.internships@ventura.org
or by mail to:**

**Carla Cross, LMFT, ATR-BC, Internships and Workforce Development Manager
1911 Williams Drive, Suite 200, Oxnard, CA 93036
Office Phone: (805) 981-4221**

What is the time frame for the application and interview process?

The application deadline is March 1ST. Applications submitted after this deadline will be considered if time allows for interviewing and if traineeship spaces have not been filled with the first round of interviews. After an initial screening, if selected for an interview, applicants will be contacted by a clinic manager or supervisor to schedule an interview time.

What types of questions will I be asked during the interview process?

You will be asked questions related to your interest in the mental health field, specifically in public mental health; any prior mental health experience; and current clinical knowledge. You will also be asked about your time commitment and what you hope to gain from a traineeship with VCBH. During the interview you are encouraged to ask questions about the program to determine if placement with VCBH would fit your educational needs. The interview is meant to be a collaborative process so VCBH, your educational institution, and you are fully satisfied with the decision to participate in a practicum with VCBH.

What is involved in the orientation process?

Applicants complete a background clearance shortly after receiving a conditional acceptance into the program. A TB clearance is completed just prior to the start of clinical training. The first few weeks of the traineeship are dedicated to a variety of orientation experiences. You will attend New Student Orientation and participate in other orientation activities to become familiar with the department and clinic settings.

What would be included in my typical caseload and clinical experiences?

Your caseload and specific experiences are based on your assigned program but will typically include individual, group and/or family therapy, assessment updates and treatment planning, case management, and crises intervention. You can generally expect to have a “full caseload” within the first 3 months of the program. You will also be responsible for presenting at clinical case conferences, completing documentation of services and adhering to all policies and regulations. Students will be exposed to evidence based practices that have been implemented in the department and will learn about public mental health services. Students will also gain an orientation to the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) and the MHSA concepts of Wellness and Recovery. You will receive weekly supervision, participate in treatment team meetings, and attend a variety of additional seminars, conferences and other training as your schedule allows.

What type of supervision is included in the training program?

VCBH employs mental health professionals from a variety of disciplines. Supervisors of trainees may be Licensed Psychologists, Licensed Clinical Social Workers, or Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists. Supervisors have completed an initial course in supervision and complete 6 hours of continuing education in supervision every two years. The department adheres to all Board of Behavioral Sciences regulations and guidelines. The primary supervisor provides 1 hour of individual supervision each week and assists with case assignments. You may also receive additional supervision through group supervision if it is required and/or available at your assigned program or clinic.

Are there any other requirements?

Applicants must complete a background clearance prior to formal acceptance into the program. This is a requirement by the County of Ventura for all staff, volunteers, and students. Forms will be provided to you after the conditional offer has been made and the background clearance is conducted at no cost to the student. It typically takes approximately 2 weeks to complete this process. If you have any questions about this or have any reason to think you might not clear a background check then you can contact the Internship and Workforce Development Manager during the interview process to discuss your situation. After the background clearance is completed students receive a formal acceptance letter which confirms their training position.

In addition to the background clearance, students must complete a TB clearance. Depending on the student's preference, this can be conducted by the student's personal physician or can be arranged through the County's employee health services (EHS) department. There is no cost to the student if conducted through EHS.

Students are expected to carry student malpractice insurance but may also submit a certificate of insurance from their educational institution if covered through the school. You must provide evidence of insurance coverage to the Internship and Workforce Development Manager at the beginning of the traineeship.

Are there any fees assessed to the student?

Students are never charged a fee for any part of the traineeship. This is a collaborative venture between the school, the student, and VCBH. The training programs at VCBH are designed to provide educational training and professional development for the student while also providing quality mental health services to the clients of VCBH. Students will receive a wealth of experience, excellent supervision and supplemental seminars that are invaluable to professional development.

Are there any paid traineeships or stipends available for MFT or PCC students?

Bilingual students (Spanish/English) may be eligible for a bilingual stipend through VCBH if funding is available for the current training year. Additional information regarding eligibility criteria is provided by the Internships and Workforce Development Manager. Students may also be able to apply for a mental health stipend through the Mental Health Services Act funding. This stipend program is for students that are interested in ultimately pursuing employment in agencies or clinics that provide public mental health services. Students should contact the coordinators at their schools to request information about the application process for these state funded stipends and to determine if there is current funding for this program.

Does VCBH provide positions for MFT or PCC Associates?

VCBH has an employment category for MFT or PCC Associates. This job classification is the Behavioral Health Clinician I and additional information can be acquired about this employment position through the County of Ventura Human Resources Website. VCBH is supportive of students that have completed a successful traineeship and are interested in pursuing employment with the County. There is a strong interest in maintaining an ongoing relationship with students that have completed a traineeship in the department when there are available, appropriate positions that fit the student's strengths and experience level. There is no special advantage given to trainees in the recruitment process but the experience that is gained during the traineeship provides valuable skills and experience that makes the student a stronger candidate during the interviewing process.

You may receive additional information by contacting:

Carla Cross, LMFT, ATR-BC

Internship and Workforce Development Manager - Ventura County Behavioral Health Department

Phone: 805-981-4221 | Email: Carla.Cross@ventura.org

Department website: <http://www.vchca.org/agency-divisions/behavioral-health>