

**Jesse Brown VA Medical Center**  
**Postdoctoral Fellowship in Clinical Psychology with an Emphasis on SMI**

The Jesse Brown VA Medical Center Postdoctoral Fellowship Program in Psychology is pleased to announce recruitment for one postdoctoral fellowship position in clinical psychology with emphasis on Severe Mental Illness (SMI) for the 2021-2022 training year.

**Program Overview:** The Jesse Brown VAMC is recruiting one fellow for our 1-year postdoctoral program in psychology aimed at providing interprofessional education in the treatment of SMI, including schizophrenia-spectrum disorders and severe, chronic mood disorders. The assessment and treatment of clinical conditions characterized by psychosis are emphasized. Fellows develop competencies in clinically addressing these diagnoses using empirically based practices. The goal of this program is to allow fellows to emerge fully prepared to independently practice in an interdisciplinary, collaborative care setting in the VA or elsewhere, with competencies in delivering services using a recovery-oriented, patient-centered approach. A full copy of the program brochure can be found on the program's website, <https://www.chicago.va.gov/about/psychresidency/psychology.asp>

**Rotation Schedule:** The fellow is assigned to half-time clinical rotations within the Mental Health Clinic and the Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center with additional opportunities to provide care in acute treatment settings, such as the Inpatient Psychiatry Unit and the Psychosocial Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program. The Psychosocial Rehabilitation and Recovery Center (PRRC) provides a therapeutic and supportive learning environment for veterans with SMI that is designed to maximize functioning in all domains of recovery. The PRRC serves veterans with schizophrenia, schizoaffective disorder, severe, chronic mood disorders, and severe, chronic PTSD who experience serious psychiatric symptoms or any serious impairment in functioning. The PRRC's services include individual recovery planning, individual psychotherapy, and psychoeducational groups focusing on symptom management, coping skills, and life skills, as well as community reintegration work. During the 12-month rotation in the PRRC, the fellow serves as the primary clinician for assigned PRRC members, providing individual therapy and community reintegration services, as well as group services to all PRRC members. The fellow has the option to receive specialty training in Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Psychosis (CBTp). In addition, the fellow will serve as liaison to the residential SMI treatment unit, and as part of this role, provide bridge service in individual and group settings for veterans who may be referred to the PRRC after finishing residential treatment. The Mental Health Clinic (MHC) rotation consists of many opportunities involving assessment, individual psychotherapy, multi-disciplinary team consultation and treatment planning, and psychoeducation. Although the focal population within this rotation will be veterans with SMI, other diagnostic populations may also be seen to support the fellow's overall training in certain interventions and assessment instruments. Training in specific modalities of treatment (e.g., Cognitive Therapy, Cognitive Processing Therapy for PTSD) will be offered, and fellows are expected to develop flexibility in terms of their orientations toward patient conceptualization. The active management of patients with SMI and crisis management are common activities in MHC. Taking an active role in case management will also be central to the fellow's experience. Finally, fellows are expected to participate in the supervision of interns or externs as part of this rotation.

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**Setting:** The Jesse Brown Veterans Affairs Medical Center (JBVAMC) is located two miles west of the Loop, Chicago's central downtown district. It is part of Chicago's large Illinois Medical District, the nation's largest urban medical district, which also includes Cook County Hospital, Rush University Medical Center and the University of Illinois at Chicago Medical Center. The medical center includes a 200-bed acute care facility and has four satellite outpatient clinics. JBVAMC serves approximately 51,000 veterans per year and has an operating budget of \$445M, with approximately 2775 employees. Many of JBVAMC's veterans are eligible for VA health care because they are disabled or economically disadvantaged. JBVAMC is affiliated with the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine and Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine. Over 1800 medical and applied health trainees rotate through the medical center each year, receiving training in medicine, surgery, psychiatry, neurology, dentistry, radiology, orthopedics, psychology, nursing, pharmacy, social work, and audiology, among other areas.

**Staff:** The Jesse Brown VAMC has over 40 staff psychologist positions in various areas of specialty. The Director of Training is Jamie Mathews, PsyD and the Chief of Psychology is Alexander Schut, Ph.D., ABPP.

**Start Date:** August 30, 2021

**Stipend and Benefits:** \$51,169 (estimated); health insurance, 13 days paid vacation, all federal holidays, and up to 13 days of sick leave

**Qualifications/Eligibility:**

**Eligibility requirements for VA Health Professions Trainee**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) adheres to all Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action policies. As a Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Health Professions Trainee (HPT), you will receive a Federal appointment, and the following requirements will apply prior to that appointment

1. **U.S. Citizenship.** HPTs 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.
2. **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.
3. **Selective Service Registration.** Male applicants born after 12/31/1959 must have registered for the Selective Service by age 26 to be eligible for U.S. government employment, including selection as a paid or WOC VA trainee. For additional information about the Selective Service System, and to register or to check your registration status visit <https://www.sss.gov/> . Anyone who was required to register but did not register before the age of 26 will need to apply for a Status Information Letter (SIL) and request a waiver. Waivers are rare and requests will be

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reviewed on a case by case basis by the VA Office of Human Resources Management. This process can take up to six months for a verdict.

**4. Fingerprint Screening and Background Investigation.** All HPTs will be fingerprinted and undergo screenings and background investigations. Additional details about the required background checks can be found at the following website:

<http://www.archives.gov/federalregister/codification/executive-order/10450.html>.

**5. Drug Testing.** Per Executive Order 12564, the VA strives to be a Drug-Free Workplace. HPTs are not drug-tested prior to appointment, however are subject to random drug testing throughout the entire VA appointment period. You will be asked to sign an acknowledgement form stating you are aware of this practice. See item 8 below.

**6. 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 Affiliations (OAA). The affiliation agreement delineates the duties of VA and the affiliated institution. Most APA-accredited doctoral programs have an agreement on file. More information about this document can be found at

<https://www.va.gov/oa/agreements.asp> (see section on psychology internships). Post-degree programs typically will not have an affiliation agreement, as the HPT is no longer enrolled in an academic program and the program is VA sponsored.

**7. TQCVL.** To streamline on-boarding of HPTs, VHA Office of Academic Affiliations requires completion of a Trainee Qualifications and Credentials Verification Letter (TQCVL). An Educational Official at the Affiliate must complete and sign this letter. For post-graduate programs where an affiliate is not the program sponsor, this process must be completed by the VA Training Director. Your VA appointment cannot happen until the TQCVL is submitted and signed by senior leadership from the VA facility. For more information about this document, please visit <https://www.va.gov/OAA/TQCVL.asp>

a. Health Requirements. Among other things, the TQCVL confirms that you, the trainee, are fit to perform the essential functions (physical and mental) of the training program and immunized following current Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines and VHA policy. This protects you, other employees and patients while working in a healthcare facility. Required are annual tuberculosis screening, Hepatitis B vaccine as well as annual influenza vaccine. Declinations are EXTREMELY rare. The influenza vaccine is required unless medical or religious justification is provided.

b. Primary source verification of all prior education and training is certified via the TQCVL. Training and Program Directors will be contacting the appropriate institutions to ensure you have the appropriate qualifications and credentials as required by the admission criteria of the training program in which you are enrolled. 8. Additional On-boarding Forms. Additional pre-employment forms include the Application for Health Professions Trainees (VA 10-2850D) and the Declaration for Federal Employment (OF 306). These documents and others are available online for review at

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<https://www.va.gov/oa/app-forms.asp>. Falsifying any answer on these required Federal documents will result in the inability to appoint or immediate dismissal from the training program.

9. Proof of Identity per VA. VA on-boarding requires presentation of two source documents (IDs). Documents must be unexpired and names on both documents must match. For more information visit: [https://www.oit.va.gov/programs/piv/\\_media/docs/IDMatrix.pdf](https://www.oit.va.gov/programs/piv/_media/docs/IDMatrix.pdf)

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.

[https://www.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub\\_ID=646&FType=2](https://www.va.gov/vapubs/viewPublication.asp?Pub_ID=646&FType=2)

- Selective Service website where the requirements, benefits and penalties of registering vs. not registering are outlined: <https://www.sss.gov/Registration/Why-Register/Benefits-andPenalties>

Additional Information Specific Suitability Information from Title 5 (Referenced in VHA Handbook 5005)

**(b) *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:

- (1) Misconduct or negligence in employment;
- (2) Criminal or dishonest conduct;
- (3) Material, intentional false statement, or deception or fraud in examination or appointment;
- (4) Refusal to furnish testimony as required by § 5.4 of this chapter;
- (5) 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;
- (6) Illegal use of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances without evidence of substantial rehabilitation;
- (7) Knowing and willful engagement in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force; and
- (8) Any statutory or regulatory bar which prevents the lawful employment of the person involved in the position in question.

**(c) *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:

- (1) The nature of the position for which the person is applying or in which the person is employed;

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- (2) The nature and seriousness of the conduct;
- (3) The circumstances surrounding the conduct;
- (4) The recency of the conduct;
- (5) The age of the person involved at the time of the conduct;
- (6) Contributing societal conditions; and
- (7) The absence or presence of rehabilitation or efforts toward rehabilitation.

Additional Eligibility Criteria for Psychology Postdoctoral Fellow Applicants

A postdoctoral fellowship applicant also must meet these criteria to be considered for this VA Psychology Internship Program:

1. Be a graduate of an APA-accredited graduate program in clinical or counseling psychology.
2. Have completed an APA-accredited internship program; or being currently enrolled, in good standing, in such a program.
3. Exceptions to 1 and 2 can be granted only in consonance with those listed in the most recent Psychology Occupational Series Qualification Standards (VA Handbook 5005, Part II, Appendix G18)

**Application Procedure:** Applicants must be U.S. citizens who are candidates in (or have completed) an APA-accredited doctoral program in clinical or counseling psychology. They must have completed an APA-accredited internship program and have earned their Ph.D. or Psy.D. prior to the start date of the fellowship. Additional qualifications are established through VA policy and federal regulations.

To apply, please complete the following:

1. A cover letter outlining career goals and goodness of fit with our program
2. A current curriculum vitae
3. Copies of graduate transcripts to date—please note that if the doctoral degree has not yet been awarded, we may require the delivery of an official transcript (by the start date of the program) showing the degree awarding date before admitting a selectee to the fellowship program
4. Two or three letters of recommendation, one of which must be from an internship supervisor (if the candidate is currently in an internship program), sent directly from the letter writers via electronic attachment
5. A letter from the applicant's internship director of training verifying that the applicant is in good standing with his or her program along with the applicant's anticipated completion date of the internship; or a copy of the internship completion certificate, if the candidate has already completed internship.

Applicants should send items 1-3 to [vhachspsychologytraining@va.gov](mailto:vhachspsychologytraining@va.gov) using the subject line "PTSD-Pain-SUD Fellowship Submission for [First and last name of applicant]." Please limit the size of the email with items 1-3 to 1 Mb. Applicants should have their letters (items 4-5) sent by

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their letter writers to the same email address using the subject line “PTSD-Pain-SUD Fellowship Letter for [First and last name of applicant].”

**Applicants should submit all materials by 1/4/2021.** Failure to adhere to the above instructions may result in delayed consideration or rejection of the application.

**Interview and Selection Procedure**

If, on the basis of the application materials, a candidate is selected for further consideration, the candidate will be invited to interview with the relevant training staff and the Director of Training. Interviewees will also have an opportunity to meet with the current postdoctoral fellows to learn more about their lived experiences on fellowship. For the recruitment cycle of the 2021-22 training year, all interviews will occur in a virtual format via video teleconferencing (e.g., WebEx). Interviewees should be prepared to address the content of their applications and answer performance-based interview questions.

The program agrees to abide by APPIC guidelines (<https://www.appic.org/home-old/Postdoctoral/APPIC-Postdoctoral-Selection-Guidelines>) with regard to postdoctoral fellowship selection and the extension of offers. Consequently, it will anticipate making selection offers on the notification date of **2/22/2021**. If a candidate still under consideration receives a bona fide offer from another training site and would like to inquire about a reciprocal offer from JBVAMC, the inquiry should be made to the Director of Training (see contact information below).

Please address questions to the Director of Training:

Jamie Mathews, PsyD  
Jesse Brown VA Medical Center  
MHSL/Psychology (116B)  
820 South Damen Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60612  
Office: 312-569-8387 x59241  
Email: [vhachspsychologytraining@va.gov](mailto:vhachspsychologytraining@va.gov)  
<http://www.chicago.va.gov/about/psychresidency/psychology.asp>

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