



Behavioral Health

Marriage & Family Therapy Internship Program 2025-2026



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About the Department of Behavioral Health

The San Bernardino County Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) is a comprehensive community mental health organization that provides a full range of mental health services to the approximately 2,000,000 residents in the largest county (in area) in the continental 48 states. The Department encompasses several outpatient clinics, clinical programs, and over 1,000 employees throughout the county. DBH service providers include Social Workers, Marriage and Family Therapists, Clinical Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Case Managers, Mental Health Specialists, and Student Interns. Outpatient, forensic, and day treatment services are provided in the Department's multiple community-based clinical sites, including neighborhood and outlying Department regional centers and detention facilities, as well as through sites contracted with various local private agencies and providers.

As an organization, the Department of Behavioral Health adheres to the community mental health philosophy, including early treatment of emotional disorders, providing services in non-clinic locations when appropriate, and responsiveness to changing community needs. California uses the "Recovery Model" for delivery of Medi-Cal/Medicaid services, emphasizing services for those in acute need, the severely and persistently mentally ill, and "at-risk" children and families. The Department continues to progress in implementing a "mental health recovery" philosophy of care, emphasizing optimism regarding client improvement, assistance with basic resource needs, client empowerment, reintegration into the community, and the value of client self-help. Outpatient services involve a strong emphasis on brief treatment and group treatment, though student interns may have the opportunity to work with some clients for the entire internship year. A wide range of theoretical orientations and approaches are found among our staff, including Psychodynamic, Cognitive-Behavioral, Humanistic, Family Systems, Eclectic/Integrative, Solution-Focused, Play Therapy, Motivational Interviewing, and more. The Department is committed to the multi-disciplinary team approach, and student interns will gain experience working alongside those of other disciplines as part of a services team.

Department of Behavioral Health Mission Statement

San Bernardino County Behavioral Health Programs strive to be recognized as a progressive system of seamless, accessible and effective services that promote prevention, intervention, recovery and resiliency for individuals, families and communities.

Marriage & Family Therapy Internship Program Overview

Internship Program Mission

The mission of the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) Internship Program is to provide a quality training experience that will prepare MFT trainees to become competent, effective, and ethical therapists. We value diversity within our staff as well as in our clients and are committed to providing a practicum experience that promotes respect, care, compassion, and understanding.

Internship Experience

MFT Practicum Students are placed in our clinical programs with the best opportunity for a wide range of clinical experience with adults, children, and families. Our clinical trainings correspond with local college and university learning objectives for the level of the student and incorporate trainings applicable to the diverse cultures and populations we serve.

Depending on the program in which the trainee is placed, trainees may have the opportunity to provide triage, case management, initial screenings, and clinical assessments, as well as individual, family, and group therapy with children and/or adults. Trainees may also have the opportunity to provide crisis intervention with the support of clinical staff. Caseloads vary with the readiness of the student, but most trainees build up to 7 to 10 client hours per week. Attention is paid to each student's school requirements to ensure that all practicum requirements are met.

Training

All trainees receive a 2-week orientation and training session to the MFT Internship Program from the MFT Intern Program Supervisor and additional DBH staff. Trainings and topical discussions are also ongoing components of group supervision. Additionally, students have access to an extensive online training program provided by DBH. The Department also offers excellent live trainings on an ongoing basis, covering a variety of topics. Students are welcome to attend DBH trainings with the approval of their supervisor.

Supervision

Students receive weekly individual supervision from their assigned clinical supervisor at their site, a licensed MFT, or on occasion, other appropriately licensed staff (e.g., Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Licensed Psychologist). Students also attend a weekly 2-hour group supervision, which occurs on either Tuesday or Wednesday, with the MFT



Intern Program Supervisor at the Internship Program office located in San Bernardino. Depending on availability, group supervision might be provided at the placement site instead of with the Intern Program Supervisor. Additional Group Supervision meetings may be scheduled as needed depending on the number of interns in a given year. Individual and Group Supervision are included in the 20-hour internship schedule.

Internship/Traineeship Locations

Trainees primarily work in the outpatient setting, with clinics in Ontario, Fontana, Rialto, San Bernardino, Victorville, Barstow, and Needles. Forensic sites available to trainees are located in Colton, San Bernardino, and Victorville. The outpatient programs serve their surrounding communities, including adults, children, and families. Some DBH programs offer specialized services, such as field-based and intensive programs for adults or children. Available internship sites vary by year.

Schedules

Each internship is for a period of one year. Trainees are expected to work 20 hours each week. Hours are worked during normal business hours (M-F, 8-5) and are flexible to work around the student's academic schedule, typically resulting in two 8-hour days and one 4-hour day per week. During work time, trainees see clients for therapy, complete clinical assessments, complete clinical paperwork, facilitate groups, and attend weekly individual and group supervision.

Compensation

Paid Positions

Each year there are a set number of paid positions available which are paid at an hourly rate that is authorized and updated annually. Trainees are paid for hours worked (20 hours), except for holidays and other requested time off. Students are paid on a bi-weekly basis for the hours worked during each pay period.

The Department does not provide health insurance for trainees but does provide worker's compensation coverage and 24 hours of sick leave coverage in a fiscal year upon working 90 days.

Unpaid Positions

There may be unpaid trainee placements available, which vary in number from year to year. Students can apply in the same manner as for the paid positions. The student should indicate if they are available for an unpaid position should the paid positions be filled when submitting their application. Unpaid students are expected to work 20 hours a week and will receive the same supervision and training available to the paid students.

“The Intern Program was very helpful to me and provided me with a great deal of experience with diverse populations and the mental health field. All the county employees that I had interactions with were very friendly and helpful.” - Former MFT Trainee

Application Requirements

- Applicant must be enrolled in a university program that meets the California Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) requirements for MFT licensure.
- Applicant must complete 12 semester units or 18 quarter units by the start date of the internship.
- Applicant must have adequate malpractice insurance provided by their university or themselves.
- The applicant's university must have an existing standard contract with DBH or be willing to enter one.

There is no limit to the number of students who may apply from a graduate program, and students need not be preselected by their school.

Application and Selection Process

Students need to submit an application form and any requested supporting documents to apply to the program. The application process is subject to change and instructions on how to apply can be found on our DBH website:

<https://wp.sbcounty.gov/dbh/careers/>

The application period is open throughout the beginning of each year for the Fall cohort (July start). The application deadline varies depending on start time. All applicants who apply before the deadline will receive a status update regarding interview offers. The program may consider an additional Spring cohort (January Start). Requests for a Spring cohort start must be discussed with the Internship Program Supervisor.

Interviews are conducted between late February and mid-March by the MFT Intern Program Supervisor and additional members of the interview panel. Internship positions will be offered by the beginning of April.

Students who are chosen for positions will then complete the hiring and background process through the DBH Human Resources department. Students will begin internship orientation in early July and be placed in their clinical sites approximately mid-July. All dates are subject to change. Please visit the DBH website for updated information.



Positions after Internship

While DBH does not guarantee being hired after completing the internship, the Department is committed to hiring applicants who previously completed an internship at DBH. An internship in the MFT Internship Program provides valuable experience and training that uniquely prepares participants for success within the Department

COVID-19 Response

DBH takes the health and safety of its employees and clients seriously and has worked closely with the Public Health Officer and medical staff to establish safety procedures for each clinic. As a result, DBH will continue to monitor public health situations and will make policies to protect the public and employees accordingly. Additionally, the internship program works closely with university partners and other county programs to determine the best way to balance the needs for intern safety, training, and community care. All staff, including interns/practicum students, are required to be vaccinated or obtain a medical or religious exemption to provide services. Individuals with an exemption are required to wear a mask in all settings. The policies regarding vaccination are expected to continue indefinitely. Policies regarding masking will continue to follow CDC and State guidelines. Vaccines, testing, and masks are provided at no cost to employees or interns.

Contact Information

If you would like more information about the program, feel free to contact:

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Related Sites

[American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy](#)
[California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists](#)
[California Board of Behavioral Sciences](#)