



**BOOST 200**

MAKING MENTAL HEALTH HAPPEN

# Participant Guidelines

9/26/2023

*A special initiative of the Virginia Health Care Foundation,  
funded by the Virginia General Assembly and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services.*



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## A. Background and Purpose

### Background

Virginia is in the midst of a mental health crisis in the public and private sectors, caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, societal stressors and a shortage of licensed behavioral health (BH) professionals. Those who exist are overwhelmed and many Virginians are unable to get the help they need.

The shortage of BH professionals is not a new problem. Seventy percent (70%) of Virginia is a federally-designated Mental Health Professional Shortage Area (MHPSA) with nearly 40% of Virginians living in these communities. The severity of the shortage is, however.

The gravity and nature of the BH workforce shortage is clear in an [Assessment of the Capacity of Virginia's Behavioral Health Workforce](#), released by the Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF) in January 2022. Not only are there insufficient numbers of needed behavioral health professionals, the race and ethnicity of those practicing is not proportionate to the population of Virginia. With coming retirements of a high percentage of them, demand is expected to continue to outpace available services for at least the next decade.

One significant barrier faced by many who want to become licensed in Virginia as a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) or Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) is the financial cost of the required clinical supervision hours, about \$10,000 and \$20,000, respectively.

Many Supervisees in Social Work and Residents in Counseling must pay out-of-pocket for Supervision. This financial burden makes it impossible for them to pursue Supervision, while meeting basic living expenses and paying back student loans. As a result, every year there are Masters graduates who want to become licensed in Virginia, but are unable to do so.

To help address this barrier and increase the availability of basic mental health services, the General Assembly and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services (DBHDS) have recently funded *Boost 200*, a new special initiative to accelerate licensure of 200 Masters-prepared therapists in Virginia by paying for the Supervision hours required for their licensure.

*Boost 200* is administered by VHCF ([www.vhcf.org](http://www.vhcf.org)), a public-private partnership, is deeply invested in increasing access to basic mental health services for Virginians. To date, VHCF has invested more than \$10 million to make licensed behavioral professionals, tele-mental health services and behavioral health best practices, such as integrated and trauma-informed care, available throughout the Commonwealth.

## Purpose

The purpose of *Boost 200* is twofold. It will immediately result in 200 Masters-prepared individuals under Supervision, providing mental health services to help meet the skyrocketing demand. Simultaneously, it will help accelerate licensure of LCSWs, LMFTs and LPCs.

### **B. *Boost 200* Eligibility Requirements/Priority Categories**

- Masters-prepared Social Workers, Counselors or Marriage and Family Therapists; Residents in Counseling or Marriage and Family Therapy licensed by the Virginia Department of Health Professions (*DHP*); and current Supervisees in Social Work approved by the DHP may apply for *Boost 200*.
- All applicants must pay out-of-pocket for all or most of their licensure-required Supervision; have applied to the DHP to begin Supervision and also:
  - ✓ Be eligible to work in the US for any employer without Visa sponsorship;
  - ✓ Be free from judgements arising from federal or state debt; and
  - ✓ Not have any existing *service* obligations with other entities loans or scholarships.
- Preference and more favorable consideration will be given to eligible applicants who are practicing or will practice in one of the 93 Virginia localities designated as a [Mental Health Professional Shortage Area](#) **or** a person of color **or** bilingual.
- Preference will also be given to eligible applicants who are just starting their journey to licensure, however, applicants who have completed no more than 60% of the required clinical and Supervision hours to become licensed as an LCSW, LMFT or LPC in Virginia will also be considered. This is:
  - ✓ Up to 1800 Clinical hours/60 Supervision hours for Supervisees in Social Work.
  - ✓ Up to 2040 Clinical hours/120 Supervision hours for Residents in Marriage and Family Therapy.
  - ✓ Up to 2040 Clinical hours/120 Supervision hours for Residents in Counseling.
- Interested candidates who do not meet the three preference criteria noted above are also encouraged to apply.

***Note: Boost 200 applicants are responsible for identifying and securing a Supervisor.***

### C. Applicant Commitments

All *Boost 200* applicants (*social workers, counselors and marriage and family therapists*) must commit to the following:

- A 2-year full-time (*40 hours per week; 4,000 hours total*) service obligation in Virginia, once licensed as an LCSW, LMFT or LPC;
- Completing the clinical hours and Supervision hours (*LCSW: 3,000/100; LMFT: 3,400/200; LPC: 3,400/200*) required for licensure in Virginia in a timely fashion and without delay;
- Reporting the number of clinical (*direct/ancillary*) and Supervision hours completed to VHCF monthly via a tracking tool provided by the Foundation;
- Participating in *Boost 200* Orientation, up to 3 Roundtables, evaluation of the initiative and marketing/promotion; and
- Taking the DHP-required licensure exam no later than 4 months after completing Supervision hours (*refer to the [DHP Licensure Handbook for Counselors](#), [DHP Licensure Handbook for Marriage and Family Therapists](#), and [DHP Licensure Handbook for Social Workers](#) for requirements and process*).

***In addition, Residents in Counseling and Marriage and Family Therapy must submit their application for LPC and LMFT Licensure by Examination within 2 weeks of passing their licensure exam.***

### D. Applying for *Boost 200*

Interested applicants must complete the [online \*Boost 200\* application](#) and attach the required materials (<https://www.vhcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Boost-200-Application-Check-List-1.25.23.pdf>). Paper applications will not be accepted.

The *Boost 200* application gathers the applicant's personal, contact, financial and demographic information; education and work experience; and Supervision information.

Complete will applications also include a [Personal Statement](#), current resume and [Recommendation Form](#) completed by someone who supervised the applicant for at least 100 internship hours and is familiar with their clinical skills.

- *Boost 200* applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis, until all funding is obligated.
- Award decisions will be communicated to all applicants.
- Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Note: a .pdf preview of the application is available on the *Boost 200* website.

### **E. *Boost 200* Enrollment**

To enroll in *Boost 200*, all accepted applicants must provide:

- Documentation of Supervision Approval and designation by the DHP as a Supervisee in Social Work, Temporary License as a Resident in Marriage and Family Therapy from the DHP; or Temporary License as a Resident in Counseling from the DHP;
- Verification of Work Site and Acknowledgement of Application Form, completed by the candidate's Work Site(s);
- Verification of Supervision Form, completed by the Supervisor;
- Signed Supervisory Contract;
- Signed *Boost 200* Contract; and
- Documentation of clinical of Supervision hours completed, to-date.

### **F. Continued Participation in *Boost 200***

Ongoing participation in *Boost 200* is dependent upon the participant:

- Making satisfactory progress on fulfillment of required clinical supervision hours;
- Maintaining good standing with the DHP;
- Completing required reporting of Supervision and clinical hours to VHCF in a timely manner; and
- Communicating changes in employment, Supervision, and other key information to the Foundation in a timely manner.

More details will be provided at Orientation and in the *Boost 200* Contract.

*Boost 200 participants and their Supervisors must follow all Virginia DHP requirements to achieve and maintain licensure in the Commonwealth.*

### **G. Service Commitment**

*Boost 200 LPCs/LCSWs/LMFTs may fulfill their Service Commitment in any setting and with any patient/client population in Virginia. All service hours must be spent serving Virginians.*

*Boost 200 participants must work full-time as an LPC, LCSW or LMFT in Virginia for two (2) years or 4,000 hours after becoming licensed. With VHCF permission, Boost 200 licensed therapists may work part-time (at least 20 hours/week), completing the obligation in a maximum of 48 months, if necessary.*

Participants and their employer are required to complete and submit VHCF's semi-annual Report of Service Commitment Form, documenting progress towards the 4,000 hour Service Commitment.

## H. Department of Health Professional (DHP) Regulations:

*Boost 200* participants and their Supervisors must follow all DHP requirements and regulations to achieve and maintain licensure (*including Supervision requirements*) in the Commonwealth for the duration of *Boost 200* participation.

Supervision approval is granted by the DHP. **VHCF/*Boost 200* does not have the authority to grant Supervision approval for Supervisees/Residents or approve Supervisors.**

- For more information about the DHP Supervision requirements and how to apply for Supervision as a Resident in Counseling or Resident in Marriage and Family Therapy go to: <https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/counseling/>
- For more information about the DHP Supervision requirements and how to apply for Supervision as a Supervisee in Social Work go to: <https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/social/>

Questions about *Boost 200* can be submitted [here](#).