

Field practice and the role of the Field Practice Advisor (FPA)

Field practice is intended to reinforce concepts that the trainee has learned in the classroom, on the Internet etc. It occurs in the county office as the trainee is exposed to actual case activity and then later through supervised practice on actual cases. The County Director will decide on how the future caseload of the trainee is distributed while they are going through the training process. At the discretion of the County Director, the FPA may be given some of the trainee's cases while the trainee is working towards certification, and in the management of this caseload, provide the trainee with opportunities to observe and practice case management activities.

Responsibilities of the Field Practice advisor:

- From the beginning date of employment and through the first 6 months, the FPA works with the trainee serving as a mentor, teacher, guide and support system for the trainee. Strives to develop a strong rapport/supportive relationship with the trainee to encourage and enhance their progress toward successful certification and towards sound, independent case practice.
- From the onset of field practice, the FPA allows the trainee to shadow them as they perform a myriad case management tasks, encouraging questions from the trainee and basing responses on specific policy reference and good practice.
- The FPA provides the trainee with actual case management assignments. While the trainee carries out these assignments, the FPA shadows and coaches the trainee with policy clarification and good practice reminders/techniques.
- The FPA provides immediate verbal and when possible written feedback to the trainee, pointing out strengths and weaknesses of their case management performance.
- As the field practice continues and the trainee's confidence and skills improve, the FPA allows the trainee to assume greater co-case management responsibility/accountability. The FPA retains ownership of the cases on their tear sheet until the trainee attains certifications and can assume full case management responsibility.
- The FPA signs off on any TCM contacts that the trainee provides after conferencing with the trainee to validate that an actual TCM service was provided.
- The FPA provides the trainee with ongoing support and encouragement throughout their initial field practice and continued support and guidance during their initial six months of independent practice.
- The FPA confers on a routine basis with the supervisor, Regional Program Specialists and Regional Trainer (new position) on the trainees' progress during the field practice, identifying trainee weaknesses early on so that they can be successfully managed prior to completion of the certification process. Informs the Regional Program Specialist, Supervisor and Regional Trainer of any concerns regarding the trainee's ability to assume case management responsibilities or ancillary issues that come to the attention of the FPA that may affect the trainee completing their certification process.
- The FPA helps prepare the trainee for the field based observation and record review by critiquing work performed and services delivered and assessing compliance with policy and good practice.
- The FPA ensures that the trainee attends required follow up training for their position.

Requirements of FPA:

- Must be recommended by the Immediate Supervisor.
- Must have received satisfactory PMP over past year.
- Must attend FPA training.
- Preferred: Must have at least one year of social services case management experience in DFCS OCP.