



Society for

HEALTH PSYCHOLOGY

Securing a Job in Integrated Primary Care: Tips, Tricks, and Other Helpful Info

Division 38 IPC SIG

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This resource was created by Cerissa Blaney, Ph.D., and Katie Rider Munday, Ph.D., through their participation on the Division 38 Integrated Primary Care Interest Group (IPC IG) leadership committee.

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Helpful Websites

When looking for jobs in IPC, the following websites are great places to begin your search:

1. Division 38 Society for Health Psychology
<https://www.apa.org/about/division/div38>
 IPC jobs are posted on Division 38 listserv regularly (membership is required for listserv access). There is a general Division 38 list as well as a specific Primary Care (IPC specific) list.
2. Collaborative Family Healthcare Association
<https://jobs.cfha.net>
 Can search by key word/job title and location. IPC jobs are posted on the CFHA listserv regularly (membership is required for listerv access).
3. Association of Psychologists in Academic Health Centers (APAHC)
<https://ahcpsychologists.org>
 IPC jobs are posted on the APAHC website regularly (membership is required for listserv access).
4. Society of Behavioral Medicine (SBM)
<https://www.sbm.org/>
 IPC jobs are posted on SBM website regularly (membership required for listserv access) and they have an active Integrated Primary Care SIG that hosts its own listserv.
5. USA Jobs
<https://www.usajobs.gov>
 For VA and Military Hospital IPC positions (DHA positions), this is an invaluable resource. Once you create a profile, you can set saved search settings based on key words, job title, location, etc. You will then receive regular emails that include links to all newly posted jobs that meet your search specifications
6. As is the case with many types of work, Indeed does list a variety of psychologist positions.

Key Considerations:

- a. Yes, the majority of these resources require payment of a membership fee. And yes, the fee is worth it! Each of the above-outlined listservs are highly active, and job postings come through regularly.
- b. If you decide to join an organization, be certain to follow the instructions emailed to you regarding how to join the organization's listserv. There are typically several simple steps involved. Don't assume that joining the organization will add you to the listserv automatically.

- c. Check the listservs frequently by ensuring the postings are sent to an email you access on a routine basis. You may want to consider setting up a separate email account purely for listserv postings. This will keep the postings organized and prevent new postings from getting lost among a sea of less pertinent emails.
- d. Don't just observe, engage! Reading new postings as they come through is great. However, to make full use of a given listserv during the job search process, consider posting a brief message inquiring about relevant contacts and/or available jobs. This can be particularly helpful if you are searching for a job in a specific geographical area. In the posting, be certain to provide basic information about who you are and the type of job for which you are looking.

“Hello. I want to work for you.” - How to Compose a Cold Call Email

Estimates suggest that between 70 to 80% of jobs are never posted publicly. For this reason, contacting IPC leadership directly to express your interest in working at their facility is a critical component of the job search process. Here are some considerations to keep in mind when drafting such correspondence.

1. Many email addresses can be located online. However, if you are interested in working at a particular facility and are unable to locate the hiring manager's email address, don't hesitate to contact another staff member at that facility. Oftentimes, the staff member will forward your message to the correct individual. Such forwarding can prove to your advantage, as the hiring manager may be more likely to open an email from a fellow staff member, as opposed to one from an unknown email address.
2. Keep cold call emails short and to the point. People are busy and long-winded messages are easier to ignore.
3. Be courteous and polite, and use a non-demanding tone. This is your first opportunity to make a positive impression.
4. If you receive a response indicating that no positions are available, reply and ask kindly if you might check in periodically in the future to inquire about new openings. Hiring needs change frequently and unless you remind an organization of your ongoing interest, they are not likely to think of you when openings do arise.

5. Be certain to attach your vita. Organizations will frequently keep these on file to reference when new positions become available.
6. When composing your message, be certain to include the following basic components:
 - a. Your name and current position
 - b. The date you will be available to begin a new position
 - c. The type of position you are looking for
 - d. Why you are passionate about such a position and how your previous experiences have equipped you for this work
 - e. Why you are interested in working for the specific organization (if you are applying for a Defense Health Agency BHC position, prior experience working in the Military Health System is preferred, but not necessary)
 - f. Your contact information
 - g. Thank you!
7. Many people find contacting hiring managers in this way to be intimidating, but don't let fear hold you back from making a critical connection. No response is probably the worst that could happen, and you might just make a connection that leads to a wonderful IPC job.

Example Cold Call Email:

Dear Dr. Smith,

My name is Jane Doe and I am the current postdoctoral fellow in integrated primary care at the ABC Facility. I am reaching out to express my strong interest in joining your team upon completion of my fellowship in June 2019.

I began working in integrated primary care as a practicum student during my doctoral studies, and completed three integrated primary care rotations during my predoctoral internship at the ABC Facility. I am now completing a one-year intensive fellowship in integrated primary care at the ABC Facility. This fellowship involves the routine provision of the full range of behavioral health services in a fully integrated primary care clinic, along with the development and execution of several integrated primary care related research projects.

I am impressed by your organization's strong commitment to the provision of high quality integrated primary care, and intend to relocate to your area once my postdoc is complete. Accordingly, I was wondering what positions you foresee becoming available in the near future?

If you would prefer to speak about this by phone, please don't hesitate to contact me at 999-999-9999. Please also feel free to forward this message as you see fit. I have attached my vita to this email for your reference.

I look forward to connecting with you soon, and appreciate your consideration.

Kind regards,

Jane Doe, Ph.D.
IPC Postdoctoral Fellow
ABC Facility
janedoe@abc.com
999-999-9999

Securing VA Employment

The VA system is one of the largest payers to support IPC positions and often refers to the positions as PCMHI (Primary Care Mental Health Integration). There are a variety of ways to look for VA related IPC positions. However, we HIGHLY recommend reaching out to the Chief of Psychology directly, especially if you have a certain VA at which you are hoping to gain employment.

Key Considerations:

1. USA JOBS (<https://www.usajobs.gov/>) is a one-stop resource for all government related positions
2. Email Chief of Psychology: (to get contact info - quick google search with "Chief of Psychology at XXXXX VA) will lead directly to their VA contact info.
3. Reach out to colleagues or staff within IPC/PCMHI positions at the VA at which you are aiming to land employment. Often, you will see these people posting on the listservs referenced above.
4. VA Grade-Pay system: Most VA Hospital Systems follow a GS pay scale. You can review the various Grades and Steps by location at the following website: <https://www.federalpay.org/gs/2019>. All of your subsequent raises and promotions will be based off where you started and the local Professional Standards Board is responsible for determining one's grade and step. However, if you are agreeing to extra duties and/or have

relevant prior experiences you can negotiate for a higher step by speaking with your hiring supervisor. GS level 13 is the grade at which you typically start after post-doc. The STEP level will depend on your years of work since postdoc was completed and any other specific accomplishments you have that add value to the position.

5. Interns/Postdoc - If you are a postdoctoral fellow don't hesitate to reach out to hiring managers to see if they are willing to take a postdoc for a position! Many VAs will supervise and hire a post doc for a vacant position.
6. Don't forget to ask about . . . relocation funds, loan repayment, or a signing Bonus!! They are often able to offer one or two of these in combination so please ask once you have been offered a position but prior to accepting the position.
7. Be aware that you will typically be offered a VERBAL/TENTATIVE offer prior to receipt of a firm offer letter. It is only after the facility has progressed through the steps necessary to credential you that they can provide a formal offer letter. This process can take time. It is not unusual to wait 3 months or longer before starting a position.
8. BE OPEN- Oftentimes, to get your foot in the door at a specific VA you must be willing to accept a non-PCMHI psychologist position with the intention of moving into a PCMHI position when one opens up.

Securing Employment in the Defense Health Agency (DHA)

1. The Defense Health Agency Primary Care Behavioral Health Program (DHA PCBH Program) focuses on the implementation of the PCBH model of service delivery in over 275 military primary care clinics.
2. Behavioral health consultants (BHCs) are integrated as full-time patient-centered medical home team members. BHCs work with active duty service members, retired service members and their families. The BHC positions are for civilians, meaning they are not active-duty service member jobs.
3. For more information about DHA PCBH Program contact:
 - a. Dr. Christopher Hunter: DHA PCBH Program Director. 703-681-0079 christopher.l.hunter16.mil@mail.mil
 - b. Dr. Aditya Bhagwat: DHA PCBH Program Manager. 703-275-6287 aditya.a.bhagwat.mil@mail.mil
 - c. Dr. Lana Kahle: DHA PCBH Program Manager svetlana.v.kahle.civ@mail.mil

- d. Dr. Tony Satterfield: DHA PCBH Program Manager
william.a.satterfield.mil@mail.mil
4. General Schedule Positions (GS): GS positions in the DHA will be advertised on USAJOBS. Positions can be searched for using the key word “Psychologist” and limiting the search to the “Department of Defense.” Some job postings may not specifically state “behavioral health consultant” so it is important to read the posting carefully and look for other key words such as “consultant”, “primary care”, “integrated care” or “patient centered medical home.” Note that the military also has “embedded” behavioral health positions for psychologists in primary care, but these are NOT BHC positions. Contacting the military medical treatment facility for clarification would be appropriate and advisable. Salaries for GS psychology positions typically start at the GS13 level; the step level may be negotiable. The actual dollar amount varies by locality and the full range of GS salaries can be found at:
<https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/pay-leave/salaries-wages/>
 5. Contract DHA positions are not advertised in one particular location but can be found on most employment websites (indeed.com etc.).

Government vs Non-Government IPC positions

1. Government positions for IPC: are often well supported financially. Working with a one-payer system can be a nice advantage when working within IPC. However, these systems also tend to be less flexible in terms of establishing new processes and programs and have set tours of duty (work hours).
2. Non-Government IPC positions: vary significantly in terms of their funding, support and level of integration. If you are involved in a family medicine medical school environment there is often increased support for embedding a psychologist(s) in their teams. Some free standing, private medical offices will more likely struggle with financial support for integrating a psychologist or establishing IPC in their clinics as less is known in those sectors about billing for IPC related services. In turn, this often leads to a more co-located service and a greater need for program development, advocacy, and training of other team members.
3. Questions to ask when interviewing: Will you be the only mental health provider? (This can lead to over-referring to the onsite psychologist, so

understanding referral resources in the area and the flow of triage of patients is important.) What support do they have/anticipate for growth? How does the leadership support the IPC programs? What do they see as the biggest needs for patients/ providers?

Out of State Job Seeking

The following are some considerations to keep in mind when searching for an IPC position in a different state:

1. State psychological associations can be wonderful networking resources. Consider joining the association of the state to which you plan to relocate prior to relocating. This will give you access to the association listserv where jobs are likely to be posted.
2. Identify the top 2-3 IPC organizations in the area to which you are relocating, and begin to monitor the job portion of their websites regularly. Consider also identifying the leadership of these organizations and sending a cold call email (as detailed above) or reaching out by phone to express your interest.
3. If you are relocating to an area where you have family living already, speak to them in advance of your move about asking around on your behalf. Particularly if your family is unfamiliar with psychology and IPC, supply them with a brief written statement outlining your training and interests. They can provide this statement should they come into contact with a relevant contact person. Your preferred contact information should be included at the end of the statement.
4. Don't hesitate to reach out to contacts in the larger region to which you are relocating, even if these individuals do not reside in the specific city or state in which you are planning to live. There are often regional psychological associations that bring together all psychologists in a given region, meaning a colleague in a neighboring state might have useful information about your preferred area.
5. Just ask around! When you are visiting your new area to look for housing, etc., inquire broadly about respected hospitals and primary care practices in the community. While the realtor may have no knowledge of IPC, he/she will likely be well acquainted with local medical facilities and able to offer valuable information regarding each facility's reputation.
6. Don't forget to carefully review the licensing requirements of the state to which you are relocating. Contact the state licensing board early in your

relocation process to inquire about that state's specific requirements and the general timeline involved.

7. Some states have license reciprocity if you are a member of the National Register of Health Service Psychologists (<https://www.nationalregister.org/>). So, you may want to apply to be a member, which provides the added perk of credential banking. They offer scholarships as well to keep fees low and the application is cheaper the earlier in your career you apply!

Application Key Words

When applying for an IPC position, consider incorporating the following key words/characteristics/concepts in your application materials in an effort to highlight your knowledge of and fit with IPC.

- Biopsychosocial model
- Brief therapy models
- Consultation
- Efficient
- Evidence-based practice
- Flexible
- Functional assessment
- Measurement-based care
- Motivational interviewing
- Multidisciplinary teams
- Open-door policy
- Population healthcare model
- Prevention
- Prioritization of competing demands/needs
- Problem focused
- Psychosocial impacts of medical conditions
- Strengths-based approach
- Team-based/team player
- Triage skills

National IPC Contacts

1. At this time, we have not come across a national list of contacts for IPC, however, we are in the process of trying to collect this information.
2. If you want to share your contact with our team, please email Katie (katiermundey@gmail.com) or Cerissa (cerissablaney@gmail.com).
3. You will often see key IPC players post on the related listservs discussed above. When you see others commenting from a medical school, VA hospital, Defense Health Agency or a department in which you are hoping to seek employment, save their contact info and so you can reach out for more information.
3. Searching for “Centers for Integrated Healthcare” such as <https://www.mirecc.va.gov/cih-visn2/> can often lead to contacts who are involved in training and education for IPC. Such individuals are often in contact with key stakeholders who will be hiring.
4. Reaching out to leadership of national IPC organizations has the potential to lead you to great contacts for related positions.

**The Division 38 Integrated Primary Care Interest Group leadership team would like to offer our help and support as you navigate the job search process. Please feel free to reach out to us with questions on how to make contacts for IPC jobs or to review CV or cover letters: Katie Rider Mundy (kariderma87@gmail.com) and Cerissa Blaney (cerissablaney@gmail.com).