

Steve Bullock, Governor

Sheila Hogan, Director

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Mental Health Professional Person (MHPP). The certification of MHPPs is an important part of the backbone of our mental health crisis response system in Montana. Thus, the certification process is a high priority. MHPP documents and information can be found on our website at <https://dphhs.mt.gov/amdd/mentalhealthservices/mhppinformforms>.

The role of a MHPP brings with it the responsibility of participating in a decision that involves the possible removal of an individual's personal freedom. As the State Mental Health Authority, the Addictive Mental Disorders Division (AMDD) takes this role seriously and are careful to document the legal qualifications of a MHPP to evaluate an individual for commitment, and to testify in a court of law.

The certification process has been carefully crafted through Montana Statute and Administrative Rule to be as efficient and expedient as possible, as well as to ensure that our MHPPs are fully qualified to perform their duties. AMDD has outlined the following recommendations to improve the application process and reduce frustration for all involved.

1. Montana Code Annotated (MCA) 53-21-101 through 53-21-198 and Administrative Rule of Montana (ARM) 37.91.101 through 37.91.601 address all the processes and procedures for the MHPP.
2. A copy of your mental health professional license should be included in your application packet.
3. There are four parts to the application packet.
 - Part I contains the applicant information, including home and work address, email address for occasional notices from AMDD, college names and degrees, continuing education credits (CEU's) and training, and a letter of application.
 - Part II contains employment information. If you have more than one previous employment experience, it is recommended that you include all employment on separate Part II forms. The committee will need to see at least 2 years of experience, but may request to see more.
 - Part III is a reference form to be completed by a colleague who has worked with the applicant long enough to be familiar with the quality of his/her work, experience in the mental health field, and personal character. There are three references required. This form must be mailed by the referent. Please note that despite the best intentions of referents, a referral form is sometimes lost on someone's desk and not sent to AMDD. Therefore, it is important to contact AMDD to verify that all packet components have been received.
 - Part IV contains an endorsement from a currently certified MHPP who can attest to the applicant's complete understanding of the duties and responsibilities of certification. The endorser may also provide one of the references.
4. The MHPP Committee cannot review an application packet until it is complete and received by AMDD. It is essential that an applicant contact me, Barbara Graziano, at (406) 444-9330 to ensure that all four parts of the application packet and documentation of licensure have been received.

5. Once an application packet is complete, it will be reviewed by the Committee no later than 20 business days from receipt and file completion.
6. The Committee reviews the population experience of an applicant (e.g., adults, children, and/or SDMI, or SED); the length of time they have served in various mental health positions; the quality of references; and the nature of their credentials. The review process follows Montana Rule and Statute, and is intended to document for legal purposes that an applicant meets the standards to serve in the role of a MHPP.
7. The Committee will take one of the following actions:
 - determine that an applicant is fully qualified to sit for the exam,
 - request additional information,
 - hold a decision in abeyance pending additional months of experience, or
 - vote to deny eligibility.
8. When an applicant has been approved by the Committee to sit for the exam, a letter will be sent that includes study materials and contact information for their local job service where they can make an appointment to take the exam. The open-book exam is based on relevant MCA and ARM, as well as the resources available in Montana. The exam is not timed; however, it is important to set aside at least two hours to complete the exam. A 90 percent or a minimum of 36 of 40 points is required to pass the exam, and the exam can be taken as many times as needed for a passing score. However, another, current endorsement will be needed each time an applicant requests to take the exam.
9. After the successful completion of the exam, a certificate is issued to the new MHPP and includes the newly assigned certificate number with the expiration date. A certificate expires three years after issuance. MHPPs are expected to anticipate the expiration date in time to submit renewal information to AMDD for re-certification. This information includes a list of continuing education units, training, or instruction relevant to the mental health field during the past three-year certification period, and current employment information. Our office will attempt contact as a reminder using the contact information on file. Therefore, it is important to contact AMDD when a MHPP place of employment or contact information changes. The MHPP certificate will expire if not renewed before the expiration date resulting in closure of the MHPP file that will require reapplication including a re-examination.

If you have any questions or comments, please don't hesitate to contact me at (406) 444-9330 or BGraziano@mt.gov.

Sincerely,

Barbara Canning-Graziano, LCSW, Chair
Clinical Program Manager
MHPP Certification Committee
Addictive and Mental Disorders Division (AMDD)
Department Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS)