Department of Veterans Affairs
Washington, DC 20420

VA HANDBOOK 5005/155
Transmittal Sheet
November 30, 2022

STAFFING

1. **REASON FOR ISSUE:** To establish a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) qualification standard for Addiction Therapist, General Schedule (GS)-0101, appointed under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3), Appointments in Veterans Health Administration and 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(B), Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments and without-compensation appointments.

2. **SUMMARY OF CONTENTS/MAJOR CHANGES:** This handbook contains mandatory procedures on staffing. This revision establishes the Addiction Therapist, an occupation for both bachelor's and master's level therapists under VA's title 38 hybrid excepted service employment system in accordance with the authority established under P.L. 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010. VA Secretary has authority under 38 U.S.C. § 7402 to prescribe qualifications for occupations identified in or established under 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3), Appointments in Veterans Health Administration and 38 U.S.C. § 7405(a)(1)(B), Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments and without-compensation appointments. This qualification standard will be incorporated into the electronic version of VA Handbook 5005, Staffing, that is maintained on the Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer website and VA Publications website. The new standard is effective on the date of this publication.

3. **RESPONSIBLE OFFICE:** Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (05), Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059).

4. **RELATED DIRECTIVE:** VA Directive 5005, Staffing.

5. **RESCISSIONS:** None

CERTIFIED BY:

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BY DIRECTION OF THE SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS:

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DISTRIBUTION: Electronic Only

NOTE: This transmittal page accompanied the former VA Handbook 5005, Staffing publication. It is provided for reference to the establishment of this qualification standard.

FORMER VA HANDBOOK REFERENCE: PART II APPENDIX G76
EFFECTIVE DATE: November 30, 2022

ADDICTION THERAPIST (BACHELOR'S LEVEL) AND ADDICTION THERAPIST (LICENSED MASTER'S) QUALIFICATION STANDARD GS-0101 Veterans Health Administration

1. **COVERAGE.** The following are requirements for appointment or placement, as an Addiction Therapist (AT) in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). These requirements apply to all VHA Addiction Therapists in the General Schedule (GS)-0101 series. Addiction Therapists, both Addiction Therapist (Bachelor's Level) and Addiction Therapists (Licensed Master's), work with individuals, couples, families and groups providing psychosocial treatment for substance use disorders (SUD) and addressing the effects of SUD on interpersonal relationships using individual, couples, families and group-oriented therapies. VHA Addiction Therapists (Bachelor's Level and Licensed Master's) can be assigned to VA Medical Centers, Community-Based Outpatient Clinics, Readjustment Counseling Service /Vet Centers, Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) offices and VHA Central Office.

2. **AUTHORITIES.**

   a. P.L. 111-163, Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act of 2010;

   b. 38 U.S.C. § 7401, Appointments in Veterans Health Administration;

   c. 38 U.S.C. § 7402, Qualifications of appointees;

   d. 38 U.S.C. § 7403, Period of appointments; promotions;

   e. 38 U.S.C. § 7405, Temporary full-time appointments, part-time appointments and without-compensation appointments;

   f. 38 U.S.C. § 7407, Administrative provisions for section 7405 and 7406 appointments.

3. **DEFINITIONS.**

   a. **Addiction Therapy**. Addiction therapy is a broad range of interventions for the treatment of SUD built on an understanding of, appreciation of, and ability to appropriately use the contributions of evidence-based addiction and behavioral health counseling models as they apply to modalities of care for individuals, groups, families, couples and significant others. This includes using methods that are sensitive to the individual client characteristics and the influence of significant others.

b. **Addiction Therapist (Bachelor's Level) (AT).** The AT level is designated for those who possess a bachelor's degree and hold a state, territory, commonwealth or the District of Columbia's (referred to throughout as the jurisdiction) highest-level recognition for practice (i.e., license or certification) in the field of Alcohol and Drug Treatment. ATs in this level assignment are dependent providers and perform work under guidance of Addiction Therapists (Licensed Master's) in designated assignments. Although some jurisdictions may recognize ATs with a bachelor's degree as an independent provider, VHA only recognizes a professional with possession of a bachelor's degree as a dependent provider.

c. **Addiction Therapist (Licensed Master's) (LMAT).** The LMAT level is designated for AT's who possess a master's degree and hold a state, territory, commonwealth or the District of Columbia's highest-level recognition for independent practice (i.e., license or certification) in the field of Alcohol and Drug Treatment.

d. **Appointing Official.** The Human Resources (HR) Officer is delegated appointing authority to process and authenticate notifications of personnel actions and authority to effect management-approved employment actions on behalf of officials, employees and facilities for which service is provided.

e. **Approving Official.** The VISN Director or Facility Director is the authorized approving official and will determine whether to approve or disapprove the appointment of employees in the hybrid occupations**.**

f. **Licensure and Certification.** The highest level of recognition in the field of Alcohol and Drug Treatment may be titled differently in each jurisdiction. For example, a state may title the highest-level of recognition in the field of Alcohol and Drug treatment as either "license" or "certification." When "license/licensed," "licensure," "certified/certification," or "non-licensed" is referenced throughout the standard and sub-appendices it is implied and intended to mean the certification or license granted by a jurisdiction depending on the highest level of recognition for professional ATs in the field of Alcohol and Drug Treatment. An individual in an AT or LMAT position must hold a state's highest level of recognition for the specified level/position being filled in the field of Alcohol and Drug Treatment. The required license and certification must be full, current and unrestricted.

g. **Journey Level.** A full performance level is set in each sub-appendice for the AT and the LMAT. The full performance level for the AT is a GS-09 and the LMAT is GS-11.

h. **Clinical Supervision.** Clinical supervision is between an LMAT who is in a specified assignment and an entry level and/or unlicensed AT in which the entry level and/or unlicensed AT clinical work is reviewed. Work is reviewed to improve the AT's work with clients; ensuring client welfare; supporting the AT in relation to their work and supporting the AT's professional development. This

includes co-signing clinical notes and supervising an individual as they are working towards licensure. Management officials should refer to the specific jurisdiction licensing regulations to determine the requirements for providing clinical supervision.

i. **Administrative Supervision.** Supervisory responsibilities include, but are not limited to, assigning and evaluating the work of subordinate staff; resolving complex problems to ensure Veteran services are met; evaluating performance and taking disciplinary action when necessary. The supervisor has full administrative and professional responsibility for planning and directing the work of others.

j. **State Approved Supervisor.** The requirements to become an approved supervisor vary by jurisdiction. Some jurisdictions have specific standards to allow LMATs to provide clinical supervision. An approved supervisor may clinically supervise ATs or unlicensed LMATs if permitted under their jurisdiction's licensing laws or regulations. Management officials will refer to specific jurisdiction's licensing regulations to determine the requirements for providing supervision. Specific assignments in the LMAT sub-appendice are designated.

k. **Program Coordinator.** The Program Coordinator is an LMAT who implements, directs and coordinates the work and functions of a SUD program. Depending on the structure of the service/facility, the program coordinator may work independently or report directly to the program manager who has overall responsibility for the program.

l. **Program Manager.** This is the organizational title for the supervisory LMAT who manages the overall SUD program. This role is often referred to as the SUD director.

m. **Creditable Experience.** To be creditable, the experience must have required the use of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) associated with current professional alcohol and drug counseling treatment practices. The experience also includes the ability to treat substance use disorders, including working with individuals, couples, families and/or groups. Experience satisfying this requirement must be active professional practice (post-degree), which is paid/non-paid employment as an alcohol and drug counselor, as defined by the appropriate state licensing or certifying boards.

n. **Quality of Experience.** Qualifying experience is only creditable if it is obtained following graduation for the specific level (bachelor's degree or master's degree) in alcohol and drug studies or comparable degree in a behavioral health field (i.e., social work, psychology, counseling) and includes work as an Alcohol and Drug Counselor directly related to the position to be filled. The experience must be comparable to AT/LMAT experience at the next lower grade level of the position being filled. For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, administrative

independence, complexity and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time.

o. **Part-Time Experience.** Part-time experience is creditable according to its relationship to a full-time workweek. For example, an individual employed 20 hours per week, or on a half-time basis, would receive one full-time work week of credit for every two weeks of service.

4. **BASIC REQUIREMENTS.** To qualify for appointment or placement to these occupational assignments, all applicants must possess the following:

a. **Citizenship.** Be a citizen of the United States (U.S.). Non-citizens may be appointed when it is not possible to recruit qualified citizens in accordance with 38 U.S.C. § 7407(a).

b. **Physical Standards.** See VA Directive and Handbook 5019, Employee Occupational Health Service for requirements.

c. **English Language Proficiency.** AT/LMAT candidates must be proficient in spoken and written English as required by 38 U.S.C. § 7403(f).

d. **Education.** AT and LMAT candidates must meet the education requirements defined in the specific sub-appendice for the position being filled.

e. **Foreign Education.** There is no substitution for foreign education for this occupation; therefore, foreign education evaluation is not applicable.

f. **Licensure/Certification.** Reference to “license,” “licensure,” “certification,” or “non-licensed” throughout the standard and sub-appendices is implied and intended for different levels of certification and license granted by level in a United States state, territory, commonwealth, or the District of Columbia depending on the highest level of recognition for practice in the field of Alcohol and Drug Treatment in a jurisdiction based upon the specific level of degree obtained (bachelor’s degree or master’s degree). AT and LMAT candidates must meet the licensure requirements defined in the specific sub-appendice for the position being filled.

g. Grandfathering Provision.

h. All persons employed in VHA in this occupational series or another occupational series and performing the duties as described in the qualification standard on the effective date of this qualification standard are considered to have met all qualification requirements for the grade held, including positive education, credential or certification that are part of the basic requirements of the occupation. For employees who do not meet all the basic requirements required in this standard but who met the qualifications applicable to the position at the time they were appointed to it, the following provisions apply:

(1) Employees in an occupation that does not require a licensure, certification or registration, may be reassigned, promoted or demoted within the occupation.

(2) Employees in an occupation that requires licensure, certification, or registration may be reassigned, promoted up to and including the full performance level, or demoted within the occupation but may not be promoted beyond the full performance level or placed in supervisory or managerial positions.

(3) Employees in an occupation that require a licensure, certification or registration only at higher grade levels must meet the licensure, certification or registration requirement before being promoted to those higher grade levels.

(4) Employees who are appointed on a temporary basis prior to the effective date of the qualification standard may not have their temporary appointment extended or be reappointed, on a temporary or permanent basis, until they fully meet the basic requirements of the standard.

(5) Employees initially grandfathered into this occupation who subsequently obtain additional education and/or licensure, certification, or registration that meet all the basic requirements of this qualification standard, must maintain the required credentials as a condition of employment in the occupation.

(6) Employees retained in an occupation listed in 38 U.S.C. § 7401(3) under this provision who leave that occupation or employment with the VA, lose protected status and must meet the full VA qualification standard requirements in effect at the time of reentry to the occupation and/or VA.

5. DEVIATIONS.

a. An approving official may, under unusual circumstances, approve reasonable deviations to the grade determination requirements for an employee whose composite record of accomplishments, performance and qualifications, as well as current assignment, warrants such action based on demonstrated competence to meet the requirements of the proposed grade and/or assignment.

b. The placement of individuals in grade levels or assignments not described in this standard must be approved by the Under Secretary for Health in VHA Central Office prior to placement in the position.

c. Under no circumstances will the educational or credential requirement be waived for those occupations with a positive education requirement or when specific credentials are identified as necessary to meet minimum requirements.

APPENDIX A. ADDICTION THERAPIST (BACHELOR'S LEVEL)

1. **BASIC REQUIREMENT.** In addition to meeting the basic requirements outlined in this standard, paragraph 3, Basic Requirements, the following additional requirements must also be met to qualify and hold a position as an AT:

    a. **Education**. Hold a bachelor's degree in drug and alcohol studies or a related behavioral health field from an accredited college or university. In some jurisdictions, individuals may not be required to hold a bachelor's degree to be licensed in Alcohol and Drug Treatment. VHA will not waive education requirements even if the candidate has a license that does not require a bachelor's degree.

    b. **Licensure.**

        (1) **Licensure Requirements:** Individuals appointed or reassigned to an AT position in the GS-0101 series must:

            (a) Hold a full, current, and unrestricted license in a state, territory, commonwealth, or the District of Columbia to practice in the field of Alcohol and Drug Treatment; AND

            (b) Complete one of the following:

                i International Certification and Reciprocity Consortium, Credentialed Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Counselor Certification; or

                ii National Association for Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Counselors, National Certified Addiction Counselor Level 1.

        (2) **Loss of License or certification.** In collaboration with HR Office staff, management officials must immediately relieve employees of the duties and responsibilities associated with the occupation who fail to maintain the required licensure or certification, which may also result in separation from employment.

2. **GRADE REQUIREMENTS AND DETERMINATIONS.** In addition to the basic requirements outlined in paragraph 3 of this standard and paragraph 1 of this sub-appendice, the following criteria must be met when determining the qualification of candidates for the specified assignment:

    a. Addiction Therapist (Bachelor's Level) GS-05.

        (1) **Experience.** The entry level assignment is used for ATs who are licensed with less than one year of experience. There is no experience outside of the basic requirements

(2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** None

(3) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve in an entry-level developmental position. ATs in the entry-level assignment will receive close clinical supervision and guidance from an LMAT and meet weekly with an assigned clinical supervisor. Duties include, but are not limited to, assisting with intake/assessments, facilitating program orientation or educational sessions and treatment planning. ATs identify patients experiencing psychological distress and engage licensed clinicians as necessary to provide crisis intervention. They maintain appropriate records and chart accurate information. They develop and maintain appropriate communication, rapport and positive working relationship with various institutions, organizations and service providers.

b. Addiction Therapist (Bachelor's Level) GS-07.

(1) **Experience.** In addition to the basic requirements, at least one year of creditable experience equivalent to the next lower grade; OR

(2) **Education (Advanced Entry Level Placement).** Applicants who meet the GS-05 grade level may be appointed at the GS-07 grade level if they possess a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in a major field of study in a drug and alcohol studies or a related behavioral health field with an exemplary academic record as demonstrated by:

(a) 3.0 or higher out of a possible 4.0 ("B" or better) as recorded on their official transcript, or as computed based on four years of education or as computed based on courses completed during the final two years of the curriculum; OR

(b) 3.5 or higher out of a possible 4.0 ("B+" or better) based on the average of the required courses completed in the major field or the required courses in the major field completed during the final two years of the curriculum; OR

(c) Class Standing: Applicants must be in the upper third of the graduating class in the college, university or major subdivision based on completed courses.

(3) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience/education requirements, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs.

(a) Knowledge of principles, concepts and methods of counseling and therapies used in treatment of individuals with SUDs.

(b) Knowledge of appropriate documentation of substance use history and treatment.

(c) Ability to identify patients who are in psychological distress.

(4) **Assignment.** ATs in this level assignment will receive clinical supervision and guidance from designated LMAT. ATs assist with addiction screening, assessments, orientation, education, treatment planning and counseling. They identify patients experiencing psychological distress and engage licensed clinicians as necessary to provide crisis intervention. ATs assist in developing an evaluation/summary of the client's substance use and any co-occurring conditions based on the results of assessments to provide an integrated approach to treatment planning based on the client's strengths, preferences and identified problems and needs. ATs participate with a multidisciplinary team regarding treatment planning. They communicate with a variety of institutions, organizations and service providers.

c. Addiction Therapist (Bachelor's Level) GS-09.

(1) **Experience.** One year of creditable experience equivalent to the next lower grade.

(2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

(a) Knowledge of coexisting medical or other mental health disorders as interrelated to SUDs.

(b) Ability to complete assessments of substance use disorders, treatment planning and continued care planning.

(c) Ability to develop and maintain effective working or therapeutic relationships with multidisciplinary staff, Veterans and their families.

(3) **Assignment.** This is the full performance-level assignment for ATs. Although the ATs are dependent providers and perform work under guidance of LMATs, ATs at this level perform intake/assessments using a biopsychosocial history which could include urine toxicology/breathalyzer data and/or collateral information. They provide case management and counseling on issues that involve substance use. ATs conduct and utilize designated measurement tools for baseline and follow-up care. They assist with the utilization of the assessment and in collaboration with the patient, create an individualized treatment plan and continuing care plans. ATs provide addiction-related psychoeducation for individuals/groups/couples

and evidence-based psychosocial interventions. They provide crisis intervention to patients in psychological distress consistent with VA national policy and within the scope of practice to include engaging licensed mental health clinicians when clinically indicated. ATs are part of the treatment team that includes licensed independent practitioners that formulate plans during the continuum of care and, at discharge, and arrange referrals to agencies and organizations as needed.

APPENDIX B. ADDICTION THERAPIST (LICENSED MASTER'S)

1. **BASIC REQUIREMENT.** In addition to meeting the basic requirements outlined in this standard, paragraph 3, Basic Requirements, the following additional requirements must also be met to qualify and hold a position as an LMAT:

   a. **Education.**

      (1) Hold a master's degree or higher in drug and alcohol studies or related behavioral health field from an accredited college or university.

   b. **Licensure**. Individuals appointed or reassigned to an LMAT position must possess a full, current, and unrestricted license in a jurisdiction for independent practice in the field of Alcohol and Drug Treatment.

      (1) **Exception**. The Secretary or designee may waive the licensure requirement for selectees who are otherwise qualified, pending state acceptance of completion of state prerequisites at the master's level. Licensures can be waived for three years from the date of employment. This exception is allowed on the condition that non-licensed LMATs appointed on this basis provide care only under the clinical supervision of an LMAT from the designated assignments to provide clinical supervision. Non-licensed LMAT applicants who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements may be appointed as LMATs under the authority of 38 U.S.C.§ 7401(3). This exception applies only at the GS-09 entry grade level and individuals may not be promoted/converted until they obtain the required license. For grades/assignments at or above the full performance level, candidates must be licensed at the master's level.

      (2) **Failure to Obtain Licensure.** Prior to the time of appointment, HR Office staff will provide uncertified or unlicensed LMATs, the written requirement to obtain licensure, the date by which the license must be acquired and the consequences for not becoming licensed by the deadline. In all cases, LMATs must actively pursue meeting requirements for licensure starting from the date of their appointment. If LMATs fail to obtain licensure during this time period, their employment may be terminated.

      (3) **Loss of License.** In collaboration with HR Office staff, management officials must immediately relieve employees of the duties and responsibilities associated with the occupation who fail to maintain the required licensure or certification, which may also result in separation from employment.

2. **GRADE REQUIREMENTS AND DETERMINATIONS.** In addition to the basic requirements outlined in paragraph 1 of this sub-appendice and paragraph 3 of

this standard, the following criteria must be met when determining the grade of the candidates:

c. Addiction Therapist (Licensed Master's) GS-09.

(1) **Education, License and Experience.** The GS-09 grade level is the entry grade level for LMATs who have:

(a) Less than one year of experience post licensure; **OR**,

(b) LMATs at the master's level who are graduates not yet licensed at the independent practice (Journey) level. Unlicensed LMATs at the GS-09 grade level must have completed the required education listed in paragraph 1.a. above and are working toward obtaining a full, current, and unrestricted license in a jurisdiction for independent practice in the field of Alcohol and Drug Treatment.

(2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the basic requirements, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs.

(a) Knowledge of coexisting medical or other mental health disorders and the interrelationship of SUDs.

(b) Knowledge of basic recovery programs and resources.

(c) Skill in providing individual and group therapy, including using certain SUD Evidenced-Based Therapy (EBTs).

(d) Skill in developing and maintaining effective working or therapeutic relationships with multidisciplinary staff, Veterans and their families, and community resources to ensure appropriate referrals.

(e) Ability to complete the assessment of substance use disorders, treatment/recovery planning and continuing care planning.

(f) Ability to identify patients who are in psychological distress consistent with VA national policy and within scope of certification and secure appropriate interventions.

(3) **Assignment.** Employees at this grade level serve in an entry-level developmental LMAT positions. At the entry-level, close clinical supervision is provided by higher-level LMATs. Duties may include but are not limited to counseling and providing psychoeducation, including EBT for individuals, groups, families and couples. Services are offered by LMATs either individually or as co-leader. LMATs assist in the caseload management of all patients in the program. LMATs assist in developing treatment plans (reviews and updates) and contribute to team decisions,

including the necessary determination of readiness for discharge. LMATs, at this level, assist in monitoring medication compliance as appropriate to assigned programs. They help maintain compliance with VA standards of care, accreditation bodies such as the Joint Commission, Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, and other compliance agencies as appropriate to assigned programs and best practices of care (i.e., Opioid Treatment Program, Drug Enforcement Agency, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment and Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration. They conduct intake and needs assessments of Veterans with their significant others, extended family and others in the psychosocial network and support systems under supervision. LMATs ascertain the employment history and difficulties encountered in employment through assessment for vocational services planning to assist Veterans in meeting their vocational goals. LMATs use their knowledge of community-based resources to assist with recovery, including housing support. They review outside records as they become available and prepare correspondence related to the patient's rehabilitation, such as letters for courts, letters for an employer and other agencies upon the request of the patient. Under close supervision, LMATs may provide crisis intervention to patients in psychological distress. LMATs develop and maintain appropriate communication, rapport and positive working relationship with various institutions, organizations and service providers.

d. Addiction Therapist (Licensed Master’s) GS-11.

(1) **Experience.** One year of creditable experience comparable to the next lower grade.

(2) **Licensure.** Candidates must possess a full, current and unrestricted license in a State for independent practice in the field of Alcohol and Drug Treatment.

(3) **NOTE:** Applicants who meet the qualifications requirements for an AT at the full performance level, who have a minimum of one year experience at that level and who have obtained the master's degree and license will be qualified at the GS-11 level.

(4) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

(a) Skill to independently complete assessments of substance use disorders, treatment planning and continued care planning.

(b) Skill to apply the principles, concepts and methods of counseling and therapies used in the treatment of individuals with SUDs.

(c) Skill to collaborate and consult on medical or other psychiatric disorders as interrelated to SUDs.

(d) Ability to apply various community-based recovery programs and resources in a treatment plan.

(5) **Assignment.** This assignment is the full performance level, for LMATs. At the full performance level LMATs independently provide addiction screening/assessments, orientation/education, treatment planning and counseling in person or via telehealth. They analyze problems and interpret and adapt guidelines such as policies, regulations, precedents, etc. for application to specific problems and recommend changes. LMATs provide evidenced-based practices in programming and recovery plan development. They provide psychoeducation for individuals, groups, families and couples either as leaders or co-leader. LMATs administer crisis intervention to patients in psychological distress handling emergencies within the scope of practice. They perform clinical supervision and oversight of patient care. They handle the coordination of treatment, and management of acute and chronic substance use and mental health issues. LMATs manage a caseload of patients with complex addictions, and mental and related physical problems. LMATs involve participants and their identified support systems in the treatment via education, treatment and planning. They develop a diagnostic evaluation/summary of the client's substance abuse and coexisting conditions. LMATs utilize assessment and diagnostic evaluations to develop an individualized treatment plan; and incorporate assessments and psychological testing results from physical exams and urine toxicology data for use by a multidisciplinary treatment team to develop a treatment plan. They make recommendations to the treatment team regarding readiness for discharge. LMATs are part of the team that formulates discharge plans and arranges referrals to community agencies and organizations. They ascertain the employment history to include employment difficulties; and conduct an assessment for vocational services planning and housing support and provide community-based resources that assist with recovery. LMATs collaborate with other disciplines to compile data to ensure quality patient care and compliance with Joint Commission Standards and ensure current information is available.

e. Addiction Therapist (Licensed Master's) Program Coordinator, GS-12.

(1) **Experience and Licensure.** One year of creditable experience comparable to the next lower grade level. Some jurisdictions' licenses do not license an individual to provide clinical supervision to trainees or unlicensed ATs. HR Staff will refer to specific jurisdiction's licensing laws regarding the requirements for providing clinical supervision.

(2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSAs).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

(a) Skill in analyzing organizational issues to develop and implement solutions that result in the sound operation of a SUD program.

(b) Skill to effectively manage quality and productivity in the SUD program.

(c) Skill in program planning for the continual development of policies and procedures of a SUD program, including staff training

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), and variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Program coordinators implement, direct and coordinate the work and functions of SUD programs. Depending on the structure of the service/facility, program coordinators may work independently or report directly to the program manager who has overall responsibility for the program. Program coordinators are administratively responsible for a clinical SUD program (e.g., Residential Treatment, Intensive Outpatient Treatment, Opioid Replacement Therapy and Outpatient Treatment, etc.). They manage the programs daily operations and prepare reports and statistics for facility, VISN and national use. They orient and provide on-the-job training for new and current ATs/ LMATs within their program, ensuring all ATs/ LMATs training requirements are met. Program coordinators instruct and coordinate care with multidisciplinary staff. They may provide clinical supervision over unlicensed and licensed AT or LMAT trainees. They also may administratively manage any employees assigned to their program if the structure of the Department does not support a program manager level assignment.

f. Lead Addiction Therapist (Licensed Master's) GS-12.

(1) **Experience and Licensure.** One year of creditable experience equivalent to the next lower grade. HR Staff will refer to specific jurisdictions' licensing laws regarding the requirements for providing clinical supervision. Some jurisdictions' licenses require an additional credential (for example, State Approved Supervisor) to provide clinical supervision to trainees or unlicensed ATs.

(2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA).** In addition to the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

(a) Skill in interpersonal relationships in dealing with employees, team leaders and managers.

(b) Ability to provide staff training and development.

(c) Ability to independently set priorities in order to meet multiple deadlines.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must consist of significant scope, complexity (difficulty), variety and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Lead LMATs report directly to SUD Directors. Lead LMATs assist with managing SUD treatment services of at least three AT staff. They provide recommendations to supervisors (SUD Director) of any clinical changes to policy and procedure. Lead LMATs communicate assignments with milestones, priorities, expected outcomes, deadlines and time frames for completing assignments. They make adjustments to assignments to distribute and balance workload and tasks among staff to accomplish the workload in accordance with the established priorities of the SUD Director or designee. Lead LMATs are experts in addiction therapy and are the points of contact to answer questions pertaining to the program providing consultation in the care and management of patients to other addiction therapists. They monitor and report on the status and progress of work completed for AT and LMAT staff to ensure the supervisors' instructions on work priorities, methods, deadlines and quality have been met. They address program issues under review and problems to be resolved by providing advice on work methods, practices and procedures. Lead LMATs ensure AT and LMAT staff comply with clinical procedures, treatment goals and standards of practice. Lead LMATs provide leadership, direction, orientation, coaching, in-service training, staff development and continuing education programs for assigned social work staff. They assist in communicating the organizations' strategic plan, mission, vision and values to the clinical staff and ensure integration into the work plans, products and services. Lead LMATs maintain reference materials, project files and documentation of policies, procedures and written instructions to ensure staff is kept up to date and well informed. Lead LMATs assist with the oversight of EBT provided by other LMATs. They analyze and provide oversight of core quality and performance improvement projects and reports. Leads participate actively in quality assurance programs within their facility, reporting accomplishments, issues within the program, need for resources, training, equipment and the status or completion of tasks to appropriate management. They assist SUD Directors or designees in collaborating with other disciplines in compiling data for quality management to ensure quality patient care and compliance with accreditation organizations and VA standards and ensure current information is available. Lead LMATs provide input to the SUD Director or designee on performance reviews for ATs and LMATs.

g. Supervisory Addiction Therapist (Licensed Master's) GS-13.

(1) **Experience and Licensure**. One year of creditable experience comparable to the next lower level. HR Office staff will refer to specific jurisdiction's licensing laws regarding the requirements for providing clinical supervision. Some jurisdictions' licenses do not license an individual to provide clinical supervision to trainees or unlicensed ATs.

(2) **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA).** In addition to meeting the experience above, the candidate must demonstrate the following KSAs:

(a) Knowledge of supervisory duties, including clinical supervision, consultation, negotiation with other departments and quality improvement.

(b) Skill in interpersonal relationships with individuals at various levels.

(c) Skill in managing budget and staff allocations in the facility.

(d) Ability to independently set priorities to meet multiple deadlines.

(3) **Assignment.** For all assignments above the full performance level, the higher-level duties must be of significant scope, administrative independence, complexity and range of variety as described in this standard at the specified grade level and be performed by the incumbent at least 25% of the time. Supervisory LMATs are the program managers and directors of SUD programs. They manage the overall daily operations of SUD programs and administrative supervision of staff within programs. They ensure compliance with accrediting body standards. SUD directors develop and implement program policies and procedures and serve as principal counselors to addiction staff at varying levels and assignments. SUD directors oversee the program budget and staffing requirements. They develop and implement program goal setting, design, conduct and report the result of research relevant to mental health as a body of knowledge. SUD directors monitor and make work assignments, complete performance reviews, resolve daily workplace issues and maintain efficient workflow (e.g., monitor and report on the status and progress of work completed for all AT and LMAT staff to ensure the supervisor's instructions on work priorities, methods, deadlines and quality have been met). They interview candidates for positions, and recommend appointments, advancements, or disciplinary actions when appropriate. They develop functional statements and are responsible for the professional and administrative management of an assigned area. They assign personnel and serve as a mentor to help employees develop their full potential. SUD directors establish performance standards and evaluate the overall performance of employees; define competency requirements and identify

the developmental and training needs of their staff. They clinically supervise LMAT staff in crisis intervention, psychodiagnostic and management of mental health outpatients. Management officials should refer to specific state licensing/certification requirements regarding clinical supervision. SUD directors also serve as consultants for internal and external departments and treatment organizations.]

RESPONSIBLE OFFICE: Human Resources and Administration/Operations, Security and Preparedness (HRA/OSP) (006), Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer (OCHCO) (05), Recruitment and Placement Policy Service (059)