

About ESH

Eastern State Hospital (ESH) is the nation's first public mental health hospital, claiming the slogan "the first to care." The hospital was founded in 1773, with an emphasis on community-focused mental health care. In the past 250+ years, we have made continuous efforts to improve the care we provide.

The current hospital campus situated on 500 acres & consists of 2 patient care buildings. We have a staff of over 900 to care for up to ~300 patients. ESH is accredited by The Joint Commission & offers active treatment to residents of southeastern Virginia.

A short drive from Washington DC, Virginia Beach, & Richmond, Virginia - Eastern State Hospital (ESH) is located 3 miles west of Colonial Williamsburg. Our region is easily accessible & extremely diverse.



Mission Statements

At ESH, our mission is to partner with those we serve to promote personal independence. Our vision is to continuously pursue the highest quality services that empower individuals in their recovery. Our virtues are to demonstrate & encourage compassion, self-determination, empowerment, honesty, integrity, cooperation, teamwork, & respect.

The Psychology Department is committed to excellence in clinical & forensic assessment, case formulation, & therapeutic interventions. The department utilizes research to inform all aspects of clinical practice at ESH, including psychological assessment & treatment, program design & implementation, consultation to improve the environmental milieu, & collaboration with other disciplines. We uphold our principles & commitment to facilitating autonomy & empowerment, so we may foster a culture of recovery from serious mental illness.



HPSA
Health Professions
Storage Area



Virginia Department of
Behavioral Health &
Developmental Services

Eastern State Hospital | 4601 Ironbound Road, Williamsburg, Virginia 23188
Phone (757) 253-5181 | Fax (757) 253-5065 | esh.dhhs.virginia.gov

Eastern State Hospital

Advanced Psychology Practicum 2026-2027



**Eastern State Hospital
Department of Psychology
4601 Ironbound Rd
Williamsburg, VA 23188**

Our Patient Population

Age. Our hospital provides treatment for emerging adults, adults, & older adults. Placement at our site thus involves exposure to much of the lifespan (age 18+).

Presenting Problems. We primarily serve adults with severe & persistent mental illness. However, much of our population experiences co-occurring intellectual disabilities, developmental disabilities, personality disorders, trauma symptoms, substance use disorders, neurocognitive decline, & physical health problems.

Legal Status. Increasingly ESH's patient population has become justice-involved. We do serve civilly committed patients without legal involvement, but primarily jail transfers hospitalized for temporary stabilization, competency restoration, initial evaluations of competency/sanity; & insanity acquittees working through the graduated privileging system.

Socioeconomic Status. As a state facility, many of the patients in our care are indigent.

Veteran Status. With proximity to U.S. Army, Navy, & Air Force hubs in particular, many of our patients are veterans, & at times are active duty military personnel.

Additional Cultural & Demographic Factors. The hospital serves the southeastern region of Virginia, & reflects the local demographics with respect to race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, religion, etc.

*Students are encouraged to communicate any specialized interests in case those can be accommodated

Our Training Program

Our training year runs from August to May (2+ days on site required), with the option to extend into summer.

Clinical Responsibilities. Psychological testing on an inpatient basis (e.g., psychodiagnostic, malingering, neurocognitive), individual therapy, & group therapy.

Communication. Experience in clinical report writing, writing progress notes, & communicating with staff of other disciplines verbally & in writing.

Observation. Exposure to as many inpatient hospital functions as possible, with opportunities to observe & participate in formal forensic evaluations (e.g., competency, interpersonal violence risk, temporary custody), clinical assessments (e.g., intake assessments, suicide risk), treatment team meetings, civil commitment hearings, court hearings for judicial authorization for medication, multidisciplinary review team (MDRT) meetings regarding medication, etc.

Supervision. We will offer group supervision & individual supervision by licensed psychologists and/or a postdoctoral fellow supervised by a licensed psychologist, to allow for exposure to a range of supervision styles.

Didactic Training. In-person trainings, recommended webinars, & the weekly DBHDS forensic seminar.

Research. Research opportunities can also be made available to those with interest.

<https://dbhds.virginia.gov/facilities/esh/research-training-opportunities/>

Our Training Philosophy

Our doctoral psychology training program operates in tandem with our established postdoctoral fellowship, & our counselor training program. We aim to train strong clinicians & future colleagues, with interest in gaining experience with a largely underserved population. We emphasize knowledge of the law & consistent ethics. We encourage application of theoretical knowledge, & understanding of evidence-based practices, in clinical practice. All ESH services must meet appropriate national standards of care.

How to Apply

Please submit application materials via email to the ESH Psychology Practicum Training Director:

Laura M. Grossi, PhD, ABPP (SMI)
laura.grossi@dbhds.virginia.gov

Office Phone: (757) 208-7818

Required Materials:

- 1 Cover Letter
- 1 Curriculum Vitae
- 1 De-identified Assessment Report
- 2 Letters of Recommendation

Application Deadline: 02/06/2026

Interviews: March 2026 (exact dates TBD)

Acceptance Information: We anticipate taking 2 qualified doctoral students, at least in their 3rd year of training.