

INDIANA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY

Guidelines for Identifying a Field Placement

- Get started early so as to reduce your stress and prevent you from scrambling to secure a placement last minute. The process can take time and there may be competition from other students in your area.
- Read and familiarize yourself with the *MSW Field Manual* so you know what will be expected of you at your field placement and can consider these items when interviewing with an agency.
- Remember that your Foundation Year field placement is meant to help you develop broader more generalist practice skills and your Advanced Year field placement will be more clinically in depth. If you are interested in a specific type of clinical or therapeutic work, it is better to save this internship for your Advanced Year.
- Identify at least 3-5 agencies in your area that serve a population of interest for you (Adults, Children, Older adults, Individuals who are homeless, mentally ill, incarcerated youth, etc.) You can use Google to search for agencies that serve your chosen population in your area or if 2-1-1 is available in your state, you can call or visit their website for more information. The United Way may also be a helpful resource.
- Once you have identified a possible agency, review the agency's website and the kinds of services they offer to confirm it is a viable placement for you. If information about agency personnel is available, write down the names of people you can contact directly about a field placement. (Clinical director, program directors, agency director or CEO).
- Contact the agency directly and ask if they take or are interested in taking on an MSW student for an internship. Calling the agency directly is preferred over sending an email that you find on a website. Your email may not be read or quickly overlooked.
- The best person to speak with about this is a clinical director or a higher level agency director. You can also speak with someone in Human Resources if needed.
- If the agency is interested, ask specifically about whether they can take interns for the time period you need. Some agencies may accept interns but only during certain times of the year.
- Request an interview with the agency and set up a time and date to meet face to face.
- At the interview, make sure to be on time and treat it the same way you would a job interview. Dress professionally and bring a prepared set of questions that you have about the agency and what they have to offer you as an intern. Be prepared also to share what you have to offer as an intern and why you would be a good fit.

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- Ask about the availability of an MSW with two or more years of experience to supervise you. If an MSW is not available, determine who would provide the supervision and in what way.
- Ask about the agency's decision making timeline for letting you know if you would be accepted as an intern and any orientation or pre-practicum requirements you would need to complete.
- Get a business card with email and follow up information from the person you interview with before leaving.
- After the interview, use the Field Placement Initial Site Review form to capture notes and rate the agency as a possible field placement.
- Email the person you interviewed with within 1-2 business days to thank them for the interview and express your continued interest or politely decline if you have decided not to pursue it further.
- Follow up with a phone call to the person you interviewed with just prior to the stated decision making timeframe.
- **If you are having trouble finding an agency that is interested or takes interns, contact the director of field to brainstorm and strategize early in the process. David.King2@Indwes.edu**