The Poverello Center offers a variety of services and housing options for individuals and families who are homeless or low-income. At the downtown facility, “the Pov” combines the services of an emergency shelter, food pantry, soup kitchen, and clothing room. Also, health care, case management, and resource referral services can be accessed at the downtown location. In addition to the services found within the walls of the main facility, the Poverello Center conducts outreach to homeless individuals and families “on the street” or “camping out”. The Homeless Outreach Team (HOTeam) strives to non-intrusively build relationships and offer services to individuals who don’t go to the shelter.

Along with the downtown facility, the Poverello Center staffs two transitional housing programs – the Joseph Residence for families who are homeless and the Valor House for veterans who are homeless. Both transitional housing programs offer affordable housing combined with supportive services to assist people toward permanent, independent housing and other important goals.

The Poverello Center and all of its programs strive to maintain the dignity and value of each person seeking services, create a safe and supportive environment, and promote independence and sustainable solutions for those we serve.

The emergency shelter at the downtown facility of the Pov is available to offer shelter to adult men and women. Families and individuals are welcome to access the resources of the food pantry, soup kitchen, health care, and clothing room at the Pov. Families with minor children are served at the Joseph Residence. Veterans are served at the Valor House.

Students interested in practicum placements at the Poverello Center or its transitional housing programs will have the opportunity to serve a great diversity of people while meeting their immediate needs of shelter, food, and clothing. There are many ways that students can become involved: case management, direct care services, outreach, program development and implementation, or program evaluation. Each student will have the opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with all Poverello services and clients prior to selecting an emphasis of service or role to engage in. In addition to meaningful, hands-on experiences, students will receive quality, responsive supervision from an MSW graduate of the University of Montana. Finally, students will have opportunities to engage in group learning and service based on the teaching/learning approach used in the Poverello Center’s practicum placements. As many as six practicum students will be accepted for placement at Poverello programs each year.
SHORT TERM PROJECTS (could be completed in a semester or two):
1. **Update and expand reference library** of Missoula city and county resources for the people we serve (referral book – “Resource Book” for all sites; files of resources such as brochures, business cards, posters at each Pov program)
2. **Job coaching** for Opportunity Resources, Inc. (ORI) volunteers on site at Poverello programs. The student would assist volunteers with developmental disabilities in performing their duties and staying focused during their volunteer shift. Additionally, the student may be responsible for providing case notes or progress evaluation to ORI and/or the volunteer.
3. **Create a reference library of regional resources** for the people we serve. This would be a new project to expand our knowledge of resources beyond what’s available locally. It could include making connections and building relationships with other organizations doing similar work or serving our clients in other communities in the region.
4. **Continue current archive project** to coalesce and organize pictures, stories, newsletters, articles, projects of the Poverello Center over the years. This project would be used to document the services and facility of the Poverello prior to its relocation. Information gathered in this project could be used for honoring the old building in our new building’s decor.
5. **Update and expand the central policy and intervention book** at the Poverello Center, Emergency Shelter. The student would be responsible for organizing the current written policies, guidelines, interventions, and training materials into one binder for support staff use and training.
6. **Develop Wellness Lending Libraries** at the Valor House and Joseph Residence. The student would collect, organize, and promote materials for/from local resources that support resident wellness. For example, the student would compile a library of materials such as hiking guides, meditation music, local bicycle regulations, nutrition guides, healthy recipes, etc.

LONG TERM PROJECTS (could require two or more semesters for completion/continuation):
1. **Program evaluation** of all Poverello affiliated programs. In order to better understand the impact and efficacy of its services, the Poverello wishes to thoroughly and critically evaluate the performance of all its programs. The student would engage in strategic planning for ongoing, comprehensive evaluation. Also, the student would conduct evaluation, utilizing creative and client centered techniques to measure program effectiveness. The student would strategize and implement methods for incorporating ongoing evaluation and data collection into program administration. Further, the student would prepare written evaluations, needs assessments, and strategic plans for continuation of evaluation, keeping in mind the likelihood that evaluation projects begun by him/her may be completed by subsequent practicum students.
2. **Develop the Intake & Referral program for the Emergency Shelter**. This project represents a shift in current services away from the practice of providing case management to all shelter clients. Instead, all support staff will have the capability and role of completing intake interviews with all clients. Then those clients in need of referrals would receive the referral information from the support staff completing the intake. One possible referral made after intake for some clients would be to the in-house case managers. The student would develop the new program and related policies and procedures. Additionally, the student would train all support staff in new policies as well as intake process. Further, the student would establish a system of evaluation built into the procedures of the new program.
3. **Develop, implement, and evaluate skill building classes and support groups** at all Poverello programs. While some Pov programs have currently established classes or groups, other programs have none. Each program would benefit from development, expansion, or improvement upon classes and groups. Additionally, assistance to program directors with organizing, facilitating, and evaluating classes and groups is needed. The student would collaborate with each program director and with clients for developing targeted classes and groups. Additionally, the student will establish a system of evaluation built into the concepts of the classes and groups.
4. **Develop a summer lunch and/or after school snack program for children.** In order to better serve the children and families living at the Joseph Residence, a supplemental nutrition program could be created. Working closely with the Joseph Residence Program Director and the Food Rescue Program Director, the student would explore viability, need, resources, target population, method of delivery, policies, and evaluation of such a program.

5. **Provide clinical and administrative support to the service-learning class** with the Sociology Department of the University of Montana. For 3 years, the class has met on site at the Poverello Emergency Shelter, striving to educate undergraduate and graduate students through course work and volunteer service on the issues of hunger and homelessness. The student would provide support to the students grappling with emotional, ethical, or social justice issues relating to the class. Also, the student would assist the teacher in coordinating guest speakers for class time, student volunteer service placements, student evaluations, and client interview opportunities for the students. As needed, the student would advocate for class stakeholders such as the instructor, Sociology Department, students, and especially Poverello clients. Further, the student would act as liaison between the Poverello Center and class stakeholders.

6. **Provide case management to individuals and families experiencing homelessness** within our three distinct service programs; the emergency shelter, the Joseph Residence, or the Valor House. The exact case management approach will vary depending on the population served, longevity of the program, and needs of each individual. The student will have the ability to provide case management support to diverse populations including families, veterans, elderly, and people living with a disability, mental illness or addiction. Case management may be triage in nature or long term. The student will have the ability to learn and employ various models of intervention including motivational interviewing, assessment, and the development of individual services plans. Students will be encouraged to participate in various forums, like the At Risk Housing Coalition’s Case Manager’s Roundtable, to stay up to date on resources in the community. Because each program has very unique needs, the introduction of case management into your learning experience will be individualized and developed in conjunction with your agency supervisor.

7. **Assess needs and options for technological advancements** at all Poverello affiliated programs. Currently, all service tracking databases and systems are antiquated, inadequate, and working in isolation. Ideally, the Poverello would have an integrated, expandable, and service specific tracking system for all programs. The student would work closely with each Program Director to identify needs for technology to track services and resources of their program. Also, the student would research possible technology solutions that would meet the needs of the organization and provide opportunities for growth and expansion of services. Further, when possible, the student would facilitate implementation of new technology into all Poverello programs.

† These projects could be adapted to incorporate two students, either first or second year MSW students.

**D. EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS**

All students will need to submit a resume and 3 professional references to be considered for practicum opportunities at the Poverello Center or its transitional housing programs. Then, students will be invited to an interview to explore their interests in working at the Pov, as well as describe their professional experiences and skill sets to Pov interviewers.

Masters level students are requested to commit to a two-year practicum placement at the Poverello Center. A two-year commitment provides MSW students with the opportunity to do in-depth work on large, comprehensive projects that will expand and improve the Poverello Center’s ability to serve members of our community.

Most importantly, students are expected to treat clients of the Poverello Center and its programs with respect and dignity. Our residents and clients are our neighbors, friends, and equals; worthy of our best abilities to assist them in their most trying times.