



PRESS RELEASE

NBCC Foundation

3 Terrace Way

Greensboro, NC 27403-3660

Phone: 336-232-0376

www.nbccf.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Merida Amarilis Valera Awarded \$11,000 Counseling Fellowship From NBCC and Affiliates

Erie, PA—The NBCC Foundation, an affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), recently selected Merida Amarilis Valera, of Erie, Pennsylvania, for the NBCC Minority Fellowship Program-Addictions Counselors (MFP-AC). As an NBCC MFP-AC fellow, Valera will receive funding and training to support her education and facilitate her addictions counseling service to underserved minority transition-age youth (ages 16–25).



The NBCC MFP-AC is made possible by a grant awarded to NBCC by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) in September 2014.

The Foundation is contracted by NBCC to administer the NBCC MFP-AC, as well as training and collaboration activities, such as [webinars](#), that are open to all National Certified Counselors (NCCs). The goal of the program is to reduce health disparities and improve behavioral health care outcomes for racially and ethnically diverse populations by increasing the available number of culturally competent behavioral health professionals.

The NBCC MFP will distribute up to \$11,000 to Valera and the 29 other master's-level addictions counseling students selected to receive the fellowship award. Valera is both a student and graduate of Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, where she is currently a master's student in the clinical mental health counseling program. Upon graduation, Valera intends to work with transition-age minority youth, particularly those who identify within the gender and sexual/affectional minority spectrum. She would also like to work with people who are often marginalized, such as ethnic minorities and people living in rural areas, where shortages of mental health services are common. Earning this fellowship will allow Valera to attend counseling conferences to establish a stronger professional identity as a counselor, learn evidence-based practices to better serve underserved populations and advocate for the counseling profession.

The Foundation plans to open the next NBCC MFP-AC application period in September 2016. To learn more about the NBCC MFP and its fellows, please visit www.nbccf.org.

ABOUT THE NBCC FOUNDATION

The NBCC Foundation is the nonprofit affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), based in Greensboro, North Carolina. NBCC is the nation's premier professional certification board devoted to credentialing counselors who meet standards for the general and specialty practices of professional counseling. Currently, there are more than 60,000 National Certified Counselors in the United States and more than 50 countries. The Foundation's mission is to leverage the power of counseling by strategically focusing resources for positive change.

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