

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Virginia "Viky" Garcia Awarded \$20,000 Counseling Fellowship From NBCC and Affiliates



Laredo, TX—The NBCC Foundation, an affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC), recently selected Virginia "Viky" Garcia, of Laredo, Texas, for the National Board for Certified Counselors Minority Fellowship Program (NBCC MFP). As an NBCC MFP Fellow, Garcia will receive funding and training to support her education and facilitate her service to underserved minority populations.

The NBCC MFP is made possible by a grant awarded to the NBCC Foundation by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The Foundation administers the MFP, including training and collaboration activities, such as [webinars](#), that are open to all National Certified Counselors (NCCs). The goal of the program is to strengthen the infrastructure that engages diverse individuals in counseling and increases the number of professional counselors providing effective, culturally competent services to underserved populations.

The NBCC Foundation will distribute \$20,000 to Garcia and the other 19 doctoral counseling students selected to receive the fellowship award. Garcia is a graduate of Northern Illinois University, in DeKalb, and is currently a doctoral student in the counselor education and supervision program at St. Mary's University, in San Antonio, Texas. Garcia has served the predominantly Mexican-American border community of Laredo, Texas, in numerous leadership roles in student affairs, low-income housing, interning at the local drug court program, and serving on multiple social service nonprofit boards. She was instrumental in helping to bring the interfaith Laredo Humanitarian Relief Team together in 2014 to address the growing homelessness problem created by the release of asylum-seeking women and children on their own recognizance after being processed by the federal government. She also volunteers to interpret for Spanish-speakers at immigration detention centers when needed. These experiences reignited her long-ago plan to pursue a PhD and to train better, more culturally competent counselors to address the mental health of new Americans, immigrants, and marginalized Latin-American populations. She has served as a research assistant in the International Relations Department of St. Mary's University, assisting in a project focused on asylum seekers and changes in federal policy and practices. Garcia has begun a pilot project with community health partners to assess the level of trauma symptomology in immigrant women of Webb County. The NBCC Minority Fellowship Program will allow Garcia the opportunity to work with a mentor, find support to expand her research interests, and become a better-trained researcher in addressing the disparities in mental health services. The access to networks will increase the quality of her work and ability to collaborate across institutions. She looks forward to a richer doctoral experience and the broader scope that the fellowship will provide.

The NBCC Foundation has also awarded 30 \$10,000 [master's-level fellowships](#) through the MFP-Mental Health Counseling-Master's (MFP-MHC-M) and 40 [master's-level fellowships](#) of \$15,000 through the MFP-Addictions Counselors (MFP-AC). The Foundation plans to open the next NBCC MFP application period in fall 2019. To learn more about the NBCC MFP and its fellows, please visit www.nbccf.org/Programs/Fellows.

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 66,000 board certified counselors in the United States and over 50 countries. The Foundation's mission is to leverage the power of counseling by strategically focusing resources for positive change.

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