

Pre-Health Service Fellowship

A year of meaningful volunteer service alongside people in recovery, for students and professionals building experience in health and human services.

At a glance: 12-month commitment · 2 to 3 hours a week · cohorts run September to August · full training provided · pilot cohort launching Winter 2027

Why this fellowship

Medical schools, nursing and allied health programs, and employers all look past the number of hours on an application. They want sustained, meaningful experience with real people. Memorial University's Faculty of Medicine, for example, does not require a set number of volunteer hours; it weighs volunteer and work experience alongside academics, references and interviews.

Guardians offers something more useful than hours: a year of consistent work with a vulnerable population, real stories to draw on in interviews, and a supervisor who knows you well enough to write a strong, specific reference. Addiction and mental health are public health issues that every future clinician and helping professional will face.

Who should apply

- Pre-medical students preparing for medical school applications
- Nursing, social work, psychology and pharmacy students
- Early-career professionals building experience for jobs in health, social services and community work
- Anyone mature, reliable and ready to commit to a full year

Volunteer roles

Role	What you will do	What you gain
Benefits navigation assistant	Help clients gather documents, book appointments for disability tax credit and CPP Disability forms, and track applications	Direct client work in health-system navigation; the strongest role for a health-program application
Sober living house support	Life-skills sessions, meal planning, rides to appointments and social activities alongside staff	Sustained, trusting relationships with residents
Street outreach (supervised, in pairs)	Build relationships with people on the street, share information about Guardians' homes and programs, hand out resource cards, and connect people to staff	Front-line experience as the first bridge into recovery supports
Research and data	Track outcomes such as housing retention and benefits obtained	Research experience and data skills
Health education	Run workshops on nutrition, navigating the health system and emergency response	Teaching and public communication experience

Training you receive

Every fellow completes the following before their first shift. The training is itself something you can list on your applications.

- Criminal record and vulnerable sector check
- Confidentiality agreement and code of conduct
- Naloxone (overdose response) training
- Trauma-informed care and stigma-free language
- Mental Health First Aid or an equivalent course
- Orientation on recovery and the Guardians of Recovery mission

What you get

- **Documented experience.** Hours and duties are logged throughout the year, and every fellow receives an annual summary letter.
- **Monthly reflection.** Group debriefs on ethics, difficult situations and lessons learned, the same self-awareness interviews like the MMI are designed to test.
- **Earned references.** Guardians writes strong, specific references for fellows who have earned them through consistent, committed service.
- **A leadership path.** Second-year fellows can become team leads who train and mentor new volunteers.
- **Good timing.** A fall start gives you a full year of experience and a reference ready for the next application cycle.

Clear boundaries

To protect clients and fellows, volunteers do not give medical advice, do not handle medications and do not act as counsellors. Street outreach is always done in pairs, and only after training. Clients always know when they are working with a volunteer and may decline.

How to apply

Submit a short application through the Guardians of Recovery website, followed by a brief interview. We select for maturity, reliability and genuine interest in serving people in recovery, not grades alone. Space in each cohort is limited.

Timeline: Winter 2027 pilot cohort of 5 to 8 fellows · First full 12-month cohort opens September 2027

Admissions criteria referenced: Memorial University Doctor of Medicine program, mun.ca/undergrad/programs/medicine. Requirements change; always confirm directly with the program you are applying to.