

Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship

BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION
Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance

PURPOSE

The Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship Program is funded subject to the availability of funds and appropriation from the Massachusetts Legislature. The behavioral health workforce is identified as a priority workforce area. Supporting individuals in the behavioral health pipeline throughout their education and career development is essential to increasing the pool of available behavioral health professionals working to serve the needs of the Commonwealth. The Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship program will provide funds to Massachusetts public and private institutions of higher education (IHEs) to provide financial incentives for behavioral health students to complete graduate programs (master's degrees or graduate-level certificates) and apply newly advanced skills to high need behavioral health settings in Massachusetts.

DEFINITIONS

- **Eligible Institution:**
Accredited public and private higher education institutions located in the Commonwealth and authorized to grant degrees that offer eligible programs, listed below:

AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
ASSUMPTION UNIVERSITY
BAY PATH UNIVERSITY
BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC
BOSTON COLLEGE
BOSTON GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOANALYSIS INC
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
BRIDGEWATER STATE UNIVERSITY
CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE
EMMANUEL COLLEGE
COLLEGE OF OUR LADY OF THE ELMS

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FITCHBURG STATE UNIVERSITY
FRAMINGHAM STATE UNIVERSITY
GORDON COLLEGE
GORDON-CONWELL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
LESLEY UNIVERSITY
MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
MCPHS UNIVERSITY
MERRIMACK COLLEGE
MGH INSTITUTE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONS
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
REGIS COLLEGE
SALEM STATE UNIVERSITY
SIMMONS UNIVERSITY
SMITH COLLEGE
SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE
SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY
TUFTS UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS-AMHERST
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS-BOSTON
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS-DARTMOUTH
WESTERN NEW ENGLAND UNIVERSITY
WESTFIELD STATE UNIVERSITY
WILLIAM JAMES COLLEGE
WORCESTER STATE UNIVERSITY

Or any other accredited public or private higher education institutions located and authorized to grant degrees in the Commonwealth that (1) offer eligible programs, and (2) are attended by an eligible student that currently lives in one of the [Advancing Health Equity in Massachusetts Priority Geographies](#) municipalities.

- **Eligible Program:**

Approved behavioral health master's degree or graduate-level certificate programs, inclusive of mental health and substance use disorder (SUD)/opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment programs, listed below:

- Social Work
- Mental Health Counseling

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- Substance Abuse Counseling
- Marriage and Family Therapy/Counseling
- Rehabilitation Counseling
- Level Psychology programs
- Psychoanalysis
- Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing programs
- Pastoral Counseling programs

Or any other master's degree or graduate-level certificate programs that directly name behavioral health, mental health, or substance use treatment as its specific area of inquiry within the following CIP Codes:

Program	CIP Code
College Student Counseling and Personnel Services	13.1102
Student Counseling and Personnel Services, Other	13.1199
Pastoral Studies/Counseling	39.0701
Clinical Psychology	42.2801
Counseling Psychology	42.2803
School Psychology	42.2805
Educational Psychology	42.2806
Health/Medical Psychology	42.2810
Forensic Psychology	42.2812
Applied Behavior Analysis	42.2814
Clinical, Counseling and Applied Psychology, Other	42.2899
Social Work	44.0701
Youth Services/Administration	44.0702
Substance Abuse/Addiction Counseling	51.1501
Community Health Services/Liaison/Counseling	51.1504
Marriage and Family Therapy/Counseling	51.1505
Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy	51.1507
Mental Health Counseling/Counselor	51.1508
Mental and Social Health Services and Allied Professions, Other	51.1599
Community Health and Preventive Medicine.	51.2208
Maternal and Child Health	51.2209
Behavioral Aspects of Health	51.2212
Art Therapy/Therapist	51.2301
Music Therapy/Therapist	51.2305
Occupational Therapy/Therapist	51.2306
Therapeutic Recreation/Recreational Therapy	51.2309

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Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling/Counselor	51.2310
Rehabilitation and Therapeutic Professions, Other	51.2399
Psychiatric/Mental Health Nurse/Nursing	51.3810
Geriatric Nurse/Nursing	51.3821

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship program, the student must:

- a) be enrolled in an eligible institution, as defined;
- b) (1) be a U.S. Citizen, permanent legal resident, or non-citizen eligible under Title IV regulations and physically reside in Massachusetts for at least one year, as of the start of the enrolled term with an intent to remain in Massachusetts consistent with Board of Higher Education policy; or (2) have an approved eligibility status designated by the Board of Higher Education pursuant to Section 9 of Chapter 15A, as amended by Section 11 of Chapter 28 of the Acts of 2023;
- c) complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or, if ineligible to complete the FAFSA, then complete the Massachusetts Application for State Financial Aid (MASFA);
- d) comply with financial aid verification requirements;
- e) not be in default on any federal or state student loans for attendance at any institution, or owe a refund for any previous state financial aid program;
- f) sign a Terms and Conditions Agreement to continue employment and commit to providing behavioral health services in Massachusetts upon completing the eligible program's degree requirements, which shall be six months of service for each semester of award under this program, following completion of the program;
- g) enroll, as a matriculated student, on a full-time or part-time basis (minimum of 6 credits, or the equivalent) in an eligible program of study; and
- h) meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) according to institution's requirements and federal standards.
- i) not be a recipient of funds under any of the following financial aid workforce programs: Tomorrow's Teachers Scholarship, High Demand Scholarship, Early Childhood Educators Scholarship, or the Paraprofessional Grant. Students who

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simultaneously apply and meet eligibility criteria for more than one of these workforce programs shall only be determined eligible for one program.

PROGRAM CONDITIONS

- Disbursement of funds: Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship funding is disbursed to institutions on a semester basis for students who meet all eligibility criteria, as certified by the institution;
- Payment of Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship funds is sent directly to the institution from the Commonwealth's Comptroller's Office. Funds must be disbursed to students by the end of the academic year.
- The institution is required to report recipient, programmatic, and other data to the Department of Higher Education (DHE) upon request;
- Institutions shall facilitate access to on-campus support services to students who receive assistance under the Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship program, to promote persistence in and completion of their program of study;
- The institution is responsible for verifying student eligibility;
- Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarships may be awarded to support summer enrollment, if funds are available; and
- Institutions are required, upon request, to submit data to the Department of Higher Education to demonstrate maintenance of fiscal effort in their commitment to institutional aid to students, while participating in the Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship Program.

RECIPIENT RESPONSIBILITIES

To remain eligible for the Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship program, the student must:

- a) sign a scholarship agreement to obtain certification and/or licensure and commit to working in Massachusetts for at least six months per academic semester of award under this program pursuant to the service commitment section below, and

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provided that failure to complete the required behavioral health work commitment will result in a repayment of funds as defined in said agreement;

- b) for individuals already employed in an eligible behavioral health setting, remain employed at that setting or another eligible behavioral health setting, and for individuals not yet employed in an eligible behavioral health setting, become employed in an eligible behavioral health setting within 6 months of completing an approved behavioral health master's degree or graduate-level certificate;
- c) annually provide proof of employment to document fulfillment of the service obligation;
- d) acknowledge that this scholarship is considered repayment through service and in absence of fulfilling that commitment, the scholarship reverts to a loan that must be repaid by the scholarship recipient, per the terms of the promissory note; and
- e) acknowledge the set-forth repayment through service schedule, that 6 months of work will forgive one semester of scholarship.

AWARD VALUE

The Board of Higher Education is authorized to award up to \$12,500 for tuition, fees, and stipends for an academic year in which a student enrolls in and makes satisfactory academic progress in an eligible program; provided, and subject to appropriation and available funding, the Department of Higher Education may increase awards above these limits but not to exceed a student's total cost of attendance. Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship awards are subject to the availability of funding and appropriation by the Massachusetts legislature.

AWARD DISBURSEMENT

Participating institutions must verify that each recipient is eligible in accordance with guidelines established for the Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship program, and that the student is enrolled in an approved behavioral health program. Disbursement of awards will not be made until the student's signed promissory note has been received and approved by the Department of Higher Education.

Institutions are required to refund the Department any funds that are deemed to have been improperly awarded and disbursed to recipients who are later determined to be ineligible for the program. Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarships may be awarded to support summer enrollment if funds are available and consistent with the same terms for service commitment as set forth below.

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FORFEITURE OF SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

Recipients of Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarships who fail to complete the behavioral health work commitment are required to repay all scholarship funds, as outlined in the promissory note.

AWARD PRIORITY

In the event the fiscal year appropriation is not sufficient to permit a full award to each eligible applicant, awards shall be prioritized for students meeting all the award priority criteria noted as follows:

- Students who are culturally/linguistically diverse;
- Students who live in OR are completing programs in schools within [Advancing Health Equity in Massachusetts Priority Geographies](#) municipalities;
- Students who are incumbent healthcare workers seeking career advancement in behavioral health who are working at least 20 hours/week; and
- Students who are working in any area of healthcare (including behavioral health) at least 20 hours/week.

Subject to available funding, students that meet some of the criteria may also be eligible for a full award after students meeting all award priority criteria have been awarded.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The Department of Higher Education (DHE) is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of the Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship program. Institutions that have signed an agreement to participate in the Massachusetts State financial aid programs are required to share data for all students with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) or its designee, and the Office of Student Financial Assistance for this purpose. The program may be evaluated annually to determine any immediate impact or to determine if adjustments are required for various processes, such as disbursement of funds.

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PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

All institutions receiving funds under the Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship Program must have an active Massachusetts State Financial Aid Participation Agreement on file with the Massachusetts Office of Student Financial Assistance (OSFA).

AUDIT REQUIREMENT

- a) It shall be the responsibility of each college to maintain documentation of a recipient student's eligibility for the Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship program.
- b) The Commissioner shall require each institution to furnish annually to the BHE a report detailing specific information regarding recipients of the Behavioral Health Workforce Scholarship program. OSFA will establish the timeline, specifications, and procedures for this report, which shall include the number and type of behavioral health degree programs supported at each institution by CIP code and credential level, the number of students supported by each program at each institution, aggregate demographic information about students participating in the program, enrollment status and graduation rates of students supported by each program, and student-level information including but not limited to employment status, role, and location.
- c) All financial books, records and documents pertaining to this Program shall, at all times, be open to inspection, review and audit by the Commissioner, the State Auditor or their authorized representatives who shall have access to the premises wherever such books, records, and documents are for seven years. An institution may retain such records for a period of five years, if approval is received from the Records Conservation Board in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 30, Section 42.