

National Mental Health Workforce Acceleration Collaborative

Addressing the Nation's Mental Health Workforce Shortage

Over 50 million people in the U.S. — about 1 in 7 — experience mental illness, yet there is only one mental health provider for every 350 people in the U.S. This shortage of providers contributes to nearly 55% of adults with mental illness receiving no treatment.

Program Overview

The National Mental Health Workforce Acceleration Collaborative, also known as the Accelerator, aims to expand access to mental health and substance use care by increasing the number of qualified licensed clinicians who can provide treatment to clients, while additionally building a workforce that better represents and understands the communities it serves.

The Accelerator program provides support to post-master's candidates, who are recent master's-level graduates working full time in clinical settings and pursuing licensure in **Marriage and Family Therapy, Social Work** or **Professional Counseling**. Selected post-master's candidates will be offered up to \$10,000 in benefits and milestone-based financial incentives, including a cash stipend and professional development funds.

Key Program Benefits

- **Up to \$10,000 in incentives**
 - Milestone-based incentives for licensure progress and completion
 - Up to \$8,300 provided in cash stipends
 - Up to \$1,700 provided in professional development benefits (including licensure exam preparation support services)
- **Comprehensive support**
 - Professional development opportunities
 - Library of resources to support the licensure journey
 - Live and on-demand training and technical assistance from experts in the field
 - Peer support groups, mentorship and other networking opportunities

Candidate Eligibility Requirements

An eligible candidate for the Accelerator program should be a full-time employee who:

- Holds a master's degree from an accredited program in one of the following:
 - Counseling psychology
 - Mental health counseling
 - Marriage and family therapy/counseling
 - Social work
 - Substance use/addiction counseling

- Is licensed at the appropriate associate license level, if necessary, at hire date or soon after the start of employment, to begin accruing the required hours for clinical licensure.
- Has expressed intent to achieve one of the following clinical licenses and is early on their path to collecting clinical licensure hours (eligible candidates cannot have accrued over 20% of their clinical hours):
 - Licensed Professional Counselor
 - Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor
 - Licensed Mental Health Counselor
 - Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist
 - Licensed Clinical Social Worker
- Has recently (within the past year) obtained a qualifying master's degree and is beginning to accrue clinical licensure hours *OR* previously began working toward clinical licensure but left the behavioral health field and has now reentered to resume pursuit of licensure.
- Demonstrates financial need to obtain clinical licensure or would experience significant financial hardship in doing so without support from the Accelerator program.
- Aligns with their community by contributing to the recruitment and retention of a behavioral health workforce that reflects the populations it serves.
- Is currently employed at or has an offer letter from a community health agency. (See below for employer eligibility criteria; for-profit private practice employees generally are not eligible.)

Employer Eligibility Requirements

Candidates are expected to identify or hold employment at a site that falls into one of these categories:

- Health care facility (e.g. academic medical institution, health care system, Federally Qualified Health Center, community health care clinic, primary care)
- Mental health and substance use services (e.g., outpatient crisis stabilization services, residential or outpatient substance use services, Medication Assisted Treatment)
- Community-based and outreach services (e.g., community outreach, mobile units, home-based services, school-based services)
- Supportive and specialized services (e.g., residential or community services for intellectual/developmental disabilities, supportive employment, housing)

Please note: For-profit entities may be considered as eligible employment sites if the client population served, payer mix and mission of the organization are aligned with the NMHWAC program's intention. Generally, for-profit private practices serving primarily privately insured clients are not eligible and will only be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Have questions or want to learn more? Contact us at NMHWAC@TheNationalCouncil.org.