
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 1926 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY HOWARD, FREEMAN, HILL-EVANS, N. NELSON,
SCHLOSSBERG, SANCHEZ, D. WILLIAMS, MADDEN, DELLOSO, CIRESI,
MALAGARI, WARREN AND O'MARA, SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE,
SEPTEMBER 28, 2021

AN ACT

1 Establishing the Social Worker Educational Enrollment and
2 Training Program; and providing for authorization of
3 internship positions, for award of internship positions and
4 for funding of program; and making an appropriation.

5 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
6 hereby enacts as follows:

7 Section 1. Short title.

8 This act shall be known and may be cited as the Social Worker
9 Educational Enrollment and Training Program Act.

10 Section 2. Definitions.

11 The following words and phrases when used in this act shall
12 have the meanings given to them in this section unless the
13 context clearly indicates otherwise:

14 "Board." The State Board of Social Workers, Marriage and
15 Family Therapists and Professional Counselors.

16 "Commitment stipend." Money provided under the program to a
17 qualified applicant who enters into a contract with the
18 department under section 3(c)(1).

1 "Department." The Department of Health of the Commonwealth.

2 "Internship position." An internship position authorized by
3 the department for the program under section 4.

4 "Mental health professional shortage area or facility." Any
5 of the following:

6 (1) An area in this Commonwealth that has been certified
7 by the department as having a shortage of mental health
8 professionals based on any of the following:

9 (i) The designation of the area's geographic
10 location by the Bureau of Health Workforce under the
11 United States Health Resources and Services
12 Administration as having a shortage of mental health
13 professionals.

14 (ii) The department's determination that the area
15 has a critical shortage of clinical social workers.

16 (2) A facility in this Commonwealth that has been
17 certified by the department as having a shortage of mental
18 health professionals based on any of the following:

19 (i) The designation of the facility by the Bureau of
20 Health Workforce under the United States Health Resources
21 and Services Administration as having a shortage of
22 mental health professionals.

23 (ii) The department's determination that the
24 facility has a critical shortage of clinical social
25 workers.

26 "Program." The Social Worker Educational Enrollment and
27 Training Program established under section 3(a).

28 "Qualified applicant." An individual who meets all of the
29 criteria under section 3(b).

30 "Recipient." A qualified applicant who receives a commitment

1 stipend.

2 Section 3. Social Worker Educational Enrollment and Training
3 Program.

4 (a) Establishment.--The Social Worker Educational Enrollment
5 and Training Program is established within the department. The
6 department shall administer the program to provide commitment
7 stipends to qualified applicants who continue to practice
8 clinical social work in mental health professional shortage
9 areas. The department may consult with the Department of Human
10 Services to administer the program.

11 (b) Qualifications.--To qualify for the program, an
12 individual shall meet all of the following criteria:

13 (1) The individual is a resident of this Commonwealth.

14 (2) The individual holds a master's degree in social
15 work or social welfare or a doctoral degree in social work
16 from an accredited school of social work as recognized by the
17 board and has passed a clinical social work examination
18 acceptable to the board.

19 (3) The individual may not have previously completed the
20 equivalent of 12 months or 1,500 hours of a doctoral
21 internship program or position accredited by the board.

22 (4) The individual shall submit an application to the
23 department on a form and in a manner specified by the
24 department.

25 (c) Stipends.--The following apply:

26 (1) A qualified applicant shall be eligible to receive a
27 commitment stipend if the qualified applicant enters into a
28 contract with the department to continue serving in a mental
29 health professional shortage area upon the completion of an
30 internship position under section 4.

1 (2) A recipient shall be provided with a commitment
2 stipend of \$30,000 for the duration of the internship
3 position. The amount shall be adjusted annually for inflation
4 in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for All Urban
5 Consumers (CPI-U) for the United States for all items as
6 published by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of
7 Labor Statistics, for the previous 12-month period.

8 Section 4. Authorization of internship positions.

9 Subject to the availability of money for the program, the
10 department shall authorize internship positions located within
11 mental health professional shortage areas to participate in the
12 program in accordance with the following:

13 (1) The department shall ensure that the authorized
14 internship positions are equally distributed across rural and
15 urban areas of this Commonwealth.

16 (2) The department shall ensure that internship
17 positions provide qualified applicants with comprehensive
18 clinical training, supervision and instructional experiences
19 that prepare qualified applicants with the necessary
20 competencies to enter into the health care workforce.

21 (3) The department shall prioritize authorizing
22 internship positions in facilities that provide Medicaid-
23 covered mental health services and are accredited by the
24 National Association for Behavioral Healthcare, the National
25 Association of Social Workers, the Association of Social Work
26 Boards, the Clinical Social Work Association, the American
27 Board of Clinical Social Work or another national accrediting
28 agency for social work.

29 (4) The department shall ensure that internship
30 positions satisfy the requirements for supervised experience

1 necessary to obtain licensure to practice clinical social
2 work in accordance with the act of July 9, 1987 (P.L.220,
3 No.39), known as the Social Workers, Marriage and Family
4 Therapists and Professional Counselors Act.

5 Section 5. Award of internship positions.

6 (a) Applications.--The department shall establish a process
7 for a qualified applicant to apply for and receive an internship
8 position in accordance with this act.

9 (b) Obligations of recipient.--A qualified applicant shall
10 enter into a contract with the department that requires the
11 recipient, upon the successful completion of an internship
12 position, to be employed as a clinical social worker in a
13 designated mental health professional shortage area for a period
14 of not less than 12 months. The recipient shall have the
15 following duties:

16 (1) The recipient shall permit the department to
17 determine compliance with the employment requirements and all
18 other terms of the contract.

19 (2) The recipient shall apply for licensure to practice
20 clinical social work in accordance with the act of July 9,
21 1987 (P.L.220, No.39), known as the Social Workers, Marriage
22 and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors Act, at the
23 first opportunity after completion of the internship
24 position.

25 (3) Within six months after receiving licensure to
26 practice clinical social work under the Social Workers,
27 Marriage and Family Therapists and Professional Counselors
28 Act, the recipient shall be employed as a clinical social
29 worker serving in a mental health professional shortage area.
30 The department may exempt a recipient from the employment

1 deadline under this paragraph in accordance with the policies
2 and procedures adopted by the department as necessary to
3 implement the program under section 8.

4 (c) Failure to comply.--A recipient who fails to comply with
5 the requirements under subsection (b) shall reimburse the
6 department for the amount of the commitment stipend. Money
7 collected by the department from reimbursements under this
8 subsection shall be used exclusively to fund the program and
9 shall not be used for any other purpose.

10 Section 6. Funding of program.

11 The department shall award commitment stipends to recipients
12 to the extent that money is available to cover the
13 administration of the program.

14 Section 7. Appropriation.

15 The sum of \$10,000,000 is hereby appropriated on an annual
16 basis from the General Fund to the department for the purpose of
17 administering the program. The amount shall be adjusted annually
18 for inflation in accordance with the Consumer Price Index for
19 All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) for the United States for all items
20 as published by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of
21 Labor Statistics, for the previous 12-month period.

22 Section 8. Regulations.

23 The department shall promulgate regulations, adopt policies
24 and procedures and establish forms as necessary to implement
25 this act.

26 Section 9. Effective date.

27 This act shall take effect in 90 days.