

# Barriers and Strategies for Recruitment of Social Workers to the Behavioral Health Workforce

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# Social Workers and Behavioral Health



According to HRSA, by 2030 Tennessee will experience troubling staffing shortages for several different behavioral health professions

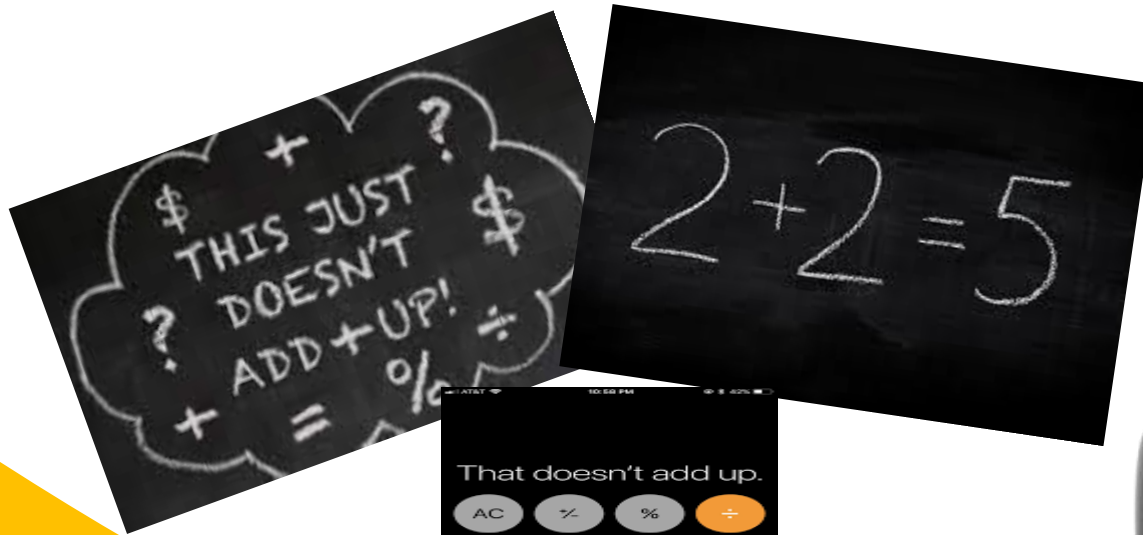
- ❖ **Estimated shortage in 2030 for mental health counselors: 1,270**
- ❖ Estimated shortage in 2030 for psychologists: 890
- ❖ Estimated shortage in 2030 for substance abuse counselors: 830
- ❖ Estimated shortage in 2030 for psychiatrists: 780 (the bulk of these, 760, are estimated to be adult psychiatrists)
- ❖ Estimated shortage in 2030 for marriage and family therapists

In addition, an analysis prepared by National Association of Social Workers Tennessee Chapter, using May 2020 information from the Tennessee Department of Health, highlights the current challenging shortage of social work professionals in many counties outside our major urban areas.



# Nashville...we have a problem

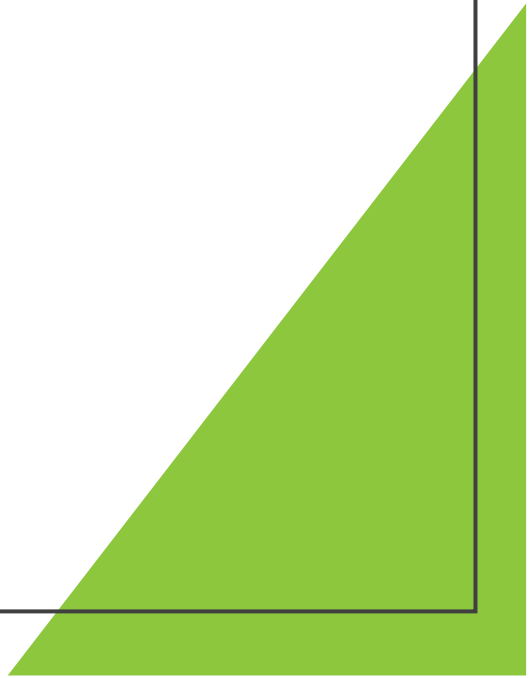
TN NASW reported in 2016-2017  
that TN Social Work programs  
graduated 635 BSW students and  
478 MSW students



**We need  
more social  
work  
students !!!!**



**CAPTAIN  
OBVIOUS**



# Barriers to Recruiting Social Workers

## Hurdle #1 Image

Many students do not know that a social work degree would prepare them for many career options in behavioral health



## Hurdle #3 Opportunity

Many social work students do not have access to opportunities for advanced training for behavioral health careers

## Hurdle #2 Access

Many students that are interested in behavioral health careers do not have access to graduate level social work programs

## Hurdle #4 Compensation

Social worker salaries are not competitive to attract and retain a strong workforce



IMAGE

What most people think about when they hear “have you ever considered being a social worker...”



# Access to Graduate Social Work Education

In 1980, the price to attend a four-year college full-time was \$10,231 annually—. By 2019-20, the total price increased to \$28,775. That's a 180% increase. (Forbes)

Graduate students are not eligible to receive the Pell Grant. The Pell Grant is a need-based award for undergraduates with demonstrated financial need.

Direct Subsidized Loans are available only to undergraduate students who have financial need.

The Education Data Initiative, or EDI, reported in 2021 that the average cost of a master's degree at a public university was \$54,500 or \$81,800 at a private school..



# Opportunities

There are limited opportunities for advanced training for Behavioral Health training for students



Behavioral Health Workforce Education and Training (BHWET) FY 2021 Awards: Tennessee

Total Funding: \$2,459,423

The University of Memphis	Memphis	TN	\$466,792
East Tennessee State University	Johnson City	TN	\$442,820
The Vanderbilt University	Nashville	TN	\$480,000
Meharry Medical College	Nashville	TN	\$474,874
Richmont Graduate University	Chattanooga	TN	\$479,739
Lipscomb University	Nashville	TN	\$115,198





# Compensation



Pay Rates Compared (Annual Mean Wages)

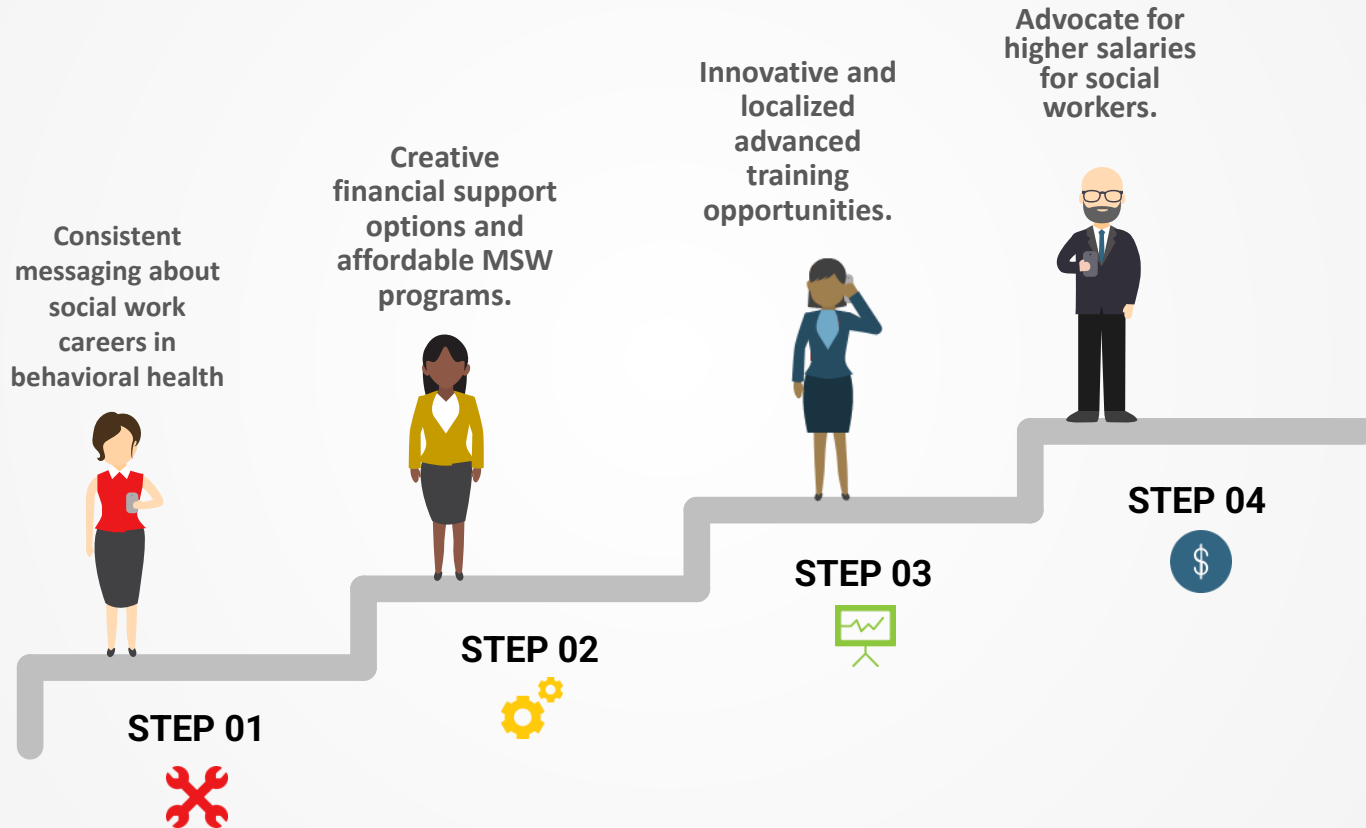
<b>Job Title</b>	<b>US</b>	<b>TN</b>
Overall	\$56,310	\$47,530
General Social Workers	\$64,940	\$55,210
MH/SA Social Workers	\$54,540	\$43,070
Psychiatrist	\$217,100	\$210,770
Nurse Practitioner	\$110,030	\$101,639
Marriage and Family Therapist	\$56,890	\$41,440
Registered Nurses	\$80,010	\$64,120

Source: May 2020 State Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates



So now what?

## Strategies to address Barriers



# Image Adjustment

Social work programs can promote behavioral health careers when recruiting students by highlighting alumni with behavioral health careers.



# Increase Financial Access to Social Work Programs

- Scholarships
- Graduate Assistantships
- Student Employment Opportunities
- Employment Based Internships (finally!!!)



# Don't just wait for HRSA Opportunities

## Look for local behavioral health training opportunities

Example: UT Psych Clinic and the College of Social Work partnership

The Department of Psychology at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, invites applications to fill a full-time licensed clinical social worker assistant director faculty position to support our growing clinical and case management needs. including but not limited to:

- Helping to integrate generalist and clinically focused social work masters students into the UT Psychological Clinic
- Supervising social work students' case management, clinical, and administrative work
- Overseeing the clinic applicant screening process
- Developing clinic orientation training materials for social work students
- Maintaining a referral directory for case management
- Helping provide supervision to therapists during and outside office hours
- Directing and maintaining the Psychology Department and School of Social Work's combined continuing education activities





Advocate for higher pay by becoming familiar with the research on high return investment on funding behavioral health care.

For example:

For every \$1 spent to expand treatment for depression, the leading cause of disability worldwide, \$7 in cost savings can be expected.

# Contact Information

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Thank you!!