

MPA TOWN HALL ON MASTER'S LICENSURE

It's more than "the master's issue"



APA HEALTH SERVICE
PSYCHOLOGY WORKFORCE
OPTIMIZATION



Master's Level *Psychology Panel*



MARYLAND
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

July 23, 2025
11:00 AM - 12:00 PM EST

Introducing Our Panelists



Syretta R. James, PhD, ABPP
APA MLA Task Force Co-chair
Executive Director, Respire Behavioral Health



Lynn F. Bufka, PhD, ABPP
APA Head of Practice



Catherine L. Grus, Ph.D.
Chief Psychologist Officer, National
Register of Health Service Psychologists



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WHY IS THIS TOPIC IMPORTANT TO MPA?

- There is a growing need for information sharing and education on this evolving topic.
- Increasing concerns and questions have emerged about the potential impact on doctoral-level psychologists.
- MPA represents a diverse membership that includes psychology associates and graduate students directly affected by these issues.



Education Requirements

Registered Psychology Associate

- Have a master's degree in clinical psychology, counseling psychology, or school psychology or a master's degree in education with a field of specialization in psychology or counseling psychology from a program accredited by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation; or
- Be admitted to candidacy for a doctoral degree in clinical psychology, counseling psychology, school psychology, or education with a field of specialization in psychology or counseling psychology in a program accredited by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation, after having satisfactorily completed at least three (3) years of postgraduate education in psychology and passed preliminary doctoral examinations; or
- Have completed a doctoral degree in psychology or in education with a field of specialization in psychology or counseling psychology from a program accredited by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation; or
- Have a least a master's level degree from a program outside the United States that has been determined by the Maryland State Board of Examiners for Psychologists to be equivalent to the degree requirements.



Supervision Requirements

Registered Psychology Associate

- Must be supervised by a psychologist licensed in Maryland with at least two years of post-licensure experience
- Depending on the Psychology Associates' educational attainment and experience, 1, 2, or 3 hours of supervision must be provided weekly for full-time (26 hours or more) work
- Supervision needed in perpetuity
- 3,250 hours of supervised post-degree clinical experience

The United States is in a mental Health Crisis



The HSP psychology workforce is insufficiently sized to address population health needs



America needs 15,000 more HSPs to meet existing demand.



By 2037, we project a shortage of nearly 80,000 HSP professionals leaving us at only 55% adequacy to meet public need.



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HOW HAVE APA AND THE FIELD OF PSYCHOLOGY RESPONDED TO THIS NEED?

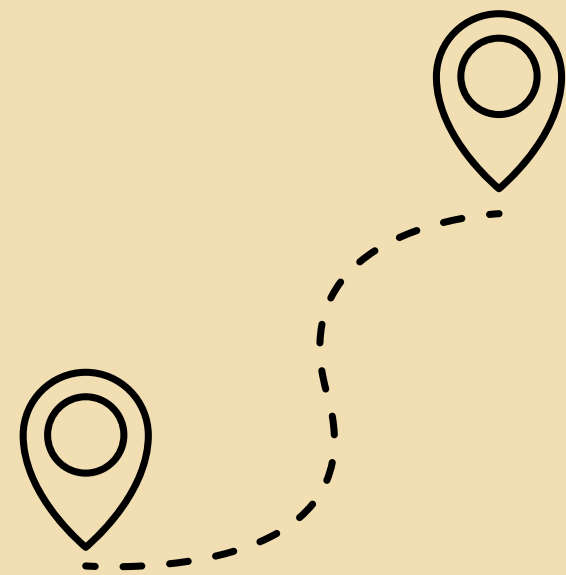
HSP psychology training programs educate, train, and graduate an increasing number of individuals prepared to practice

- ~ 4,000 individuals with a doctoral degree
- ~ 20,000+ individuals with a master's degree

For 8 years, APA governance groups and leaders have debated, discussed and approved policies designed to:

- Strengthen master's-level HSP education
- Define appropriate master's title and scope of practice

The Path to M-HSP Licensure is Currently Fragmented



Psychology has not provided a pathway to practice for graduates from master's degree programs in HSP (22,681 in 2023)

- No current option for psychology recognition or licensure in 31 states and Washington, DC
- 19 states recognize master's-level HSP professionals



Without national guidance, the result has been an inconsistent patchwork of licensing laws and professional titles.

Other Options are Disappearing

- Licensure as a licensed professional counselor has been an option for M-HSPs in states that do not have a pathway to practice through a psychology option
- State level advocacy has been successful to modify requirements for licensure as an LPC
 - CACREP accredited graduate program
 - Specific reference to psychology graduates as ineligible
 - Exemptions but requirements inconsistent with typical M-HSP curriculum
- Increasingly, M-HSP graduates do not have a path forward toward licensure and practice



Ensuring Quality Training

Hundreds of institutions currently offer master's degrees in HSP with established faculty and train programs

2018: APA Council voted to proceed with accreditation of M-HSP programs

2021: Council approved Standards of Accreditation

2024: APA's Commission on Accreditation (CoA)
Accredited its first programs

With the infrastructure established, **CoA can continue moving M-HSP programs through the accreditation process**



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APA MLA TASK FORCE UPDATES



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The Path to M-HSP Licensure is Currently Fragmented

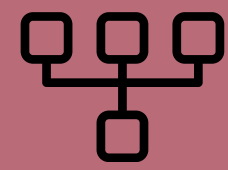
1

Define psychology practice capturing the strengths of psychology (e.g. foundation of psychological science) and distinguish from other behavioral health care professions

2

Determine the respective abilities, expertise and scopes of practice of master's trained professionals and doctoral psychologists and describe in model statutory language

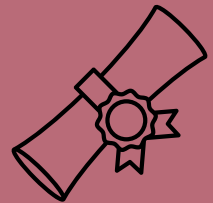
MLA Task Force's Progress to Date



Task force began meeting in June 2024
(co-chairs Art Gillaspy and Syretta James)



Solicited public comment in fall 2024 on preliminary ideas



Finalizing recommendations for scope of practice,
required education and training for M-HSP licensure



Addressing conceptual issues necessary to update doctoral MLA



Parallel WG being formed to address
licensure issues related to applied psychology



Integrated document anticipated for public comment in fall 2025



Efforts by Other Psychology Organizations

- ASPPB's Potential Regulatory Implications of Licensing Master's -Trained Individuals Task Force (PRI-LM)
 - convened in 2023
 - input and comments considered from regulatory community and other interested parties
 - updated statutory and regulatory guidance available
- National Register of Health Service Psychologists
 - Resolution on psychology as a multi-tiered profession
 - Title psychologist only for doctoral HSPs
 - Scope of practice (and title) must distinguish
 - supports the **responsible** implementation of actions to facilitate the evolution of psychology as a multi-tiered profession for the benefit of the profession and society.



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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

