

Growing the Behavioral Health Workforce

Through training and technical assistance to behavioral health agencies and practitioners, Ohio can grow and retain a sustainable and highly trained behavioral health workforce that meets the needs of Ohioans now and in the years to come.

2026 – 2027 Budget Priorities

- **Reposition the Bureau of Workforce Sustainability as the Bureau of Behavioral Health Workforce Excellence:** Strengthen the infrastructure of Ohio's behavioral health agencies and enhance the talent of practitioners they employ. Through this work, the Bureau will focus its efforts on the Behavioral Health Workforce Needs Assessment and expanding technical assistance.
- **Behavioral Health Workforce Needs Assessment:** Complete a Behavioral Health Workforce Needs Assessment, a real-time assessment that focuses on data at the practitioner and provider levels. The data captured will provide a statewide and regional picture of Ohio's behavioral health workforce environment. Communities will have real-time access to this data to inform planning for their healthcare delivery systems.
- **Technical Assistance Expansion:** Provide opportunities to upskill and professionalize Ohio's behavioral health agencies and practitioners. Through the lens of organizational development, the Department will provide needed technical assistance in human resources, financial management, succession planning, and more.

Why It Matters

Investing in Ohio's behavioral health workforce:

- Provides **support for college students and recent graduates** entering the behavioral health field.
- Will **increase and retain** the behavioral health providers needed to meet the health care needs of Ohioans.
- Assists community behavioral health centers with funding to **support recruitment initiatives and hiring incentives** to encourage behavioral health professionals' return to the community behavioral health field.
- **Supports partnerships with regional workforce development boards** to assist communities with workforce development efforts and solutions that are locally informed and driven.

By the Numbers

- Ohio has a substantial need for behavioral health providers to meet Ohioans' demands. Ohio's population to mental health professional ratio is **one mental health professional to every 340 Ohioans**.¹
- Nearly one third of Americans live in a mental health professional shortage area, impacting availability and access to behavioral health care.²

¹ County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, "[Mental Health Providers](#)." (2024)

² Health Resources & Services Administration, The National Center for Health Workforce Analysis, "[State of the Behavioral Health Workforce, 2024](#)."