



Iowa Psychological Association

State Affiliate of the American Psychological Association

September 9, 2023

To: The Iowa Council on Health and Human Service,

Historically, Iowa ranked 47th in the nation in the number of mental health providers, especially psychologists, per 100,000 people. A 2010 Iowa Psychological Association's (IPA) review of the Bureau of Professional Licensure statistics showed that 53% of Iowa psychologists were age 55 or older. It is probable that some of these valuable psychologists have since retired or will in the foreseeable future. In 2009, the IPA's Training Director, Michele Greiner, Ph.D., outlined a model training program to address Iowa's worsening workforce shortage. After a successful postdoctoral psychology pilot program with the help of a grant from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH), our training program has continued to flourish with the help of IDPH (Health and Human Services), and other partners. Since the training program's inception, 64 pre-doctoral interns and/or post-doctoral residents (some counted twice if they completed pre/post training years in Iowa) have been able to serve Iowans during their training through the IPA Training Program (sites that have received funding through this grant) or other community partners. Of that number, nearly 80% of trainees have stayed in Iowa, either currently practicing as a licensed psychologist or completing their training. As a result, over 15,000 Iowans in need of psychological treatment have been able to receive those services during the training periods alone.

The focus of this training program is not only to train future psychologists, but to serve underserved Iowans through quality mental health services. The hope is to bring trainees to Iowa and have them stay in Iowa for the remainder of their careers. Licensed psychologists on average receive around 4-6 years of graduate school education, earning a doctorate degree most commonly in clinical or counseling psychology. During graduate school, trainee's complete practicum hours which typically involve aspects of research and direct behavioral health treatment to patients. Prior to graduating with a doctorate in their particular specialty, trainees are required to complete a full year of predoctoral internship. These predoctoral internships are determined by a similar match program to medical physicians. Once this year of training is completed and other educational requirements completed, a psychology trainee graduates with their doctorate. By the time they have earned their doctorate and other training requirements, graduate trainees in psychology accrue roughly 4-6,000 hours of direct clinical training/practice before they become licensed in their respective states. An ongoing barrier has been finding trainees to complete their training in Iowa. The University of Iowa and Iowa State University graduate doctoral programs only train a certain number of people each year. This reduces the total number of future psychologists who may practice in Iowa. Another barrier is pre-doctoral internships are not well established here in Iowa. ISU Counseling Center which typically has 3-4 interns per year lost funding for the 2022/2023 year, and the program's internship future is unknown. This leaves a total of 6 spots in Iowa, 3 at U of I Counseling Center and 3 at the VA in Iowa City. Although 6 positions are still helpful and there are patients being served by these two sites, the types of populations being served include college students at U of I and the veterans at the VA. The minimal total number of internship slots in Iowa makes it difficult to retain doctoral students from our two institutions because most leave the state to receive predoctoral training. Then unfortunately, few graduate students return to be licensed or train here in Iowa.

In order to continue to advance training for future psychologists here in Iowa, IPA has worked with the National Psychology Training Consortium (NPTC) to create a predoctoral internship training program here in Iowa. This well-established national training consortium has three regions in the United States and on average trains 70 interns per year. NPTC will also provide needed organizational structure, administration, didactic training during the internship year, along with applying for APPIC membership and APA accreditation, all of which helps immensely to sustain a predoctoral training program. At this time, the consortium has added a new training region here in Iowa and collectively with the help of community partners have created 8 additional internship positions for upcoming training years. The sites include Central Iowa Psychological Services, St. Luke's Hospital, Broadlawns Medical Center, Mary Greeley Medical Center, Story County Medical Center and Mind and Spirit Counseling. These sites in addition to a future site at Des Moines University will join and make up the new Cy-Hawk region for the National Psychology Training Consortium (NPTC).

The long-term goal will be to increase to offering 10-15 predoctoral internship positions per training year, along with another 10-15 postdoctoral fellows. Even at a conservative number of 10 predoctoral interns and 10 postdoctoral fellows, given the success of retention in IPA's training program since 2008, we would expect around 16/20 trainees will become licensed as psychologists here in Iowa within 1-2 years (depending on year of training), and in 10 years IPA estimates an additional 160 licensed psychologists will provide clinical services in Iowa, ultimately adding to our mental health workforce. This will potentially increase the number of psychologists who provide clinical services by more than 36% in Iowa. The success of IPA's program has been largely measured by the ability to retain psychologists after their training here in Iowa. An estimated cost of roughly \$12,000 per intern, per year, would be needed to help sustain the expansion of IPA's current training program. In total, IPA is requesting an increase from our current yearly grant with HHS of \$48,000 to \$168,000-200,000 (per year) to cover these costs. This requested increase in funds would help with the cost for new internship positions and the ongoing funding for postdoctoral training sites that IPA has helped sustain for several years. IPA is requesting an increase in funds for the next 5 to 10 years. If approved, this annual grant amount would be invaluable to help cover these new and ongoing costs. By expanding the HHS funding to the proposed range, not only will this help in funding training sites, but this training initiative will assist in expanding workforce development issue by increasing the number of future licensed psychologists in Iowa. IPA's success rate of retention of psychological trainees has been incredibly promising. As we work to expand training for predoctoral and postdoctoral sites, the likelihood of retention following training years is high as evidenced by IPA's and community partners' retention rate of nearly 80%. Therefore, we believe expanding our training program is one of many ways to increase the number of licensed psychologists in our state, and a way to serve Iowans for decades to come.

Thank you for your consideration to increase the Iowa Psychological Association's HHS grant funds from \$48,000 per year to \$168,000-200,000 per year for the next 5-10 years.

Sincerely,



Matthew Cooper, Psy.D., MSCP
IPA Training Director



Nicole J. Holmberg, Ph.D.
President, Iowa Psychological Association