

LFC Requester: _____

**AGENCY BILL ANALYSIS
2025 REGULAR SESSION**

WITHIN 24 HOURS OF BILL POSTING, EMAIL ANALYSIS TO:

LFC@NMLEGIS.GOV

and

DFA@STATE.NM.US

{Include the bill no. in the email subject line, e.g., HB2, and only attach one bill analysis and related documentation per email message}

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

{Indicate if analysis is on an original bill, amendment, substitute or a correction of a previous bill}

Check all that apply:
Original **Amendment** _____
Correction _____ **Substitute** _____

Date 2/13/2025
Bill No: HB 347

Sponsor: Kristina Ortez
Short Title: BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAM FINANCIAL AID

Agency Name and Code Number: New Mexico State University/954
Person Writing: Clayton Abbey
Phone: 505-239-8821 **Email:** nmsufir@nmsu.edu

SECTION II: FISCAL IMPACT

APPROPRIATION (dollars in thousands)

Appropriation		Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27		
1000		Nonrecurring	

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY25	FY26	FY27		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY25	FY26	FY27	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total						

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:

HB 375 Graduate Behavioral health Scholarship Act

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis:

HB347, Behavioral Health Program Financial Aid appropriates \$1 million to the Higher Education Department to provide scholarships, other student financial aid and paid practicums for students in bachelor's and master's degree programs in behavioral health fields in the 2026 and 2027 fiscal years. The purpose of the bill is to expand enrollment and the number of graduates able to work in behavioral health fields in New Mexico. Funding should be used to supplement, not supplant, current funding and expenditures in those behavioral health degree programs.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The Behavioral Health Program Financial Aid, administered by the New Mexico Department of Higher Education, would alleviate financial burdens for students in behavioral health programs throughout the state. Specific to NMSU, the program would provide scholarships, financial aid, and paid practicums to alleviate educational financial burdens for 382 currently eligible graduate students pursuing careers in behavioral health at NMSU. As an indication of this educational financial burden, the number of credits required to complete behavioral health graduate programs at NMSU range from 30 to 86 total credits with total costs to complete their program ranging between \$10,409 to \$36,511. Financial support to students in behavioral health programs at NMSU would supplement not supplant current funding.

Increasing student enrollment in accredited behavioral health programs in Counseling and Educational Psychology programs at NMSU may require an increase in faculty to accommodate accreditation requirements.

Note: major assumptions underlying fiscal impact should be documented.

Note: if additional operating budget impact is estimated, assumptions and calculations should be reported in this section.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES-

There seems to be no significant issues, except in the omission of doctoral/PhD students in the eligibility criteria. Currently the bill states funding would only support students in bachelor's and master's degree programs in behavioral health fields.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS-

None

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

None

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

HB 347 is closely related to the proposed HB375, GRADUATE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SCHOLARSHIP ACT which would provide debt-free education to eligible graduate students who are studying to become behavioral health professionals; funding provided by both bills will be managed by the HED.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The current eligibility criteria for the bill exclude doctoral/PhD students, which would affect many students in the NMSU behavioral health programs. As the bill currently stands, it only provides funding for students in bachelor's and master's degree programs. This exclusion would impact approximately 40% of NMSU students in behavioral health programs who are pursuing doctoral/PhD degrees. Including doctoral/PhD students in the bill would help these students complete their programs in a timelier manner and reduce the financial burden associated with their educational costs. The advanced training of doctoral/PhD students can help address complex behavioral health needs of New Mexico.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES-

None

ALTERNATIVES

None

WHAT WILL BE THE CONSEQUENCES OF NOT ENACTING THIS BILL

The consequences of not enacting this bill:

1. A potential decrease in graduate students enrolled in Behavioral Health programs
2. Less funding to support students in pursuing behavioral health degrees
3. Negative impact on degree completion rates given financial challenges that detract students' attention away from their education (e.g., students experiencing the burden of financially supporting themselves while completing extensive practicum hours [400-900 depending on degree level]).

AMENDMENTS

We propose the following amendments on Page 1, Line 20- Line 22: "...provide scholarships, other student financial aid and paid practicums for students in bachelor's, master's, **and doctoral/PhD** degree programs in behavioral health fields,..."