

LFC Requester:	Connor Jorgensen
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**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 375

Sponsor: Joanne Ferrary, Eleanor Chavez, Jenifer Jones, Linda Lopez, and Kathleen Cates
Short Title: Graduate Behavioral Health Scholarship Act

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		
\$10,000	\$10,000	Recurring	

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

REVENUE (dollars in thousands)

Estimated Revenue			Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
FY26	FY27	FY28		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL OPERATING BUDGET IMPACT (dollars in thousands)

	FY26	FY27	FY28	3 Year Total Cost	Recurring or Nonrecurring	Fund Affected
Total						

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

Duplicates/Conflicts with/Companion to/Relates to:

Relates to HB347 (see explanation below)

Duplicates/Relates to Appropriation in the General Appropriation Act

SECTION III: NARRATIVE

BILL SUMMARY

Synopsis: HB375 appropriates \$10 million to the Higher Education Department for the Graduate Behavioral Health Scholarship Act. The Graduate Behavioral Health Scholarship Act provides debt-free education to eligible graduate students pursuing careers in behavioral health within the state of New Mexico. The goal is to increase the number of qualified professionals in fields such as counseling, psychology, social work, and psychiatric nursing in New Mexico. Scholarships shall be awarded to eligible students in an amount not to exceed 100% of costs of tuition, school fees, books, licensing application fees and initial licensing fees after all other state financial aid has been applied. An eligible student shall commit to practice in New Mexico for as many years as the eligible student receives a scholarship. The definition of “graduate behavioral degree program” includes a program of study intended to result in a master’s or higher degree or certification in the field of 1) counseling, 2) psychiatric nursing, 3) nurse practitioner or physician assistant, 4) psychology, or 5) social work.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

The Graduate Behavioral Health Scholarship 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 Graduate Behavior Health Scholarship would provide debt-free education to 382 currently eligible graduate students pursuing careers in behavioral health. 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.

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.

SIGNIFICANT ISSUES

There seems to be no significant issues, excepting the omission of behavioral health programs at NMSU (e.g., Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) graduate program, school psychology, clinical psychopharmacology).

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

None

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

None

CONFLICT, DUPLICATION, COMPANIONSHIP, RELATIONSHIP

HB 375 is closely related to the proposed HB347, Behavioral Health Program Financial Aid which would provide scholarships, other student financial aid and paid practicums for students in bachelor's and master's degree programs in behavioral health fields in 2026 and 2027 fiscal years; funding provided by both bills will be managed by the HED.

TECHNICAL ISSUES

The definition of “graduate behavioral health degree program” in Section 1, E, (1) that states “program of study intended to result in a master’s or higher degree or certification in the field of 1) counseling, 2) psychiatric nursing, 3) nurse practitioner or physician assistant, 4) psychology, or 5) social work”, indicates that students in other behavioral health graduate programs at NMSU may be ineligible to receive this scholarship. For example, the eligibility categories exclude the following behavioral health programs at NMSU: Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT; in College of ACES), school psychology (EdS and PhD; in college of HEST), and clinical psychopharmacology (MS; in college of HEST). In addition, the eligibility category of “nurse practitioner or physician assistant” indicates that a wider pool of non-behavioral specialists would be eligible for this scholarship which is not congruent with the intent of the scholarship. With other scholarships readily available for nurse practitioners and physician assistants, we recommend removing this category from eligibility.

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 2, Line 25 – Page 3, Line 5: “The definition of graduate behavioral degree program includes a program of study intended to result in a master’s or higher degree or certification in the field of 1) counseling/**therapy**, 2) psychiatric nursing, ~~3) nurse practitioner or physician assistant~~, 3) **clinical and school psychology**, 4) social work, or 5) **postdoc MS in clinical Psychopharmacology.**”