

Alameda County Behavioral Health Department Workforce, Education, & Training (WET) Needs Assessment

SUMMARY REPORT & OVERVIEW - 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Summary highlights the key findings from the Workforce Development, Education and Training (WET) Needs Assessment, commissioned in 2024 by the **Alameda County Behavioral Health Department (ACBHD), Health Equity Division, WET Unit** through work conducted by **Bright Research Group (BRG)**.

The assessment was conducted through a mixed-methods approach, including surveys, focus groups, and interviews. The **study gathered insights from eighty-five (85) survey respondents and twenty-one (21) focus group participants across the county and ACBHD systems of care**, providing a snapshot of system perspectives.

Results revealed a variety of needs related to skills development, pipeline, diversity and equity, and opportunities to expand the overall workforce through trainees, providers, organizations, peers, and family members.



GOALS: ACBHD launched this process to provide a system snapshot surrounding Alameda County's behavioral health system workforce needs, to better inform decision-making relative to system planning; and in order to submit a final baseline report aligned the State of California's Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) requirements in preparation for a formal transition to Proposition 1: Behavioral Health Services Act (BHSA).

SNAPSHOT OF FINDINGS:

Workforce Capacity and Needs –

Hiring and Diversity: Recruiting racially diverse, multilingual staff remains challenging, with a critical shortage of bilingual clinicians. **Burnout and Workload:** Staff face high workloads, exacerbating burnout as they address complex client needs. **Peer and Family Support:** There is strong support for expanding the peer and family workforce to better serve clients.

Pipeline Programs and Diversity –

Intern Diversity Gap: Current intern demographics do not fully represent the cultural diversity of clients, particularly African American and Latino communities. **Intern Program Feedback:** Supervisor expressed mixed satisfaction with the intern program, highlighting the need for more resources and compensation for supervisors.

Training and Education Needs Advanced Skills Demand –

Providers expressed a strong need for culturally responsive, advanced clinical skills training.

CONSIDERATIONS:

This assessment provides insights pertaining to emerging needs and some challenges within ACBHD. The findings underscore the need for continued strategic initiatives to promote workforce diversity, strengthen pipeline programs, and enhance trainings.

Even while considering the impending changes impacting statewide funding for WET across behavioral health departments in accordance with Proposition 1, it is vital that the system continues its efforts at a local level to address the needs of beneficiaries, CBO and Stakeholder partners, and employees across the system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Advanced Skills Demand:** More culturally responsive, advanced clinical training.
- Enhance Visibility and Accessibility:** Increase marketing efforts to promote WET training and education opportunities.
- Expand Advanced Skills Trainings:** Increase opportunities for more High-demand topics.
- Diversity Initiatives in Intern Programs:** Engage with Minority-serving institutions and incorporate stipends to improve intern diversity.
- Continuous Feedback Loop:** Gather and incorporate training feedback regularly.
- Support for Peer and Family Workforce:** Sustain professional development for certified peer specialists and family advocates.



**Behavioral Health
Department**
Alameda County Health