



THE SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT *of* ADMINISTRATION

Mental Health Professionals Compensation Review

February 2023

Contents

Section One — Executive Summary	3
Section Two — Introduction	5
Section Three — Scope	5
Section Four — Approach	6
Section Five — Findings.....	6
Turnover	7
Vacancy Rate	8
Retirement Eligibility.....	9
Current South Carolina State Agency Compensation Data	9
Compensation Comparators	10
Public Sector Data	10
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Data	10
Private Sector Compensation Data	11
Section Six — Recommended Changes	12
Section Seven — Implementation Cost.....	16
Section Eight — Conclusion.....	16
Appendix I — National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) – Mental Health in South Carolina	18
Appendix II — Applicant Flow Data.....	20
Appendix III — Time to Hire Data.....	21
Appendix IV — Turnover Data.....	22
Appendix V – Vacancy Rates	24
Appendix VI — Average State Agency Mental Health Professional Salaries.....	26
Appendix VII — Costing Information.....	27

Section One — Executive Summary

SCOPE

This compensation review includes positions in the Mental Health Professional classification series and other positions that require at least a master's degree in guidance, counseling, the social sciences or a related field and include working as a mental health professional as the primary job function.¹

APPROACH

The South Carolina Department of Administration's (Admin) Division of State Human Resources (DSHR) assembled a workgroup including human resources employees and programmatic staff from non-higher education state agencies that have positions that require a master's degree in guidance, counseling, the social sciences or a related field and include working as a mental health professional as the primary job function. Using feedback provided by these representatives and internal and external employee and compensation data, DSHR worked to identify the root causes behind the challenges to recruit and retain mental health professionals.

FINDINGS

Despite adequate applicant flow, agencies are not converting applicants for Mental Health Professional positions to employees. This suggests that the difficulty hiring Mental Health Professionals is not the result of a lack of applicants, or of a lack of interest in working for state government. Rather, it appears the hiring processes utilized by state agencies and/or the compensation offered prevents interested applicants from accepting offers of employment. A review of vacancy and turnover rates also reflect the difficulty recruiting and retaining Mental Health Professionals. A review of retirement eligibility data suggests this is an issue unlikely to improve without intervention.

The average salary of a Mental Health Professional I is only slightly higher than the minimum salary for a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) – Mental Health Service Provider in Tennessee and a Licensed Mental Health Professional in North Carolina and is significantly lower than the average salary of a Mental Health Professional in Kentucky. Further, the average salary for a South Carolina private sector worker in November 2022 is higher than the average salary for a South Carolina Mental Health Professional I. Finally, recent job postings from Wellpath and Oceanic Counseling Group, LLC, listed annual salaries for a Mental Health Professional from \$58,240-\$64,480 and for a LPC Counselor/Licensed Independent Social Worker (LISW) from \$87,360-\$93,000, respectively. The salaries suggest a higher range available in the private sector than the current average salaries for Mental Health Professional positions at South Carolina state agencies (\$51,385.57-\$76,166.94).

COMPENSATION RECOMMENDATIONS

DSHR recommends a compensation structure for employees in the Mental Health Professional classification series that accounts for differences in state classification, licensure, level of care provided and years of service. Minimum salaries range from \$51,039 for an unlicensed Mental Health Professional I (GA55) working in a level one environment to \$91,750 for a Mental Health Professional III (GA57) working as an Addiction Specialist Supervisor.

In addition, DSHR recommends a compensation structure for Social Worker classifications used for forensic social workers in the South Carolina Department of Mental Health's Division of Inpatient Services who function as clinical social workers with hybrid mental health and social work job duties. Minimum salaries from these positions range from \$60,771 for a Social Worker (GB75) to \$92,392 for a Social Work Director (GB77).

¹ This study does not include psychologists and psychiatrists whose job duties, education, experience and compensation differ significantly from the positions covered by this report.

IMPLEMENTATION COSTS

The implementation of the increases to the base salary described in this report would result in a total annual cost of **\$17,517,000**. This cost is assuming all vacant positions are filled.

CONCLUSION

Mental health support is more important now than ever. The Mental Health Professionals who support South Carolina citizens provide a service critical to those in need, to the friends and families who love them and to the entire community. The salary structure recommended in this compensation review will provide agencies with one tool to improve the recruitment and retention of Mental Health Professionals in South Carolina state government.

Section Two — Introduction

The need for access to mental health services in South Carolina is extensive. As Governor McMaster stated in his State of the State Address presented January 25, 2023, “[i]t’s clear that a mental health crisis exists in South Carolina following the COVID-19 pandemic, especially among our young people. Many are still struggling with the effects of disruptions, virtual instruction, isolation and constant changes to normal routines.” Governor McMaster further stated that “South Carolinians in crisis must have access to professional mental health counseling and services.”

According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)², one in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year. In South Carolina, 706,000 adults have a mental health condition. Mental illness is not restricted to adults. One in six youths aged 6-17 in the U.S. experience a mental health disorder each year, and 53,000 South Carolinians aged 12-17 have depression.

Mental illness can have far-reaching impacts beyond the individuals affected. High school students with depression are twice as likely to drop out of school than their peers. One in seven homeless South Carolinians live with a serious mental illness. One in four people in the U.S. with a serious mental illness have been arrested at some point in their life, and two in five adults in jail or prison have a history of mental illness. Seven in 10 youths in the U.S. juvenile justice system have a mental health condition. On average, one person in the U.S. dies by suicide every 11 minutes. In South Carolina, 811 lives were lost to suicide and 189,000 adults had thoughts of suicide in the year preceding February 2021.

Unfortunately, it may be difficult for people with mental illness to receive the care they need. More than half of the people with a mental health condition in the U.S. did not receive any treatment in the year preceding the NAMI report. According to NAMI, 2,304,799 people in South Carolina live in a community that does not have enough mental health professionals.

The recommendations contained in this report are designed to increase the competitiveness of Mental Health Professional salaries to improve recruitment and retention of these employees and improve the access to services for South Carolina citizens.

Section Three — Scope

To facilitate this review the South Carolina Department of Administration’s (Admin) Division of State Human Resources (DSHR) assembled a workgroup of human resources and programmatic staff from agencies that provide mental health services as part of their mission. This workgroup included the South Carolina Department of Mental Health, the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, the South Carolina Department of Corrections, the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and the South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services. This workgroup met January 27 and February 6, 2023, to clarify the scope of the study and to discuss the difficulty they have faced recruiting and retaining mental health professionals.

Through discussions with the workgroup it became clear that in state agencies, mental health services are provided by employees in a variety of job classifications beyond the Mental Health Professional classification series. Therefore, to ensure that the recommendations in this report addressed all of the appropriate positions, members of the workgroup were asked to identify positions that are not classified in the Mental Health Professionals series, require a master’s degree in guidance, counseling, the social sciences or a related field and include working as a mental health professional as the

² The NAMI fact sheet was based on data available in February 2021. The fact sheet is provided in Appendix I. This is the most up-to-date version of this fact sheet available.

Source: <https://nami.org/NAMI/media/NAMI-Media/StateFactSheets/SouthCarolinaStateFactSheet.pdf>. Accessed April 4, 2022.

primary job function.³ Based on the information gathered from the workgroup the following classifications and positions are included in this review.

Classification	Pay Band	Description of Use
Mental Health Professional I (GA55)	5	These classifications are used across multiple agencies for employees who perform or oversee counseling and case management functions for individuals with behavioral and/or emotional mental health issues, develop and implement treatment plans and guide clients in the development of skills or strategies towards achieving and maintaining good mental health.
Mental Health Professional II (GA56)	6	
Mental Health Professional III (GA57)	7	
South Carolina Department of Mental Health		
Social Worker (GB75)	5	These classifications are used for social workers in the South Carolina Department of Mental Health’s Division of Inpatient Services who function as clinical social workers with hybrid mental health and social work job duties.
Social Work Manager (GB76)	6	
Social Work Director (GB77)	7	

Section Four — Approach

To ensure that state agencies remain competitive in the relevant job market and can fill the positions needed to provide critical mental health services, DSHR began by reviewing private and public compensation data. Based on these findings DSHR created a compensation plan for Mental Health Professionals. Understanding that compensation is only one aspect that influences the ability to recruit and retain employees, DSHR also worked with the agency workgroup to identify other factors that may negatively impact the ability of state agencies to hire and retain Mental Health Professionals needed to perform their mission.

Section Five — Findings

According to the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) “South Carolina ended 2022 with a steady unemployment rate of 3.3% and nearly 99,000 jobs posted in SC Works Online Services.” With such a low unemployment rate and numerous job postings it is easy to understand why the competition for employees is fierce in South Carolina. This has contributed, in part, to the wage growth experienced here and across the United States. As DEW Director Dan Ellzey stated January 24, 2023, “hourly earnings continue to be high with an average of \$28.66.” Consequently, it is hard to find an applicant to fill nearly any job. Trying to find an applicant with the skills needed to provide effective mental health services in the challenging conditions often faced by employees in state agencies is particularly difficult.

Surprisingly, DSHR found that even in the current tight labor market the number of applicants applying for Mental Health Professional positions has remained largely consistent across the last three fiscal years. For detailed applicant information please refer to Appendix II. Therefore, it does not appear that applicant flow is the reason state agencies have high vacancy rates in Mental Health Professional positions.

³ This study does not include psychologists and psychiatrists whose job duties, education, experience, and compensation differ significantly from the positions covered by this report.

What DSHR found, however, was that despite adequate applicant flow, agencies were not converting these applicants to employees. This suggests that the difficulty hiring Mental Health Professionals is not the result of a lack of applicants, or of a lack of interest in working for state government. Rather, it appears the hiring processes utilized by state agencies and/or the compensation offered prevent interested applicants from accepting offers of employment. This is supported by the time to hire data for Mental Health Professional classifications. In December 2022 the average time to hire an employee for a position in the Mental Health Professional classification series was 191 business days. For detailed time to hire information please refer to Appendix III.

Turnover

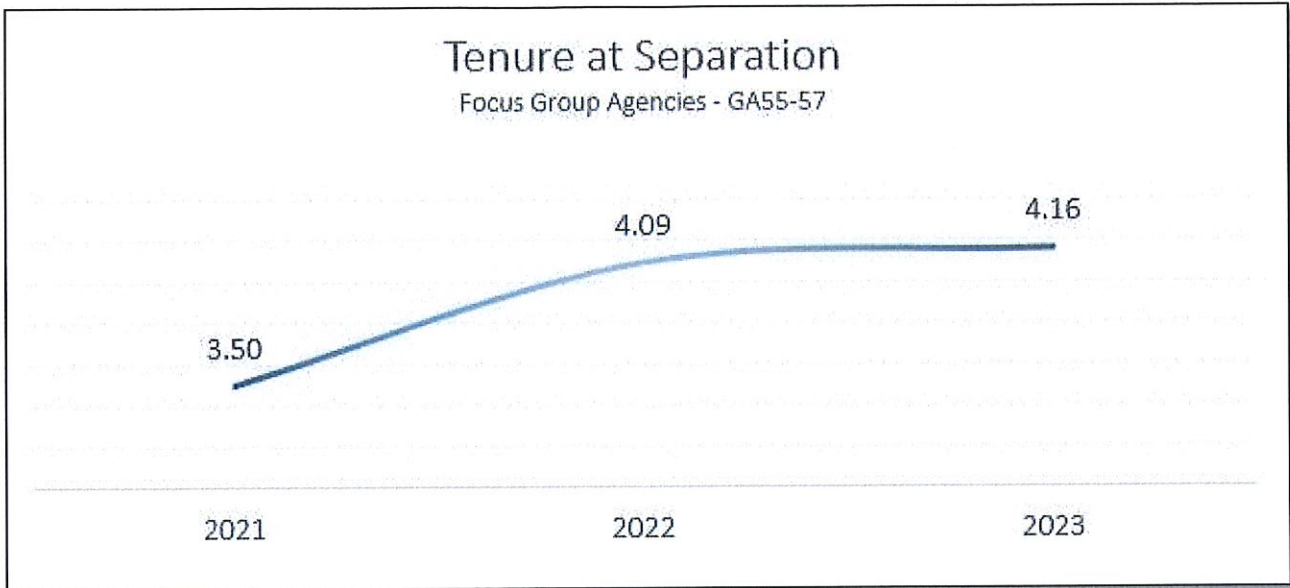
As challenging as it is to hire mental health professionals, it is equally hard to retain these employees once they are hired. As illustrated in the following table, turnover rates for Mental Health Professional I, II and III classifications tend to be higher than for other positions and have been rising over the last two calendar years in most agencies. While the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs has experienced a relatively lower turnover rate this is largely because the Mental Health Professional classifications are used for a limited number of positions at this agency.

Agency	2021 Calendar Year Turnover Rate	2022 Calendar Year Turnover Rate
South Carolina Department of Corrections	38.03%	57.14%
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	22.73%	17.39%
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	44.00%	31.28%
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	20.69%	22.50%

For detailed turnover information refer to Appendix IV.

By further examining the turnover data, DSHR discovered that most separations were reported as for “personal reasons” rather than retirement or moving to another state agency. Generally, this reason code is used when an employee declines to report why they are leaving but the majority of these situations are likely employees leaving state government for other employment. This indicates that the primary competition for employees lies outside of state government in the private sector.

Interestingly, the tenure of employees in Mental Health Professional classifications leaving state government is rising as illustrated in the following chart.



This suggests that even employees who have made the decision to join state government, and work with state agencies for several years, are being lured away to positions outside of state government, in many cases for higher compensation.

Vacancy Rate

The difficulty in recruiting and retaining Mental Health Professionals is evident in the vacancy data for Mental Health Professional classifications in state government. As illustrated in the following table, vacancy rates for Mental Health Professional I, II and III classifications are generally high and have increased over the last few years at most agencies. While the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs has experienced a lower vacancy rate over the last three years, this is largely because the Mental Health Professional classifications are used for a limited number of positions at this agency. For detailed vacancy information please refer to Appendix V.

Agency	June 2021 Vacancy Rate	June 2022 Vacancy Rate	January 2023 Vacancy Rate
South Carolina Department of Corrections	21.05%	41.41%	44.23%
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	24.24%	18.69%	17.54%
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	16.76%	22.95%	24.33%
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	14.49%	22.64%	28.30%

Retirement Eligibility

The turnover rates for mental health positions will be negatively impacted by the large number of employees who are eligible for retirement or who will be eligible soon. As indicated in the following chart, at most agencies a quarter or more of employees in the Mental Health Professional classification series are currently eligible to retire or will reach retirement eligibility in the next five years based on their state service time. Note that additional employees may be eligible due to age or based on service at a prior employer.

Agency	Number of Mental Health Professionals	Mental Health Professionals Currently Eligible to Retire	Mental Health Professionals Eligible to Retire Within Five Years	Total Mental Health Professionals Currently Eligible to Retire and Eligible to Retire Within Five Years
South Carolina Department of Corrections	58	2 (3.45%)	13 (22.41%)	15 (25.86%)
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	24	7 (29.17%)	2 (8.33%)	9 (37.50%)
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	881	59 (6.70%)	105 (11.92%)	164 (18.62%)
South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services	1	0	0	0
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	38	4 (10.53%)	8 (21.05%)	12 (31.58%)

Current South Carolina State Agency Compensation Data

Salary data for South Carolina state agencies that employ a significant number of employees in the Mental Health Professional I (GA55), Mental Health Professional II (GA56) and Mental Health Professional III (GA57) classes was also reviewed. Detailed South Carolina state agency data can be found in Appendix VI.

South Carolina State Agency Data — Mental Health Professionals I, II and III			
Classification	Number of Employees	Average Salary	Average Years of State Service
Mental Health Professional I	746	\$51,385.57	7
Mental Health Professional II	244	\$61,795.40	11
Mental Health Professional III	16	\$76,166.94	8

Compensation Comparators

Public Sector Data

State agencies compete with public employers across the Southeast for employees. This includes agencies in surrounding states and the federal government.

DSHR reviewed salary data for mental health counselor, or similar positions, from four neighboring states. A summary of this data is provided below.

Salary Data for State Agency Mental Health Counselor, or Similar, Positions	
Job Title (State)	Minimum Salary
Licensed Professional Counselor – Mental Health Service Provider (TN)	\$47,496.00
Mental Health Professional (KY)	\$59,444.00
Licensed Mental Health Professional (NC)	\$ 47,959.00
Social Worker, Licensed 1 (GA)	\$34,973.63
Social Worker, Licensed 2 (GA)	\$37,970.99
Social Worker, Licensed 3 (GA)	\$41,268.09
Social Worker, Licensed Supervisor (GA)	\$45,982.94

DSHR also reviewed postings for mental health related positions in federal agencies in South Carolina. A recent South Carolina job posting for the United States Department of Veterans Affairs advertised a Licensed Professional Mental Health Counselor position with a salary range of \$69,107-\$89,835. Another posting from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs posted a South Carolina position for a Primary Care/Mental Health Integration Team Social Worker with a salary range of \$71,995-\$93,591.

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Data

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data⁴ revealed that the annual mean salaries for Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers (BLS SOC Code 211023) and Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder and Mental Health Counselors (BLS SOC Code 211018) in South Carolina and five surrounding states were higher than the minimum DMH starting salary of \$36,457. Sometimes the average mean salaries were significantly higher.

NOTE: This data is based on the identification of positions as Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers (SOC Code 211023) and Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder and Mental Health Counselors (SOC Code 211018) by BLS and may include both private and public sector employers.

⁴ From United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) 2021 wage data.

Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers (SOC Code 211023)	
State	Annual Mean Wage
North Carolina	\$54,860.00
Georgia	\$46,720.00
Kentucky	\$44,560.00
South Carolina	\$42,900.00
Tennessee	\$41,190.00
Alabama	\$36,680.00

Substance Abuse, Behavioral Disorder and Mental Health Counselors (BLS SOC Code 211018)	
State	Annual Mean Wage
North Carolina	\$52,850.00
Georgia	\$45,740.00
Kentucky	\$45,310.00
South Carolina	\$44,250.00
Tennessee	\$43,250.00
Alabama	\$42,210.00

Private Sector Compensation Data

Private sector salaries have largely outpaced South Carolina state agency salaries making it difficult to recruit and retain employees. Recent job postings from Wellpath and Oceanic Counseling Group, LLC, listed annual salaries for a Mental Health Professional from \$58,240-\$64,480 and for a LPC Counselor/LISW Social Worker from \$87,360-\$93,000, respectively.

Particularly striking is the average salary that can be earned in the private sector in positions that have little to no education and experience requirements. In comparison, Mental Health Professionals covered by this review occupy positions that require a master's degree and may also require licenses.

To evaluate the private sector employment climate of South Carolina, DSHR reviewed the November 2022 issue of *South Carolina Data Trends* published by the South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW). According to *South Carolina Data Trends*, the average hourly earnings for private employers in November 2022, was \$28.94 (this

equates to an annualized salary based on 1,950 hours of \$56,433). While this is slightly lower than the average hourly earnings in October 2022, \$29.05, it is significantly higher than the average hourly earnings in November 2021, \$27.28 (this equates to an annualized salary based on 1,950 hours of \$53,196).

A comparison of South Carolina state agency salaries for Mental Health Professionals to similar positions in agencies in surrounding states, private sector compensation information and postings for similar positions revealed that the compensation for employees in South Carolina state agencies for mental health professionals is not sufficient to be competitive in the relevant labor market.

The average salary of a Mental Health Professional I is only slightly higher than the minimum salary for a Licensed Professional Counselor – Mental Health Service Provider in Tennessee and a Licensed Mental Health Professional in North Carolina and is significantly lower than the average salary of a Mental Health Professional in Kentucky. Further, the average salary for a South Carolina private sector worker in November 2022 is higher than the average salary for a South Carolina Mental Health Professional I. Finally, recent job postings from Wellpath and Oceanic Counseling Group, LLC listed annual salaries for a Mental Health Professional from \$58,240-\$64,480 and for a LPC Counselor/LISW Social Worker from \$87,360-\$93,000, respectively. The salaries suggest a higher range available in the private sector than the average salaries across the Mental Health Professional classification positions in South Carolina state agencies (\$51,385.57-\$76,166.94).

Section Six — Recommended Changes⁵

DSHR recommends a compensation structure for employees in the Mental Health Professional classification series that accounts for differences in state classification, licensure, level of care provided and years of service. In addition, DSHR provides recommendations for Social Worker classifications used by forensic social workers in the South Carolina Department of Mental Health’s Division of Inpatient Services who function as clinical social workers with hybrid mental health and social work job duties.

DSHR identified three levels of care and acuity provided by Mental Health Professional positions at the South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs, the South Carolina Department of Corrections, the South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice, the South Carolina Department of Mental Health, and the South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services.

The following table summarizes these levels:

Agency	Level One	Level Two	Level Three
Department of Disabilities of Special Needs	Eligibility and Intellectual Disability/Related Disabilities Regional Center Intermediate Care Facilities	N/A	N/A
Department of Corrections	Level 1 Correctional Institutions	Level 2 Correctional Institutions	Level 3 Correctional Institutions

⁵ The recommendations presented in this analysis are not intended to replace any general increases passed by the General Assembly, step increases counselors would otherwise receive through their agency’s pay plans, or performance increase plans.

Agency	Level One	Level Two	Level Three
Department of Juvenile Justice	Midlands, Upstate, and Coastal Evaluation Centers and Division of Community Services	Broad River Road Correctional Facility (BRRC) and Juvenile Detention Center (JDC)	N/A
Department of Mental Health	Division of Community Services and Division of Inpatient Services (Morris Village and Transitions)	Division of Inpatient Services (Bryant Adult, Harris, and Hall)	Division of Inpatient Services (Forensics)

The South Carolina Department of Probation, Parole and Pardon Services has one employee classified as a Mental Health Professional III (GA57), who will be considered Level 1.

DSHR then developed a pay plan matrix that sets a minimum salary for each Mental Health Professional classification based on level of care, licensure and years of relevant service. A pay plan matrix was also created for Addictions Specialists. The table below summarizes the pay matrix.

Mental Health Professional I (GA55/Band 5)			
Level 1			
Unlicensed 0-1.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 2-4.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 5-9.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 10+ years of relevant experience
\$51,039.00	\$52,539.00	\$54,039.00	\$55,539.00
Licensed 0-1.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 2-4.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 5-9.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 10+ years of relevant experience
\$55,122.00	\$56,622.00	\$58,122.00	\$59,622.00
Level 2			
Unlicensed 0-1.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 2-4.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 5-9.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 10+ years of relevant experience
\$52,570.00	\$54,070.00	\$55,570.00	\$57,070.00
Licensed 0-1.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 2-4.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 5-9.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 10+ years of relevant experience
\$56,775.00	\$58,275.00	\$59,775.00	\$61,275.00
Level 3			
Unlicensed 0-1.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 2-4.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 5-9.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 10+ years of relevant experience
\$53,590.00	\$55,090.00	\$56,590.00	\$58,090.00
Licensed 0-1.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 2-4.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 5-9.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 10+ years of relevant experience
\$57,877.00	\$59,377.00	\$60,877.00	\$62,377.00

Addictions Counselors

Licensed 0-1.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 2-4.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 5-9.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 10+ years of relevant experience
\$56,775.00	\$58,275.00	\$59,775.00	\$61,275.00

Mental Health Professional II (GA56/Band 6)

Level 1

Unlicensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$61,801.00	\$63,301.00	\$64,801.00
Licensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$66,745.00	\$68,365.00	\$69,985.00

Level 2

Unlicensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$63,655.00	\$65,155.00	\$66,655.00
Licensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$68,747.00	\$70,367.00	\$71,987.00

Level 3

Unlicensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$64,891.00	\$66,391.00	\$67,891.00
Licensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$70,082.00	\$71,702.00	\$73,322.00

Addictions Counselor Supervisors

Licensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$74,146.00	\$75,766.00	\$77,386.00

Mental Health Professional III (GA57/Band 7)		
Level 1		
Unlicensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$77,251.00	\$78,751.00	\$80,251.00
Licensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$83,431.00	\$85,051.00	\$86,671.00
Level 2		
Unlicensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$79,568.00	\$81,068.00	\$82,568.00
Licensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$85,933.00	\$87,553.00	\$89,173.00
Level 3		
Unlicensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Unlicensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$81,113.00	\$82,613.00	\$84,113.00
Licensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$87,602.00	\$89,222.00	\$90,842.00
Addictions Counselor Supervisors		
Licensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 20+ years of relevant experience
\$88,510.00	\$90,130.00	\$91,750.00

A compensation pay plan matrix was also created for Social Worker classifications used by forensic social workers in the South Carolina Department of Mental Health's Division of Inpatient Services who function as clinical social workers with hybrid mental health and social work job duties.

SCDMH — Social Worker (GB75/Band 5)		
	Licensed 0-1.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 2-4.99 years of relevant experience
Non-Supervisor	\$60,771.00	\$62,391.00

SCDMH — Social Work Manager (GB76/Band 6)			
	Licensed 5-14.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 20+ years of relevant experience
Non-Supervisor	\$70,082.00	\$71,702.00	\$73,322.00
Supervisor	\$75,688.00	\$77,308.00	\$78,928.00

SCDMH - Social Work Director (GB77/Band 7)			
	Licensed 0-14.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 15-19.99 years of relevant experience	Licensed 20+ years of relevant experience
Supervisor	\$89,152.00	\$90,772.00	\$92,392.00

Employees included in this compensation study will receive a salary increase sufficient to reach the applicable minimum salary in the pay plan or 2.5%, whichever is greater.

Agencies with positions that require job-related board certifications or doctoral degrees may apply an additional 3-5% additional skills or knowledge increase to employees' base annual salary.

Note: The recommendations presented in this analysis are not intended to replace any general increases passed by the General Assembly, step increases employees would otherwise receive, or performance increase plans.

Section Seven — Implementation Cost

The implementation of the increases to the base salary described in this report would result in a total annual cost of **\$17,517,000**. This cost is assuming all vacant positions are filled.

Detailed cost information for each agency can be found in Appendix VII.

Note: All costing information is based on employees and positions as reflected in SCEIS in February 2023. This information is provided to assist in making funding decisions for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. Funding needs for future fiscal years will need to be evaluated and requested by each agency as part of the normal budgeting process. In addition, costing information is based on the years or months of agency service of each employee. Additional costs may be incurred if current employees have experience as mental health professionals outside of the applicable agency.

Section Eight — Conclusion

Mental health support is more important now than ever. The mental health professionals who support South Carolina citizens provide a service critical to those in need, to the friends and families who love them, and the entire community. The salary structure recommended in this compensation review will provide agencies with one tool to improve the recruitment and retention of mental health professionals.

Appendices

Mental Health in South Carolina




1 in 5 U.S. adults experience mental illness each year.



706,000 adults in South Carolina have a mental health condition. **That's more than 5X** the population of Charleston.

It is more important than ever to build a stronger mental health system that provides the care, support and services needed to help people build better lives.

More than half of Americans report that COVID-19 has had a negative impact on their mental health. In February 2021, **37.6% of adults in South Carolina** reported symptoms of anxiety or depression. **23.3%** were unable to get needed counseling or therapy.



1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental illness each year. In South Carolina, **183,000 adults** have a **serious mental illness**.



1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6–17 experience a **mental health disorder** each year. **53,000 South Carolinians** age 12–17 have depression.

South Carolinians struggle to get the help they need.



More than half of people with a mental health condition in the U.S. **did not receive any treatment** in the last year.

Of the **220,000 adults in South Carolina who did not receive needed mental health care**, 47.2% did not because of cost.

10.8% of people in the state are uninsured.



South Carolinians are over 5x more likely to be forced out-of-network for mental health care than for primary health care — making it more difficult to find care and less affordable due to higher out-of-pocket costs.

2,304,799 people in South Carolina live in a community that **does not have enough mental health professionals.**

Mental Health in South Carolina

An inadequate mental health system affects individuals, families and communities.



High school students with depression are more than **2x** more likely to drop out than their peers.

56.2% of South Carolinians age 12–17 who have depression **did not receive any care** in the last year.



4,287 people in South Carolina are homeless and **1 in 7 live with a serious mental illness.**



On average, 1 person in the U.S. dies by **suicide every 11 minutes.** In South Carolina, **811 lives were lost to suicide** and 189,000 adults had thoughts of suicide in the last year.

1 in 4 people with a serious mental illness has been arrested by the police at some point in their lifetime – leading to over **2 million jail bookings** of people with serious mental illness each year.



About **2 in 5 adults** in jail or prison have a history of mental illness.



7 in 10 youth in the juvenile justice system have a mental health condition.

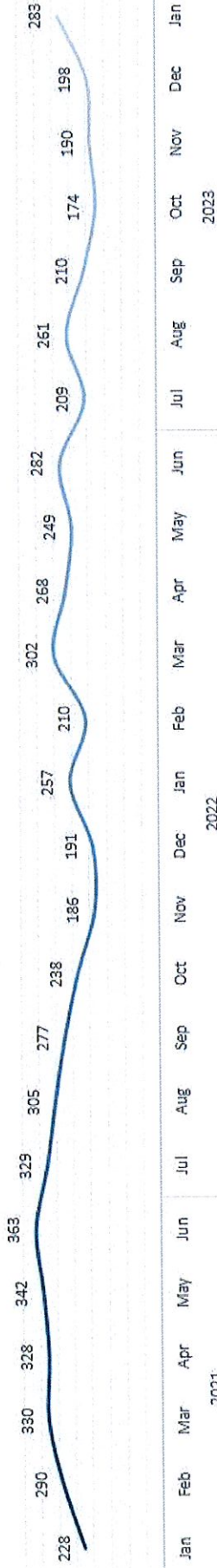



NAMI South Carolina is part of NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness, the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness.

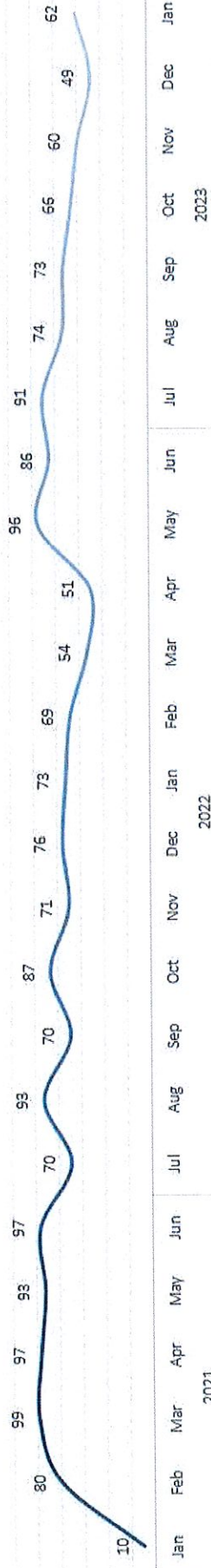
This fact sheet was compiled based on data available in February 2021. For full citations, visit: nami.org/mhpolicystats.

Appendix II — Applicant Flow Data

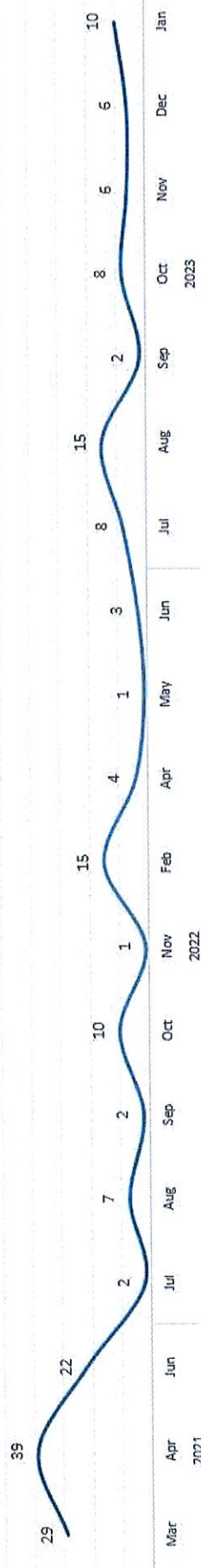
GA55 - Mental Health Professional I



GA56 - Mental Health Professional II



GA57 - Mental Health Professional III



Appendix III — Time to Hire Data

Time to Hire GA55-57



Appendix IV — Turnover Data

Agency	2021 Calendar Year Turnover Rate	2022 Calendar Year Turnover Rate
Mental Health Professional I (GA55)		
South Carolina Department of Corrections	0%	25%
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	0%	0%
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	N/A	N/A
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	47.84%	33.80%
Mental Health Professional II (GA56)		
South Carolina Department of Corrections	42.28%	62.86%
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	31.25%	18.18%
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	21.43%	24%
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	21.30%	17.14%
Mental Health Professional III (GA57)		
South Carolina Department of Corrections	25%	30.77%
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	0%	18.18%
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	0%	0%
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	N/A	N/A

Agency	2021 Calendar Year Turnover Rate	2022 Calendar Year Turnover Rate
All Mental Health Professional Classifications		
South Carolina Department of Corrections	38.03%	57.14%
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	22.73%	17.39%
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	20.69%	22.50%
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	44.00%	31.28%

Appendix V – Vacancy Rates

Agency	June 2021 Vacancy Rate	June 2022 Vacancy Rate	January 2023 Vacancy Rate
Mental Health Professional I (GA55)			
South Carolina Department of Corrections	N/A	N/A	25%
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	N/A	100%	N/A
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	N/A	N/A	N/A
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	16.18%	22.89%	24.44%
Mental Health Professional II (GA56)			
South Carolina Department of Corrections	22.62%	46.07%	48.35%
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	22.54%	5.63%	N/A
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	13.64%	23.53%	29.41%
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	20%	23.41%	23.70%
Mental Health Professional III (GA57)			
South Carolina Department of Corrections	20%	N/A	11.11%
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	33.33%	37.50%	51.28%
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	50%	N/A	N/A
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	N/A	N/A	N/A

Agency	June 2021 Vacancy Rate	June 2022 Vacancy Rate	January 2023 Vacancy Rate
All Mental Health Professional Classifications			
South Carolina Department of Corrections	21.05%	41.41%	44.23%
South Carolina Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	24.24%	18.69%	17.54%
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice	14.49%	22.64%	28.30%
South Carolina Department of Mental Health	16.76%	22.95%	24.33%

Appendix VI — Average State Agency Mental Health Professional Salaries

South Carolina State Agency Data — Mental Health Professionals I, II and III			
Mental Health Professional I (GA55)			
Agency	Count of Employees	Average Annual Salary	Average Years of State Service
Department of Corrections	3	\$51,923.67	15
Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	1	\$45,000.00	0
Department of Mental Health	742	\$51,392.00	7
Mental Health Professional II (GA56)			
Department of Corrections	47	\$63,344.04	5
Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	18	\$56,353.94	16
Department of Juvenile Justice	36	\$57,325.33	12
Department of Mental Health	143	\$63,096.68	12
Mental Health Professional III (GA57)			
Department of Corrections	8	\$72,084.00	6
Department of Disabilities and Special Needs	5	\$81,437.80	5
Department of Juvenile Justice	2	\$75,859.00	20
Department of Probation, Pardon and Parole	1	\$83,092.00	7

Appendix VII — Costing Information

Implementation Cost by Agency

Mental Health Professionals Pay Plan

	Minimum Increase: 2.50%	Fringe Rate: 43.00%	Vacants Included: 100.00%			
	Count	Current Salary	New Salary	Increase	Est Fringe Inc.	Total Increase
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS	104	5,706,668	7,346,978	1,640,310	705,333	2,345,643
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH	1,189	58,694,356	68,097,993	9,403,637	4,043,564	13,447,201
DEPT OF DISABILITIES&SPEC NEED	29	1,716,149	2,124,350	408,201	175,526	583,727
DEPT OF PROB, PAROLE & PARDON	1	83,092	85,169	2,077	893	2,971
SC DEPT JUVENILE JUSTICE	53	2,845,540	3,640,965	795,425	342,033	1,137,458
Grand Total:	1,376	69,045,805	81,295,455	12,249,650	5,267,350	17,517,000

Implementation Cost by Fund Type

Mental Health Professionals Pay Plan by Fund Type

	Count	Total Increase	State Count	State Amount	Federal Count	Federal Amount	Other Count	Other Amount
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS	104	2,345,643	104.00	2,345,643	0.00	0	0.00	0
DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH	1,189	13,447,201	588.91	6,620,667	77.58	859,436	522.51	5,967,099
DEPT OF DISABILITIES&SPEC NEED	29	583,727	25.14	516,592	0.00	0	3.86	67,135
DEPT OF PROB, PAROLE & PARDON	1	2,971	0.00	0	0.00	0	1.00	2,971
SC DEPT JUVENILE JUSTICE	53	1,137,458	48.42	1,048,146	0.00	0	4.58	89,312
Grand Total:	1,376	17,517,000	766.46	10,531,048	77.58	859,436	531.96	6,126,516

Minimum Increase: 2.50%

Fringe Rate: 43.00%

Vacants Included: 100.00%