STATE OF NEW YORK

9379

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN ASSEMBLY

December 19, 2025

Introduced by M. of A. SIMON -- read once and referred to the Committee on Mental Health

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to establishing a master of social work paid field work pilot program

The People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, do enact as follows:

Section 1. The mental hygiene law is amended by adding a new section 7.49 to read as follows:

§ 7.49 Master of social work paid field work pilot program.

(a) The office shall establish and administer a master of social work paid field work pilot program to provide stipends, within appropriations therefor, to students who are enrolled in a master of social work program of study at a program registered by the department of education and accredited by the Council of Social Work Education, or determined by the department of education to be the substantial equivalent of such a program, and who are required to perform services as part of the field work component of such program.

(b) Commencing with the fall two thousand twenty-five semester, the pilot program shall provide stipends for field work during the first four hundred fifty hours of field work for students completing a required field work component as part of their course of study in a master of social work program of study.

(1) Such pilot program shall be available to all students who:

(i) are enrolled in a master of social work program of study at a program registered by the department of education and accredited by the Council of Social Work Education, or determined by the department of education to be the substantial equivalent of such a program, and who are required to perform services as part of the field work component of such program; and

(ii) perform their field work in New York state.

EXPLANATION--Matter in *italics* (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [-] is old law to be omitted.

LBD10427-02-5

(2) Students who are eligible for this pilot program shall receive a stipend of four thousand five hundred dollars, at a rate of ten dollars per hour, while completing their first four hundred fifty hours of field work as part of their required field work component. Such stipend shall be distributed monthly and shall automatically renew annually until either the student completes four hundred fifty hours of field work or the end of the spring semester in two thousand twenty-nine, whichever occurs first. Students who receive such funding shall agree to work in New York state in a social work capacity for one year upon graduating.

(i) Students who receive funding of four thousand five hundred dollars or more relating to the completion of such field work from any other source, including, but not limited to, grants, scholarships, fellowships, or work-based placements, shall be ineligible for a stipend pursuant to this program.

(ii) Students who receive funding of less than four thousand five hundred dollars relating to the completion of such field work from any other source, including, but not limited to, grants, scholarships, fellowships, or work-based placements shall be eligible for a stipend for the difference between their existing funding and four thousand five hundred dollars.

(c) The office shall provide informational materials about the pilot program to schools in the state who offer a master of social work program of study that are registered by the department of education and accredited by the Council of Social Work Education, or determined by the department of education to be the substantial equivalent of such a program. Such schools shall conduct a public awareness campaign informing students and prospective students that their first four hundred fifty hours of required field work in a master of social work program of study will be compensated. Monies for the public awareness campaign shall not be deducted from monies designated for student interns pursuant to this section.

(d) The office shall collect data annually and make such data public on their website to assess:

(1) changes in the number of licensed master social worker applications during the pilot program compared to before the pilot program;

(2) statewide enrollment trends in master of social work programs during the pilot program compared to before the pilot program;

(3) changes in demographics of students enrolled in master of social work programs, including age, race, socioeconomic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, geographic, religion, representation, and any other demographic factor that the office deems relevant;

(4) changes in master of social work programs' retention, attrition, dropout rates, and degree conferral rates. For the purposes of this paragraph:

(i) "retention rate" means the number of students who continue enrollment in their program between specified terms;

(ii) "attrition rate" means the number of students who leave enrollment between specified points in time;

(iii) "dropout rate" means the number of students who discontinue their master of social work program without earning a degree; and

(iv) "degree conferral rate" means the number of students who complete their master of social work program;

(5) the impact on matriculation rates and enrollment status;

(6) the impact on student debt by evaluating how stipend funding affected master of social work student debt levels;

(7) the impact field work funding has on social work wages and workforce retention after graduation;

(8) the impact on field work sites by assessing how funding stipends influenced field work sites' ability to provide services to clients and communities;

(9) impacts on students' mental, emotional, physical and financial health;

(10) cost-benefit analysis of field work funding relative to services provided and preventative measures implemented, which shall include, but is not limited to, the economic value of services performed by interns (e.g., based on market rates for similar services);

(11) the impact field work funding has on local economies and economic development; and

(12) any other metric or area of study the office deems relevant.

(e) The office shall conduct a study and produce a report on the efficacy of the pilot program based on the data collected pursuant to subdivision (d) of this section and shall submit such report to the governor and the legislature, and be made public, no later than December first, two thousand twenty-nine. Such report shall include recommendations on how to expand the pilot program to increase the number of social workers in the state, improve representation in the field of social work, mitigate student debt and improve labor conditions for social workers upon graduation.

(f) Amounts made available to the master of social work paid field work pilot program shall be subject to annual appropriations therefor. Such appropriations shall be adjusted each fiscal year to provide funding to students enrolled in a qualifying master of social work program pursuant to this section and to reflect the variance between current enrollment numbers for master of social work programs and enrollment in the previous fiscal year.

§ 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025. Effective immediately, the addition, amendment and/or repeal of any rule or regulation necessary for the implementation of this act on its effective date are authorized to be made and completed on or before such effective date.