STATE OF NEW YORK

7894--A

2025-2026 Regular Sessions

IN SENATE

May 13, 2025

Introduced by Sens. SALAZAR, CLEARE, FERNANDEZ, GONZALEZ, JACKSON, MYRIE, RAMOS, SEPULVEDA, WEBB, ZELLNER -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Mental Health -- recommitted to the Committee on Mental Health in accordance with Senate Rule 6, sec. 8 -- committee discharged, bill amended, ordered reprinted as amended and recommitted to said committee

AN ACT to amend the mental hygiene law, in relation to establishing a master of social work paid field practicum 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 7.51 to read as follows:

§ 7.51 Master of social work paid field practicum pilot program.

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

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

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

(i) are enrolled in a master of social work program in accordance with subdivision (a) of this section; and

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

(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

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

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per hour, while completing their first four hundred fifty hours of a field practicum as part of their required field practicum component. Such stipend shall be distributed monthly and shall automatically renew annually until either the student completes four hundred fifty hours of a field practicum or the end of the spring semester in two thousand thirty, 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 practicum 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 practicum 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 that are registered by the state education department and accredited by the Council of Social Work Education. Such schools shall post such informational materials in the same manner as other available scholarships, fellowships, or other stipend programs on the school's official website for the purpose of informing students and prospective students of the master of social work paid field practicum pilot program established under this section.

(d) In accordance with state and federal confidentiality and privacy laws, the office shall collect data annually from any college, university, or field practicum setting that has students participating in the pilot program and make such data public on their website. The data shall be used to assess:

(1) the correlation of any increase in applications received for admission to a university or college master in social work program and the number of students who apply to the pilot program;

(2) statewide enrollment trends in master of social work programs resulting from students' participation in the pilot program compared to before the pilot program, including, but not limited to:

(i) 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;

(ii) impacts on retention, attrition, dropout rates, and degree conferral rates. For the purposes of this subparagraph:

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

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

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

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

(3) the impact on a student's financial stability and their ability to satisfy their cost of living needs, including a student's debt levels;

(4) the impact field practicum funding has on workforce retention for participating field practicum settings once the pilot program work requirement is completed;

(5) the impact on field practicum settings' ability to meet service demands of their clients and communities in which they provide services and supports; and

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

(e) The office shall 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 thirty. Such report shall include an analysis of the data collected pursuant to subdivision (d) of this section and 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 practicum 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, 2026. 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.