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**New Tulsans
Initiative**

Shared Prosperity for All Tulsans

Tulsa Behavioral Health Career Pathways Guide

for Internationally Trained Professionals



Acknowledgments

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About New Tulsans Initiative

The [New Tulsans Initiative](#) embodies the core belief that our city's greatest asset is our people. As Tulsa continues to grow as a diverse, world-class city, the [New Tulsans Initiative Welcoming Plan](#) provides pathways for immigrant integration and seeks out opportunities that benefit both native-born and immigrant residents of Tulsa.

About Flourish Tulsa

As part of the [New Tulsans Initiative](#), the City of Tulsa launched [Flourish Tulsa](#) to support internationally trained immigrants in our community. Through community partnerships, we are developing strategies to connect immigrants with employment in fields in which they have experience and interest. Flourish Tulsa partners include Austin Britt, Tulsa Authority for Economic Opportunity; Daniel Chaboya, Tulsa Community College, Diane Eason Conteras, YWCA Tulsa; Eva Stentzel, YWCA; Molly Bryant, YWCA Tulsa; Jonathan Long, Tulsa Regional Chamber; Krystal Reyes, City of Tulsa; Leticia Calvillo, City of Tulsa; Rachel Hutchings, Green Country Workforce; Martha I. Zapata, Uma Tulsa Inc.

Disclaimer

The information provided in this guide is for general informational purposes only. Please verify all information on official sites.



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Introduction

As an internationally trained immigrant in the United States, you can use your international training and education to advance in your career or pursue a new career that builds on your education and training. Since careers in behavioral health often require certifications and/or licensure, a process that can be costly and time consuming, this guide will help you navigate the recertification process and bring awareness to the various pathways available for those interested in the field of behavioral health.



Guide at Glance

If you have completed your education and have professional experiences abroad and are now starting your career in the United States, you will need to understand to what extent you meet the requirements of your chosen career.



The [Gaining Recognition for your International Education](#) section explains how to determine the United States equivalency of your educational degree to help you explore career pathways in behavioral health and other fields.



The [Overview of Behavioral Health Careers in the United States](#) section highlights key benefits of pursuing a career in behavioral health as an internationally trained immigrant and provides an overview of standards of practice in the United States to keep in mind as you consider a career in mental health.



The [Certification and Licensing Process](#) section explains the differences between the certification and the licensing processes in the United States.



The [Career Options in Behavioral Health](#) section provides examples of careers in behavioral health that may match your educational qualifications.



The [Common Occupations in the Behavioral Health Field](#) section provides a brief overview, requirements, and steps you will need to take to enter some of the common occupations in Behavioral Health.



The [Next Steps and Local Resources](#) section includes information about local organizations who are ready to support your career and educational goals!



The [Appendix](#) includes information about average salaries for behavioral health professionals, accredited educational programs for those interested in pursuing additional education, and additional resources and references.



Case Study: Reentering the Field of Behavioral Health in the United States

Name: Tayrin Saldivar-Hernandez

Credentials: Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC-S)

Job Title: Bilingual multicultural director at a community mental health agency

Tayrin is a mental health professional originally from Mexico who has worked in Tulsa, OK, for 15 years. She was aware of her desire to help others at an early age and spent many hours learning about various professions to help others. In 5th grade, she met and worked with mental health professionals who inspired her to follow their path into the mental health field.

Tayrin pursued a mental health degree at a bilingual (English/Spanish) university in Mexico City, where she completed a practicum and a thesis. At the same time, Tayrin worked as the lead of health and community programming at an organization that housed and educated children who could not live with their parents due to immigration issues. In addition to managing a team of professionals, she provided emotional support to the children and ensured they had everything they needed to thrive in their new environment.

When Tayrin moved to the United States—despite her experience, education, and professional degrees—she could not access a job equivalent to the one she had in her country of origin. The professional mental health boards and licensing system in the United States are pretty different from Mexico's. Nevertheless, Tayrin did not abandon her dreams of practicing as a mental health counselor in the United States, despite the obstacles and the long journey ahead.

Tayrin's starting point to becoming a counselor was finding employment as a case manager. To practice as a counselor, she set herself the goal of earning a master's degree in the United States. After a local university accepted her degree from Mexico, she began pursuing a master's degree in counseling. Completing a master's degree taught completely in English was a challenge. Yet, after two years, she graduated and then completed the practice requirements for licensure—3,000 hours of supervised counseling work.

Tayrin is now a Licensed Professional Counselor, supervisor, and community leader. Her work with immigrant communities ensures that all people access quality and culturally responsive mental health services. She is also a living example of what it looks like to pursue one's dreams, no matter how difficult they may seem at first.

Interview by Molly Bryant, MSW



Gaining Recognition for your International Education¹

If you have a university degree from outside the United States, obtaining a credential evaluation is often the first step to gain access to educational and employment opportunities in the United States.

A credential evaluation is an expert analysis of a degree or diploma earned abroad. There is no single agency that completes credential evaluations in the United States. However, approved agencies are listed by the [National Association of Credential Evaluation Services \(NACES\)](#).²

Because each institution—whether it be an employer, educational institution, or licensing board—has its own requirements for credential evaluations, **always** contact the institution you are submitting your evaluation to before requesting a credential evaluation.

Are your credentials from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, or Venezuela? Do you have limited proof of academic achievements as a result of adverse circumstances in one of these countries? The [WES Gateways Program](#) may be able to assist you.³ The WES Gateway Program is a program to help individuals who, as a result of adverse circumstances, have limited proof of academic achievements in their qualifying home countries. YWCA Tulsa serves as a local referral partner for the program; contact info@ywcatulsa.org for more information.

World Education Services (WES) is one of the NACES agencies that provides credential evaluation services. Click [here](#) to understand their credential evaluation process and preview a list of documents you may need to start your credential evaluation process [here](#).^{4 5}

If you are exploring a new career in the United States, it may be helpful to have an idea of the United States equivalency of your international credentials and your GPA (Grade Point Average).⁶

- This free [degree equivalency tool](#) offered by the World Education Services (WES) allows you to preview the United States equivalency of your highest completed degree.⁷
- This free [GPA calculator](#) allows you to preview the United States equivalency of your GPA.⁸

Note: These previews do not replace a formal credential evaluation.

Credential evaluation agencies generally require English translations of non-English documents. [YWCA Tulsa](#) offers language translation services locally.⁹

1 <https://knowledge.wes.org/globaltalentbridge-eguide-career-pathways-in-education-using-your-foreign-education-in-the-united-states.html>

2 <https://www.naces.org/members>

3 <https://www.wes.org/partners/global-talent-bridge/wes-gateway-overview>

4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7IMmpBb1pn8&feature=youtu.be>

5 <https://applications.wes.org/required-documents>

6 Grade Point Average (GPA): the average of a student's grades for a particular period, usually on a scale of 1 to 4.0, with 4.0 being the best.

7 <https://applications.wes.org/degree-equivalency-tool/>

8 <https://applications.wes.org/gpa-calculator/igpa.asp>

9 <https://www.ywcatulsa.org/immigrant-and-refugee-services/translation-and-interpretation-services>



Overview of Behavioral Health Careers in the United States

Why Pursue a Career in Mental Health?

- **Mental health professionals, especially those who are multicultural and multilingual, are in high demand.**
 - [The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#) projects that mental health careers will grow 25% from 2019 to 2029.¹⁰ This rate of growth is faster than the average for all occupations. This field's employment opportunities will increase as people seek counseling and peer support for mental health and addiction disorders.
 - [Oklahoma Works \(2021\)](#) lists counselors in various fields such as mental health, substance abuse, and education as *top critical occupations* in the years 2020-2022.¹¹ Critical occupations are occupations in high demand.
 - Due to the diversity of the United States population, the country has a critical need for multicultural professional and paraprofessional mental health workers who speak languages other than English. Statistics show Spanish-speaking mental health workers are in high demand ([Mental Health American, 2021](#)).¹²
- **Median salary of \$46,240 with an opportunity for upward mobility.**
 - According to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#), in 2019, the median salary in the mental health field was \$46,240 per year or \$22.23 per hour.¹³ Compensation increases with years of education and professional certifications.
- **Opportunity to work in a rewarding field that meets community needs.**
 - Immigrants with educational backgrounds or work experience in mental health can help mental health systems provide culturally competent services to diverse consumers.
 - The shortage of multicultural and multilingual mental health professionals and paraprofessionals means behavioral health consumers from ethnic and linguistic minority groups often encounter challenges accessing and obtaining culturally competent mental health services ([Mental Health America, 2021](#)).¹⁴
 - Often, behavioral health organizations that seek to provide culturally competent services cannot find the professionals and paraprofessionals who can provide those services.

10 <https://tinyurl.com/72b3kdpd>

11 <https://oklahomaworks.gov/oklahoma-workforce-data/critical-occupations>

12 <https://tinyurl.com/pwjhmju>

13 <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/community-and-social-service/substance-abuse-behavioral-disorder-and-mental-health-counselors.htm#:~:text=and%20Wage%20Statistics-,The%20median%20annual%20wage%20for%20substance%20abuse%2C%20behavioral%20disorder%2C%20and.amount%20and%20half%20earned%20less.>

14 <https://www.mhanational.org/issues/latinxhispanic-communities-and-mental-health>

Standards of Practice in the United States

As an internationally trained immigrant you may notice professional and paraprofessional standards of practice in the United States can differ greatly from the ones prevalent in your country of origin. Below is an overview of the standards of practice in the United States to keep in mind as you consider pursuing a career in behavioral health in the United States.

Educational Degrees

- In the United States, many types of bachelor's and master's degrees can qualify for certification or licensure in the behavioral health field (e.g., degrees in psychology, social work, applied behavior analysis, human relations, child and family studies may qualify).
- When pursuing additional educational degrees in the United States, it is advisable to make sure that the academic program in which you plan to enroll is accredited by governing bodies such as the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).
- You also need to check that completing the program enables you to take the required exams for certification or licensure.

Certification and Licensure

- Despite the many educational degrees that may lead to a particular career path, occupations in the behavioral health field are highly regulated in the United States. Usually, practitioners need a certification or license *in addition* to a certain number of educational credits or a degree. The certification or license must be state-sanctioned or board-sanctioned.
 - For example, a degree in social work qualifies for certification and licensure in the mental health field in the United States. Nevertheless, you cannot practice social work in Oklahoma without a social work license, even if you hold a degree in social work from an accredited educational institution.
- While foreign academic credits can be validated in the United States by organizations such as World Education Services ([WES](https://www.wes.org)), certifications and licenses are not transferable from one country to another.¹⁵
- Certifications and licensures require periodic renewal (usually annually) and several continuing education units (CEUs) or credits to maintain certification or licensure. Often, practitioners must submit an annual fee, in addition to their CEUs, to keep their certificate or license in good standing.
- Applying to take examinations and obtaining certifications and licensures require paying multiple fees to examination boards and the state. Therefore, maintaining a certificate or license in good standing requires some funds.

¹⁵ <https://www.wes.org>

State-Level and National-Level Boards

- State-level and national-level boards are tasked with setting professional standards, certifying practitioners, approving continuing education credits (to maintain certifications), and addressing misconduct.
- In the United States, each state has its own set of professional certification boards and regulations. State-specific certifications mean that practitioners certified in other states must become recertified in Oklahoma before they can practice.
- Practitioners must be licensed to practice in each state in which they want to practice.
- In Oklahoma, certification and licensing of occupations in applied behavior analysis (ABA) fall under the Oklahoma Department of Human Services ([DHS](https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs.html)).¹⁶ The certification and licensing of most mental health occupations is done by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services ([ODMHSAS](https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas.html)).¹⁷

Career Clusters

- Certification boards are specific to occupations or career clusters.
- It is worth noting the careers listed here fall under the Human Services Career Cluster. This broad category also includes occupations outside of the mental health field (e.g., occupational therapists, physical therapists, and speech pathologists).
- The Human Services Career Cluster includes career pathways related to families and human needs, such as counseling and mental health services, family and community services, personal care, and consumer services ([Oklahoma CareerTech, 2021](https://www.okcareertech.org/educators/career-clusters)).¹⁸

16 <https://oklahoma.gov/okdhs.html>

17 <https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas.html>

18 <https://www.okcareertech.org/educators/career-clusters>



Certification and Licensing Processes

In many countries, you can call yourself a psychologist or a social worker after you graduate from a university program in those disciplines. You do not need to be licensed by a professional board. In other words, the bachelor's or master's degree diploma issued by an accredited educational institution constitutes the certification. **This is not the case in the United States.** In the United States, universities prepare students with broad degrees that allow them to take examinations specific to each certification. Colleges and universities in the United States usually do not provide certification and licensure.

Many people wonder what the difference is between certification and licensing.

- **Certification:** A certification is typically voluntary, although certification can be mandatory or required to practice in certain states.
- **Licensure:** A license is a state's grant of legal authority to practice a profession within a designated scope of practice. Generally, the licensing process has higher educational demands and more extended training requirements than the certification process. In the United States, licensure typically requires having a master's degree in a program closely related to the profession in which the candidate wants to become licensed.

As you create a career pathway that fits your goals, qualifications, and interests, you might move up the ladder from certification to licensure.

The certification and licensing processes vary by profession or field of practice. Requirements for certification and licensure generally involve a combination of educational credentials, work experience, and training specific to the certificate or license for which you apply.

It is crucial to check the requirements listed by licensing boards and state agencies providing mental health certifications and talking to practitioners to become familiar with application procedures, training schedules, professional associations, and work environments.



Career Options in Behavioral Health

Once you know the United States equivalent of your international degree, you can use the information to explore career options and decide if further education is necessary. When you are looking at jobs that interest you, look for the *minimum academic requirements* needed to qualify for the position. The list below is meant to offer a sample of career options based on academic requirements.

Paraprofessional Occupations

Paraprofessional occupations generally require a high school diploma or a General Education Degree (GED), or equivalent.

Minimum Requirement: High School Diploma or a General Education Degree (GED), or Equivalent

- Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist (PRSS)

Minimum Requirement: Associate Degree, or a Combination of education and experience

An associate degree is generally the equivalent of two years of higher education.

- Behavioral Health Wellness Coach (BHEC)
- Case Manager I and II (CM I and CM II)
- Certified Psychiatric Rehabilitation Practitioner (CFRP)
- Psychiatric Aide/Technician
- Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)

Professional Occupations

A professional occupation generally requires a bachelor's degree, at minimum. Most professional occupations require a master's degree in a behavioral field before you can apply for licensure or certification from a professional board.

Minimum Requirement: Bachelor's Degree

A bachelor's degree is generally the equivalent of four years of higher education.

- Behavioral Health Rehabilitation Specialist (BHRS)
- Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC)
- Certified Behavior Analyst
- Psychological Technician

Minimum Requirement: Master's Degree

A master's degree is generally the equivalent of one to two years of study in an advanced degree program after obtaining a bachelor's degree.

- Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC)
- Licensed Behavior Analyst (LBA)
- Licensed Behavioral Practitioner (LBP)
- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)
- Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)
- Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner

Minimum Requirement: Doctoral-Level Degree

A doctorate or doctoral degree is generally the equivalent of four to six years of study in an advanced degree program.

- Licensed Psychologist



Common Occupations in the Behavioral Health Field

There are many occupations you can pursue in the field of behavioral health. Review the list below to better understand your options and the requirements necessary to enter the occupation. The list of occupations below is not exhaustive but is instead meant to provide a sample of some of the common occupations in the field of behavioral health in the United States.

Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist (C-PRSS)

A [Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist \(PRSS\)](#) provides support and recovery services to people experiencing mental illness and substance abuse disorders.¹⁹ A “peer” is a person in recovery from a mental illness and/or substance abuse disorder who has been trained to work with others on their road to recovery. Peers’ work is characterized by,

- Incorporating their recovery experience to inspire hope and provide a positive role model to those they serve
- Working with clients as part of mental health teams within community mental health agencies and inpatient and outpatient mental health facilities
- Interacting with consumers, clinicians, and administrative personnel within their agency and with social service organizations and agencies providing services to their clients

Obtaining a PRSS certification can be an entry point for mental health careers because the educational requirements are accessible.

Minimum Requirements for PRSS Certification:

- Be at least 18 years of age
- Possess good moral character
- Agree to respect and observe the PRSS Code of Ethics
- Have demonstrated recovery from a mental illness, substance use disorder or both
- Be willing to self-disclose about their personal recovery journey
- Pass an examination and successfully share your recovery story based on standards promulgated by the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (ODMHSAS) after completing the training
- Be employed by or volunteer with the state, a behavioral service provider, or an advocacy agency contracting with or accredited by ODMHSAS

¹⁹ <https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas/trainings/certified-peer-recovery-support-specialist.html>

Steps for PRSS Certification:

To start the certification process with the State of Oklahoma, candidates must obtain a National Provider Identification (NPI) Number, which is free of charge.

1. After receiving their NPI, candidates must create an account within ODMHSAS's online system.
2. Once the candidate has an account, they can complete the Online Peer Recovery Support Specialist Application. As part of the application process candidates must:
 - a. Pay a \$25 application fee.
 - b. Submit High School/GED (or college) transcripts, employment verification, and agree to respect and observe the PRSS Code of Ethics.
3. Once the candidate's application is reviewed and approved, they will receive an email with instructions to register for a 5-day training session.
4. To obtain the certification, the candidate must attend the weeklong training, pass the PRSS Exam, and share their recovery story during the training.
5. Certificates must be renewed annually and require 12 hours of continuing education units.

For more information, visit the [Oklahoma Mental Health & Substance Abuse Certified Peer Recovery Specialist webpage](https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas/trainings/certified-peer-recovery-support-specialist.html).²⁰

²⁰ <https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas/trainings/certified-peer-recovery-support-specialist.html>

Behavioral Health Case Manager

[Behavioral health case managers](#) connect clients to the services that can support their recovery and ability to live independently in the community.²¹ Case managers provide advocacy and referral assistance based on the client's needs and wishes and in partnership with the client's clinical team and family, and community organizations.

Case managers work with clients and their support systems following a treatment plan developed with and approved by the client and the clinicians involved in their care. They help agencies provide a continuum of care and support clients in achieving self-sufficiency to live independent lives.

Minimum Requirements: There are two case management certification levels. Each has different minimum requirements.

Case Manager I Certification (CM I)

- Less than 60 college credits (or a high school diploma or GED)
- 36 months of verifiable mental health work experience

The Case Manager II Certification (CM II)

- Bachelor's degree in a behavioral-related field. Persons with degrees in education, registered nurses, and individuals holding state-issued certificates as child family resiliency practitioners (CFRP) or psychiatric rehabilitation practitioners (CPRP) also qualify for the CM II Certification.

Steps:

CM I candidates must take the following steps to receive certification.

1. Obtain a National Provider Identification Number (NPI) online.
2. Create an online account on ODMHSAS's website.
3. Complete the online application and pay the \$25 application fee.
4. Submit educational transcripts.
5. Once the candidate's application is reviewed and approved, you will receive an email with instructions to,
 - a. Pay a \$50 training fee
 - b. Register for a 2-day training session
 - c. Schedule an examination at a CareerTech site
6. Candidates need to present a current photo identification issued by a government entity within the United States (i.e., passport, driver's license, school-issued I.D.).
7. Within six months of completing the training, candidates need to provide their examination report and proof of employment to receive their Case Manager Certification.

CM II candidates should review the steps outlined by the [Oklahoma Mental Health & Substance Abuse Behavioral Health Case Management webpage](#) as the steps vary based on educational background and professional experience.²²

For more information on CM I and CM II certification, visit the [Oklahoma Mental Health and Substance Abuse Behavioral Health Case Management webpage](#).²³

²¹ <https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas/trainings/behavioral-health-case-management.html>

²² <https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas/trainings/behavioral-health-case-management.html#a210>

²³ <https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas/trainings/behavioral-health-case-management.html#a210>

Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC)

An LPC provides therapy and counseling to adults, children, and/or families. Licensure requirements are more extensive than those necessary to provide peer support (see the C-PRSS section) and case management (see Case Manager I and II section) services.

Minimum Requirements: To qualify for [LPC licensure](#), candidates must have at least: ²⁴

- A master's degree in counseling or a mental health degree that is substantially content-equivalent from a regionally accredited United States university, and CACREP accredited program. A candidate's graduate degree(s) must follow a planned, sequenced mental health program to be considered acceptable.
 - The primary focus of the program must prepare the applicant for a career in counseling. College transcripts must show at least five (5) courses (3-credit hrs. each) of the sixteen (16) core knowledge areas listed by ODMHSAS.
 - Some programs offered by Oklahoma colleges and universities are pre-approved as meeting licensure requirements. A list is available on [ODMHSAS's website](#).²⁵
- In addition to educational credentials, LPC candidates need to complete three years or 3,000 hours of full-time, on-the-job experience supervised by an approved LPC-S.
- LPC candidates can practice under supervision once they meet the other licensure requirements, including a criminal background check and passing the NCE.

Steps:

1. Check the [State Board of Behavioral Health Licensure](#) for a complete list of requirements for licensure and to start an application.²⁶

²⁴ https://www.ok.gov/behavioralhealth/Acts_and_Regulations/index.html

²⁵ https://www.ok.gov/behavioralhealth/ACADEMIC_REQUIREMENTS_-_LPC.html

²⁶ https://www.ok.gov/behavioralhealth/Acts_and_Regulations/index.html

Social Worker Occupations and Licenses

Social workers can work in a variety of occupations, from administration to psychotherapy. The [Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social Workers](#) manages the licensing process for each social work occupation and grants five different types of licensure.²⁷

The five available licenses are: licensed social worker associate (LSWA), licensed master's social worker (LMSW), licensed social worker (LSW), licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), and licensed social worker with administration specialty (LSW-ADM).

Minimum Requirements: To qualify for one of the social worker licenses, candidates must:

- Hold a degree from an approved social work program
- Have passed the Board of Licensed Social Workers' examinations
- Be of good moral character
- Pass a national criminal background check that includes fingerprinting
- Pay all the necessary fees

Each type of license requires a degree from an approved social work program and passing an examination established by the Board of Licensed Social Workers.

- Licensed social work associates (LSWA) hold a bachelor's degree in social work.
- Master's social workers (LMSW) hold a master's degree in social work.
- Licensed social workers (LSW) hold a master's degree plus two years of full-time postgraduate experience in the practice of social work under professional supervision.
- Licensed clinical social workers (LCSW) hold a master's degree in social work plus two years of postgraduate experience in the practice of clinical social work (i.e., counseling, psychotherapy) under professional supervision. **Only social workers with an LCSW license can practice as psychotherapists.**
- Licensed social workers with administration specialty (LSW-ADM) hold a master's in social work plus two years of full-time postgraduate experience in the practice of administrative social work under professional supervision.

For more information about licenses for social workers, visit the [Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social Worker webpage](#).²⁸

²⁷ https://www.ok.gov/socialworkers/Rules_and_Regulations/index.html

²⁸ https://www.ok.gov/socialworkers/Rules_and_Regulations/index.html

Applied Behavior Analysis Occupations

Applied behavior analysis (ABA) uses the psychological principles of learning theory to achieve behavior modification. ABA has proven to be effective in various areas, including parent training, substance abuse treatment, anxiety, depression, dementia management, and occupational safety. ABA is perhaps best known as a treatment model for individuals with Autism and intellectual disabilities.

The Oklahoma Licensed Behavior Analyst Board (OLBAB) is tasked with certifying Board-Certified Assistant Behavior Analysts (BCaBA) and licensing Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA). Although careers in applied behavior analysis are considered mental health careers, the licensing board is managed by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) Developmental Disabilities Services (DDS).

The applied behavior analysis career path has at least four occupations with progressive educational requirements: Registered Behavior Technician (RBT), Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA), Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), and Board-Certified Behavior Analyst--Doctoral (BCBA-D).

Registered Behavior Technician (RBT)

[The Registered Behavior Technician](#) (RBT) is a paraprofessional certified in behavior analysis. RBTs assist in delivering behavior-analytic services under the close supervision of an RBT Coordinator. RBTs are responsible for implementing behavior analysis plans.²⁹ Typically, they are part of a team caring for a patient or client.

Minimum Requirements for RBT Certification:

- Typically, RBTs candidates hold a bachelor's degree in a related area, such as psychology, social work, or human services.
- Individuals who do not have a bachelor's degree in a related area but pass the background check from the Oklahoma Licensed Behavior Analyst Board (OLBAB), can enroll in an 8-week course offered online by The University of Oklahoma's College of Professional and Continuing Education. Upon completion of the coursework, candidates must take the RBT Initial Competency Assessment and OLBAB's examination.

Steps for RBT certification:

1. Candidates who meet educational requirements must complete a competency assessment and [the Registered Behavior Technician exam](#) administered by the [Oklahoma Licensed Behavior Analyst Board \(OLBAB\)](#).^{30 31} Candidates must pay several fees, including a \$50 certification application processing fee and a \$45 exam appointment fee.
2. To maintain certification, RBTs must receive ongoing supervision, adhere to a code of ethics, and renew their license annually.

Some companies hire candidates while they're still pursuing their bachelor's degree, particularly if they have experience working with individuals with disabilities.

For more information about RBT certification, visit the [Behavior Analyst Certification Board Registered Behavior Technician webpage](#).³²

²⁹ <https://www.bacb.com/rbt>

³⁰ <https://pacs.ou.edu/blog/registered-behavior-technician-training>

³¹ <https://olbab.oucpm.org>

³² <https://www.bacb.com/rbt>

Board Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA)

The Board-Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA) is an undergraduate-level certification in behavior analysis.

Professionals certified at the BCaBA level provide behavior-analytic services under a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) supervision. Please note, professionals certified at the BCaBA level may not provide behavior-analytic services without the supervision of a BCBA.

Minimum Requirements: Effective January 2022, individuals seeking a BCaBA certification have two pathways:

- The first pathway involves earning a bachelor's degree from a program approved by the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI), completing supervised, practical fieldwork, and passing an examination.
- The second pathway (for people who do not hold a bachelor's degree from an ABAI-accredited program) involves taking additional behavior-analytic coursework, completing supervised fieldwork, and passing an examination.

The University of Oklahoma offers a bachelor's degree in Lifespan Care Administration, which includes a track in applied behavior analysis that prepares students to take the examination to become a Board-Certified Assistant Behavior Analyst (BCaBA).

Steps:

1. To apply for the (BCaBA) certificate, complete all applicable forms on the [Oklahoma Licensed Behavior Analyst Board \(OLBAB\) webpage](#) and submit with other required materials to the address listed on the application.³³

Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA and BCBA-D)

The Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) is a graduate-level certification in behavior analysis. Professionals certified at the BCBA level are independent practitioners who provide behavior-analytic services.

Minimum Requirements:

Candidates applying on or after January 1, 2022, have four pathways for applying for BCBA certification. Each certification pathway involves a combination of a qualifying educational degree, specific training in applied behavior analytics (for candidates whose degrees are not in the field of behavioral analytics), supervised fieldwork, and an examination. For more information on the minimum requirements and steps to receive certification, visit <https://www.bacb.com>.

Oklahoma State University's School Psychology Program offers a graduate-level coursework sequence that meets the requirements of the Association for Behavior Analysis International (ABAI).

³³ <https://olbab.oucpm.org/applicants>

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)

Marriage and Family Therapy is a professional occupation that requires an advanced degree, usually a master's degree in marriage and family therapy. Professionals holding LMFT licenses work with individuals and families, generally using a family systems perspective. These professionals tend to work in private practice, as state and federally funded programs often do not reimburse behavioral health agencies for services rendered by LMFTs.

The profession is regulated by the [State Board of Behavioral Health Licensure](#).³⁴ The licensing board has strict content requirements regarding the coursework that qualifies candidates to take the corresponding examination. The Board's pre-approved qualifying degrees, pre-approved coursework, the academic review worksheet, and the academic requirements can be found at the following link: [Board Approved Degrees/Coursework](#).³⁵

Minimum Requirements

- All graduate coursework used to meet requirements must be completed through a regionally accredited institution.
- A candidate whose degree is in a field other than marriage and family therapy will need to ensure that they have three courses in each of the following:
 - Marital and family systems theoretical foundations
 - Marital and family systems assessment and treatment
 - Human development
- The candidate will need at least one course in each of the following:
 - Professional studies and ethics
 - Research
- At least 300 hours of practicum or supervised experience in the educational program
- The candidate must work under supervision for two years, with at least 1,000 hours of direct client contact.

Steps:

- 1) Visit the [Oklahoma State Board of Behavioral Health website](#) to learn more about the application process and access the [application portal](#).^{36 37}

³⁴ <https://www.ok.gov/behavioralhealth/index.html>

³⁵ https://www.ok.gov/behavioralhealth/ACADEMIC_REQUIREMENTS_-_LICENSE_TYPES.html

³⁶ <https://www.ok.gov/behavioralhealth/index.html>

³⁷ <https://obbhl.us.thenticcloud.net/webs/obbhl/application/#/login>



Next Steps and Local Resources



Internationally Trained Immigrants:
Flourish in Tulsa!

-  **Create a Career Plan**
-  **Pursue Employment and Paid Training or Internships**
-  **Enroll in ESL Courses**
-  **Build a Professional Network**
-  **Engage your Employer and Share these Resources**

For more information about Flourish Tulsa, contact resilient@cityoftulsa.org

Ready to pursue your professional and educational goals in the United States? Flourish Tulsa partners are available to support you every step of the way!

Step 1: Create a Career Plan

Schedule a free mini consultation at YWCA Tulsa to speak with a specialist who will help you outline your career path. To schedule an appointment, call (918) 663-0377 and mention Flourish Tulsa.

Step 2: Pursue Employment and Paid Training or Internships

Enroll in the Green Country Workforce (GCW) program to obtain a paid internship or full-time job. In addition, as a GCW participant, you may be eligible for free, professional development opportunities offered by local service providers. Sign up by visiting the [GCW Find a Job webpage](#) or calling (918) 796-1200 and mention Flourish Tulsa.³⁸

Step 3: Enroll in ESL Courses

If improving your English proficiency is one of your goals, you can enroll in English as a Second Language (ESL) courses. ESL courses are offered online and in-person at Tulsa Community College (TCC) and YWCA Tulsa. Scholarships may be available. For more information about TCC's ESL courses visit the [TCC ESL webpage](#) or call (918) 595-7536.³⁹ For information about YWCA Tulsa's ESL courses visit [YWCA Tulsa English Language Classes webpage](#) or call (918) 663-0377.⁴⁰ Remember to mention Flourish Tulsa.

38 <http://bit.ly/GCWProgram>

39 <http://bit.ly/TCCESL>

40 <http://bit.ly/YWCATulsaESL>

Step 4: Build a Professional Network

Build your professional network by joining Mosaic and attending their monthly meetings hosted by the Tulsa Regional Chamber. To learn more and register to attend, visit the [Mosaic webpage](#).⁴¹

Step 5: Engage your Employer and Share these Resources

Share the resources available on the Flourish Tulsa webpage with your human resources department or manager, visit the [Flourish Tulsa webpage](#).⁴²

For more information about Flourish Tulsa, contact resilient@cityoftulsa.org.

41 <http://bit.ly/Join-Mosaic>

42 <http://bit.ly/FlourishTulsa>



Appendix I: Average Salaries for Mental Health Occupations in Oklahoma

Occupation	Average Salary or Hourly Wage	Range Salary or Hourly Wages	Source
C-PRSS	\$12-\$15 hr.	\$24,000-\$30,000	ZipRecruiter
RBT	\$34,000 per yr.	\$30,000-\$39,000	Salary.com
CM I and II	\$35,000 per yr.	\$32,000-\$39,000	ZipRecruiter
LCSW, LMFT, LPC	\$20-\$37.50 hr.	\$40,000-\$70,000	ZipRecruiter
BCBA	\$81,000 per yr. \$43 hr.	\$65,000-\$107,500	ZipRecruiter
BCBA: Board Certified Behavior Analyst CM: Case Manager C-PRSS: Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist LCSW: Licensed Clinical Social Worker LMFT: Licensed Marital and Family Therapist LPC: Licensed Professional Counselor RBT: Registered Behavior Technician			



Appendix II: Accredited Educational Programs in the Behavioral Health Field – Oklahoma

If you are interested in additional schooling, review the table below to learn more about the educational programs offered in Oklahoma.

Social Work Programs

Program	Institution	Degree	Link
Social Work Academic Program	Northeastern State University - Tahlequah and Broken Arrow campuses	B.S. in Social Work MS in Social Work	https://academics.nsuok.edu/socialwork/Academic/BSWProgram.aspx https://academics.nsuok.edu/socialwork/Academic/MSWProgram/default.aspx
Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work	The University of Oklahoma - Norman and Tulsa campuses	B.A. in Social Work, MS in Social Work, dual degrees, and online certificate options.	https://www.ou.edu/cas/socialwork/academic-program
Social Work Program	Northwestern Oklahoma State University - Alva campus	B.S. in Social Work	https://www.nwosu.edu/school-of-arts-and-sciences/social-work
Bachelor of Science in Social Work	Oral Roberts University - Tulsa campus	B.S. in Social Work	https://oru.edu/academics/cose/undergraduate/social-work.php
Social Work Degree Program	East Central University - Ada campus	B.S. in Social Work	https://www.ecok.edu/academics/colleges-and-schools/college-liberal-arts-and-social-sciences/department-professional-programs-human-services/social-work
Human Services - A.S. - Pre-Social Work	Tulsa Community College - Tulsa campus	Associate Degree in Science	https://www.tulsacc.edu/programs-and-courses/academic-programs/human-services-pre-social-work

Counseling Programs

Program	Institution	Degrees	Link
Professional Counseling Degree and Program	University of Oklahoma - Tulsa and Norman campuses	M.S. in Educational Psychology MA in Human Relations	https://www.ou.edu/education/academics/masters/professional-counseling
Counseling Programs - School Counseling - Mental Health Counseling	Oklahoma State University - Tulsa and Stillwater campuses	M.S. in Counseling Psychology MS in Educational Psychology PhD in Clinical Psychology	https://education.okstate.edu/departments-programs/hccp/coun/index.html
Rehabilitation and Disability Studies Program	Langston University - Tulsa campus	M.S. in Rehabilitation Services	https://www.langston.edu/okc/programs-centers/drcds
Psychology Programs - Counseling - Marriage and Family - General Psychology	Cameron University - Lawton Campus	MS in Behavioral Sciences	https://www.cameron.edu/psychology/degree-programs/master-of-science-in-behavioral-sciences
School of Graduate Studies - MEd Education	East Central University - Ada Campus	MS in Education - School Counseling	https://www.ecok.edu/academics/colleges-and-schools/school-graduate-studies/med-education/master-education-options/school-counseling
Counseling Programs - Clinical Mental Health Counseling - Addiction Counseling - School Counseling	Northeastern State University - Tahlequah and Broken Arrow Campuses	MS in Counseling	https://www.nsuok.edu/MSCounseling.aspx
Counseling Psychology Program	Northwestern Oklahoma State University - Alva campus	M.S. in Counseling Psychology	https://www.nwosu.edu/graduate-studies/counseling-psychology#:~:text=MASTER%20OF%20COUNSELING%20PSYCHOLOGY,both%20(dual%2Dtrack)
Behavioral Studies Professional Counseling Program	Oklahoma City University - Oklahoma City campus	M.S. in Education Applied Behavioral Studies	https://www.okcu.edu/artsci/departments/education/education-degrees-curriculum/graduate/professional-counseling/
Professional Counseling Programs - LPC - LMFT - LADC	Oral Roberts University - Tulsa Campus	MA in Professional Counseling	https://oru.edu/academics/cotm/graduate/master-of-arts-professional-counseling.php
Counseling Programs	Southern Nazarene University - Bethany and Tulsa campuses	M.A. in Counseling Psychology	https://pgs.snu.edu/gpc
Jackson College of Graduate Studies - Psychology	University of Central Oklahoma - Edmond campus	M.A. in Psychology - Counseling	https://www.uco.edu/programs/jcgs/ceps/master-of-arts-in-psychology-counseling

Applied Behavior Analysis Programs

Program	Institution	Degree	Link
Graduate and Professional Education	Oklahoma State University - Stillwater campus	Master's in Special Education	https://go.okstate.edu/graduate-academics/programs/masters/special-education-ms.html
Registered Behavior Technician	The University of Oklahoma - Distance learning format	Not a degree but an undergraduate course to sit for certification and licensure as a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)	https://pacs.ou.edu/undergraduate-degrees/bachelor-lifespan-care/rbt/
Board Certified Behavior Analyst Certification Preparation	University of Central Oklahoma - Edmond campus	Not a degree but a graduate course to sit for certification and licensure as a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)	https://www.uco.edu/programs/jcgs/ceps/certifications/board-certified-behavior-analyst-certification
Master of Education in Special Education – Challenging Behaviors Online	Southeastern Oklahoma State University - Online Format	Master of Education in Special Education - Challenging Behaviors Online	https://online.se.edu/programs/master-of-education-in-special-education-challenging-behaviors.aspx

Marriage and Family Therapy Programs

Program	Institution	Degree	Link
Marriage and Family Therapy Master's Program	Oklahoma State University - Stillwater campus	M.S. in Marriage and Family Therapy	https://go.okstate.edu/graduate-academics/programs/masters/marriage-and-family-therapy-ms.html
College of Theology and Ministry Graduate Programs	Oral Roberts University - Tulsa campus	M.A. in Professional Counseling	https://oru.edu/academics/cotm/graduate/master-of-arts-professional-counseling.php
Psychology Programs - Counseling - Marriage and Family - General Psychology	Cameron University - Lawton campus	M.S. in Behavioral Sciences	https://www.cameron.edu/catalog/graduate/schools-and-departments/behavioral-studies
Master of Science in Counseling - Marital, Couples and Family Counseling/Therapy	Mid-America Christian University - Online Format	MS in Counseling - Marital, Couples and Family Counseling/Therapy	https://www.macu.edu/academics/adult-online/ms-in-counseling-marital-couples-and-family-counseling-therapy
Marriage and Family Therapy - Graduate Program	Oklahoma Baptist University - Shawnee campus	M.S. in Marriage and Family Therapy	https://www.okbu.edu/graduate/therapy/mft/index.html
Marital and Family Therapy Program	Southern Nazarene University - Bethany and Tulsa campuses	M.A. in Counseling Psychology	https://pgs.snu.edu/mft
Jackson College of Graduate Studies - Psychology	University of Central Oklahoma	MS in Family and Child Studies - Marriage and Family Therapy	https://www.uco.edu/programs/jcgs/ceps/master-of-science-in-family-and-child-studies--marriage--family-therapy



Appendix III: Resources and References

Behavior Analyst Resources

The University of Oklahoma. (2021). Registered Behavior Technician Training. <https://pacs.ou.edu/blog/registered-behavior-technician-training>

This reference provides more information on the behavior technician training process of the University of Oklahoma. It describes the course and the steps necessary to sign up for it.

Behavior Analyst Certification Board. (2021). Website. <https://www.bacb.com/bcba>

This reference discusses the Board-Certified Behavior Analyst certification. It includes the handbook, eligibility criteria, an overview of requirements, and other external links.

Oklahoma Licensed Behavior Analyst Board. Applied Behavior Analysis. <https://olbab.oucpm.org>

This reference gives the definition of applied behavior analysis and their importance. It then goes into detail about how to choose the right applied behavior analysis for individuals.

Case Manager Resources

Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Behavioral Health Case Manager. <https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas.html>

This reference centers around Behavioral Health Case Management. The article discusses steps to first time certification and renewal, training information, and the training schedule. Case management resources and FAQs are on the page to provide further information.

Peer Recovery Support Specialist Resources

Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services. Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialist. <https://oklahoma.gov/odmhsas/trainings/certified-peer-recovery-support-specialist.html>

This reference focuses on Certified Peer Recovery Support Specialists. Steps on how to become certified, the application process, training information and the National Provider Identification Number are given. Additional links are provided for any information not on the current page.

Marital and Family Therapists, Counselors, and Behavioral Practitioners Resources

State Board of Behavioral Health (2021). Acts and regulations.

https://www.ok.gov/behavioralhealth/Acts_and_Regulations/index.html

This resource gives direct links for the different rules and regulations regarding professional counselors, marital and family therapists and behavioral practitioners.

Oklahoma State Department of Education. How to become a school counselor.

[Counseling | Oklahoma State Department of Education](#)

This resource gives specifics about how to become a school counselor in Oklahoma. A variety of additional resources are given including COVID-19 information, counseling equity and professional development.

Certified Drug and Alcohol Counselors

Public Health Online. (2021). Oklahoma Substance Abuse Counselor Certification.

<https://www.publichealthonline.org/addiction/oklahoma-substance-abuse-counselor>

This resource gives more information about substance abuse counselors. Information regarding degree and certification requirements, experience and supervision, application and renewal process and the exam are all given.



Appendix IV: Other Career Resources

Human Services Guide [Blog] www.HumanServicesEdu.org

This resource gives more information about careers in human services. It provides a state-by-state link which gives information particular to those states. It also lists various counseling jobs available and the differences between them.

Oklahoma Works. Career Ladders. <https://oklahomaworks.gov/careerladders>

This resource provides an overview of critical jobs in Oklahoma. It gives direct links for each section, which are primarily focused on how to work up the ladder in each field.

Oklahoma Works. Career pathways for Oklahomans. <https://oklahomaworks.gov/new-career-pathways>

This resource is focused on different career paths for Oklahomans. Additional information includes an Oklahoma career guide, college plans, working up the ladder, apprenticeships, and army opportunities.

Social Work Guide [Blog]. (2021). [How to Become a Social Worker | SocialWorkGuide.org](https://socialworkguide.org/how-to-become-a-social-worker)

This resource provides information on what it takes to become a social worker. Information on education specifics, available programs, and different career paths are available.



References

Mental Health America. (2021). Latinx/Hispanic communities and mental health. <https://tinyurl.com/pwjhmju>

This reference discusses how mental health directly affects the Latinx and Hispanic communities. It gives statistics from 2020 and 2021. In-depth information about societal issues, attitudes, prevalence, treatment issues, access/insurance and screening tools can be found here. Information is also available in Spanish.

Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development. (2021). Oklahoma Works. 2020-2022 critical occupations. [2020-2022 Critical Occupations - Oklahoma Works - Oklahoma Works](#)

A list of Oklahoma’s highest-paying jobs is given, as well as the hourly rate, education requirements, on-the-job training, required certifications and ecosystems one would be working in. It also compares the number of jobs in the specified careers from 2019 to 2025.

Oklahoma CareerTech. (2021). Oklahoma career clusters. [Career Clusters — CareerTech \(CT\) - okcareertech.org](#)

This resource provides information on “career clusters” revolving around educational areas. It helps students determine what careers might be a good fit for them based on their educational background and preferences.

Southwest Oklahoma Impact Coalition. (2012). [Career Pathways Easy Start Guide.pdf \(ok.gov\)](#)

This reference guide helps those looking for the right career path get started on their journey. It gives step-by-step instructions on how to best figure out a plan of action while also giving additional resources.

U.S.Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2020). [Occupational outlook handbook: Substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors.](#)

This resource provides insight on careers in substance abuse, behavioral disorder, and mental health counselors. It describes entry-level education, median pay, job outlook growth, employment change, and much more. Additional resources on these topics are also provided.

