



**AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION**
SERVICES, INC.

2026 Advocacy Priorities

PREAMBLE

The American Psychological Association's advocacy priorities are grounded in psychological science and a commitment to promoting research funding and infrastructure expanding access to behavioral health care, advancing health equity for underserved populations, promoting wellbeing across the lifespan, and protecting human rights. Guided by a biennial membership survey, APA's strategic priorities, and APA Council Policy, APA focuses on evidence-based policies, robust federal and state advocacy, and coalition partnerships to advance psychology's impact.

PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

Funding and promotion of basic, clinical, and applied psychological research

Advocate for increased funding for basic, clinical, and applied psychological research within key agencies, foundations, and funding sources (e.g., National Institutes of Health [NIH], National Science Foundation [NSF], Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], Department of Veterans Affairs [VA], Department of Defense [DoD], Department of Education [Ed], Environmental Protection Agency [EPA]).

Science infrastructure and regulatory environment

Promote ethical, peer-reviewed, human and non-human animal forms of psychological and interdisciplinary research.

Technology and Behavior at Work

Advance the science and practice of applied psychology in managing the significant impacts of artificial intelligence (AI), social media, and other technologies on workers, mentoring relationships, and teams. Amplify the increasingly critical role that technology plays across the span of work, including recruitment and hiring, worker mental health and well-being, formal and informal training, team safety and effectiveness, and organizational culture.

PRACTICE OF PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY WORKFORCE

Access to health services, including mental and behavioral health services

Ensure affordable and equitable access to evidence-based health and behavioral health services, including services furnished via telehealth, within public and private healthcare delivery systems. Promote changes in public and private health insurance coverage and reimbursement policies and practices to facilitate psychologists' participation in these programs. Advance integrated, team-based care by expanding the role of psychologists within interprofessional healthcare settings, such as primary care, pediatric, geriatric, and specialty medical settings to improve coordination, quality, and outcomes. Advocate for sustainable funding models, payment structures, and training pathways that enable psychologists to serve effectively in integrated care teams. Strengthen enforcement of mental health parity laws. Protect and strengthen public health insurance and safety net programs, such as Medicaid, Medicare, Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), subsidies for purchase of private insurance coverage child-care, family leave, nutritional

assistance, economic stability, and housing programs. Ensure that the development and implementation of new healthcare provider payment models and new technological innovations promotes increased access to behavioral health services.

Psychology workforce development across the lifespan

Improve equitable access to graduate study for psychology, including by strengthening student financial aid, loan repayment, and loan forgiveness programs. Secure federal funding for psychology workforce training programs, including accredited internships and post-doctoral fellowships, that expand interprofessional training opportunities working with underserved populations. Enhance training and leadership skills of the next generation of psychologists, engage students, and increase accessibility of equitable training opportunities and licensure preparation for all psychology trainees.

Reimbursement and scope of practice

Ensure appropriate reimbursement for the full range of psychologists' and trainee services, including but not limited to psychotherapy, health and behavior assessment and intervention, and neuropsychological and psychological testing and assessments, both in-person and via telehealth. Leverage federal with state efforts promoting licensure, credentialing, distinguishing the value of the doctoral degree, and achieving rate reimbursement at parity with other doctoral providers. Promote psychologists in Medicare, Medicaid, and private sector health programs, including ensuring psychologists have the ability to provide services to the full scope of their licensure, and supporting VA recruitment and retention of psychologists.

Training and Practice in Applied Psychology

Expand training and practice opportunities for applied psychologists in public and private sectors in areas such as human performance, motivation, leadership and personnel assessment (e.g., employment testing for hiring and training), conflict resolution, and civic engagement. Promote public recognition of the value added by applied psychologists in these endeavors across multiple settings including those that are outside of where psychologists are commonly employed.

HEALTH EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

Health equity for underserved and vulnerable populations

Promote health equity and access to culturally competent care for diverse populations by reducing disparities in health attributed to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, geography, disability, age, socioeconomic status and poverty, and underserved and vulnerable populations, including tribal communities, children, immigrants, veterans, and individuals living with HIV/AIDS.

Criminal justice

Use psychological research to advance criminal justice reform, improve police-community relations, promote secure firearms storage and lethal means safety strategies, and to address the disparate impact of mass incarceration on marginalized communities.

Human rights and racial equity

Promote human rights and combat discrimination in all forms and settings, including education, healthcare, and workplace. Oppose efforts to curtail rights of women, sexual and gender minorities, individuals with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, and other marginalized populations. Continue advocacy around federal immigration policies related to humane treatment of immigrants and refugees.

POPULATION HEALTH

Health promotion and prevention throughout lifespan and settings

Support the psychological wellbeing and healthy development of children and adults, including access to developmentally appropriate mental health services and population-based prevention and health promotion programs across the lifespan and settings.

Application of psychological science to early childhood, K-12, and higher education

Support equitable pathways for all students across the education continuum, from birth through higher education, including through childcare services and universal pre-K programs; school-based mental health programs; teacher preparation and access to well-rounded education; psychology as a STEM discipline; and APA high school psychology curricula standards.

Substance use disorders and addictions

Advocate for policies to increase access to evidence-based practices for the prevention and treatment of and recovery from substance use disorders and addictions. Promote the expertise of psychologists in the development and implementation of non-pharmacological interventions for pain management and addictions (e.g., contingency management).

Violence and suicide prevention

Utilize psychological research to reduce suicide and interpersonal violence, including gun violence. Increase school safety and educate the public, policymakers, and law enforcement about non-violent conflict resolution, impact of trauma exposure, and the need for trauma-informed interventions.

Environmental Sustainability

Educate the public and apply psychological research to combat climate change and address its impacts on mental health and well-being, and its inequitable harms to vulnerable, marginalized communities. Support the application of psychological science to individual, community, and societal responses to climate change and environmental sustainability, and the ability of psychologists to engage effectively in these efforts.