

Agenda Item #15

BH-CONNECT Cycle Review

Presenters: Chris Roina, Lead Communications Analyst
Eric Neuhauser, Research and Evaluation, Branch Chief
Dorian Rodriguez, Monitoring and Evaluation, Section Chief

About BH-CONNECT and MBH-SLRP



The California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) applied to increase access to and improve mental health services for Medi-Cal members statewide.



The Behavioral Health Community-Based Organized Networks of Equitable Care and Treatment (BH-CONNECT) Demonstration is aimed at improving care for Medi-Cal members living with significant behavioral health needs.



See the [HCAI BH-CONNECT](#) website for more info.

HCAI is offering the **Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program (MBH-SLRP)** as part of the BH-CONNECT Workforce Initiative.

The goal of the MBH-SLRP is to reduce educational debt for behavioral health professionals who commit to serving Medi-Cal members and underserved communities. Eligible behavioral health practitioners can receive **up to \$240,000** in loan repayment with commitment to a multi-year service obligation.

MBH-SLRP Cycle Launch Success

Team Launched in Record Time!

Content Produced

- Web, flyers, email, social, newsletter, webinars

Application Launch

- July 1 launch
- 2 webinars (July 9–10) → **1,100+ attendees** (HCAI record)

Press Release

- August 4

Results

- **5,100+ applications** (closed Aug 15)
- **39,000+ webpage views in July** (HCAI's highest)
- Avg. **29,000 views in August**



MBH-SLRP Sample Media

MBH-SLRP Flyer

Reduce Your Student Debt Serve Your Community

Apply for the Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program

The Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program offers up to **\$240,000** to behavioral health professionals who commit to serving California's Medi-Cal members and the uninsured in Medi-Cal safety net settings.

Whether you're licensed, working toward licensure, or a community-based provider, this program helps **pay off student debt** while you make a difference in your community.

**APPLICATIONS
START JULY 1, 2025**

Why Apply?

- Reduce student loan debt
- Serve vulnerable communities
- Be part of California's behavioral health transformation

Who Should Apply?

This program is open to behavioral health professionals with educational loan debt who are willing to commit to serving 2 to 4 years in an eligible Medi-Cal safety net setting. See [t.ly/cACpV](#) for more information on eligible sites.

How to Apply?

Visit [t.ly/cACpV](#) for more information and to apply starting July 1, 2025





MBH-SLRP Email Campaign



A healthier California where all receive equitable, affordable, and quality health care.

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program

Applicant Webinar

July 9, 2025 1:30–3:00 p.m.

Register Now!

Dear Behavioral Health Leaders and Workforce Partners,

The Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program (MBH-SLRP) is ready to launch! The goal for the MBH-SLRP program is to reduce educational debt for behavioral health professionals who commit to serving Medi-Cal members by offering up to \$240,000 in educational loan repayment.

The application cycle opens July 1 and closes on August 15, 2025. Now is the time for individuals to take full advantage of this exciting new opportunity.

Your invited!

This webinar is designed for potential applicants to learn about the program and application process. We also welcome leaders, HR staff, administrators, program managers, and others who support or employ behavioral health professionals so that this information can be widely shared.

Register Now!

What You'll Learn:

- How individuals can apply for up to \$240,000 in loan repayment
- About program components such







A healthier California where all receive equitable, affordable, and quality health care.

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program

Informational Webinar

May 13, 2025 3:00–4:30 p.m.

Register Now!

Dear Behavioral Health Leaders and Workforce Partners,

You're invited to an informational webinar on Monday, May 13. Learn how you can support your workforce by sharing an exciting opportunity. The [Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program \(MBH-SLRP\)](#) offers up to \$240,000 in educational loan repayment for behavioral health professionals!

This webinar is designed for leaders, HR staff, administrators, program managers, and others who support or employ behavioral health professionals.

Register Now!

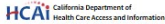
What You'll Learn:

- How individuals in your organization or network can apply for up to \$240,000 in loan repayment
- What service commitment is required
- Where service commitments can be completed and if your organization may qualify as one of these settings
- Which behavioral health professions qualify





MBH-SLRP Webpage



Search:

Facilities Workforce Affordability Data Facility Finder

Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program

HCAi is offering this Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program (MBH-SLRP) as part of the Behavioral Health Community Based Organized Networks of Equitable Care and Treatment (BH CONNECT) Workforce Initiative. The program is committed to expanding access to critical mental health and substance use disorder services across California.

The goal for the MBH-SLRP is to reduce educational debt for behavioral health professionals who commit to serving Medi-Cal members and underserved communities. Eligible behavioral health practitioners can receive up to \$240,000 in loan repayment with commitment to a multi-year service obligation.



2025 Application Cycle: Closed

The 2025 Medi-Cal Behavioral Health Student Loan Repayment Program (MBH-SLRP) closed on August 15, 2025. Applications will be reviewed through October 2025. Awards are anticipated to be announced in November 2025.

MBH-SLRP Shortage Designation Lookup Tool

This tool is designed to help applicants understand how workforce shortage severity is assessed across California counties by profession.

Filter by Profession: Use the filter to select your specific behavioral health profession. The dashboard will update to show the workforce shortage severities by county for that profession.

[View in Map](#)

Note: If you need an ADA accessible version, contact workforce@hcai.ca.gov

Purpose of the Application Cycle Review

What?

- Review the application outcomes from the MBH-SLRP cycle to assess trends and gather high-level data findings.

Why?

- To ensure program transparency, support data-driven decision-making, and strengthen alignment with HCAI's mission to expand the behavioral health workforce.

What we hope to achieve:

- Gather data insights to refine future program cycles.
- Identify key applicant trends as baseline targets for future program evaluation.
- Build upon a Post-Cycle Review once award notices are processed.

MBH SLRP Important Dates



Data Insights

As of 10/1/2025, we received over 5,100 completed applications.

The average score of eligible applicants was 47.1

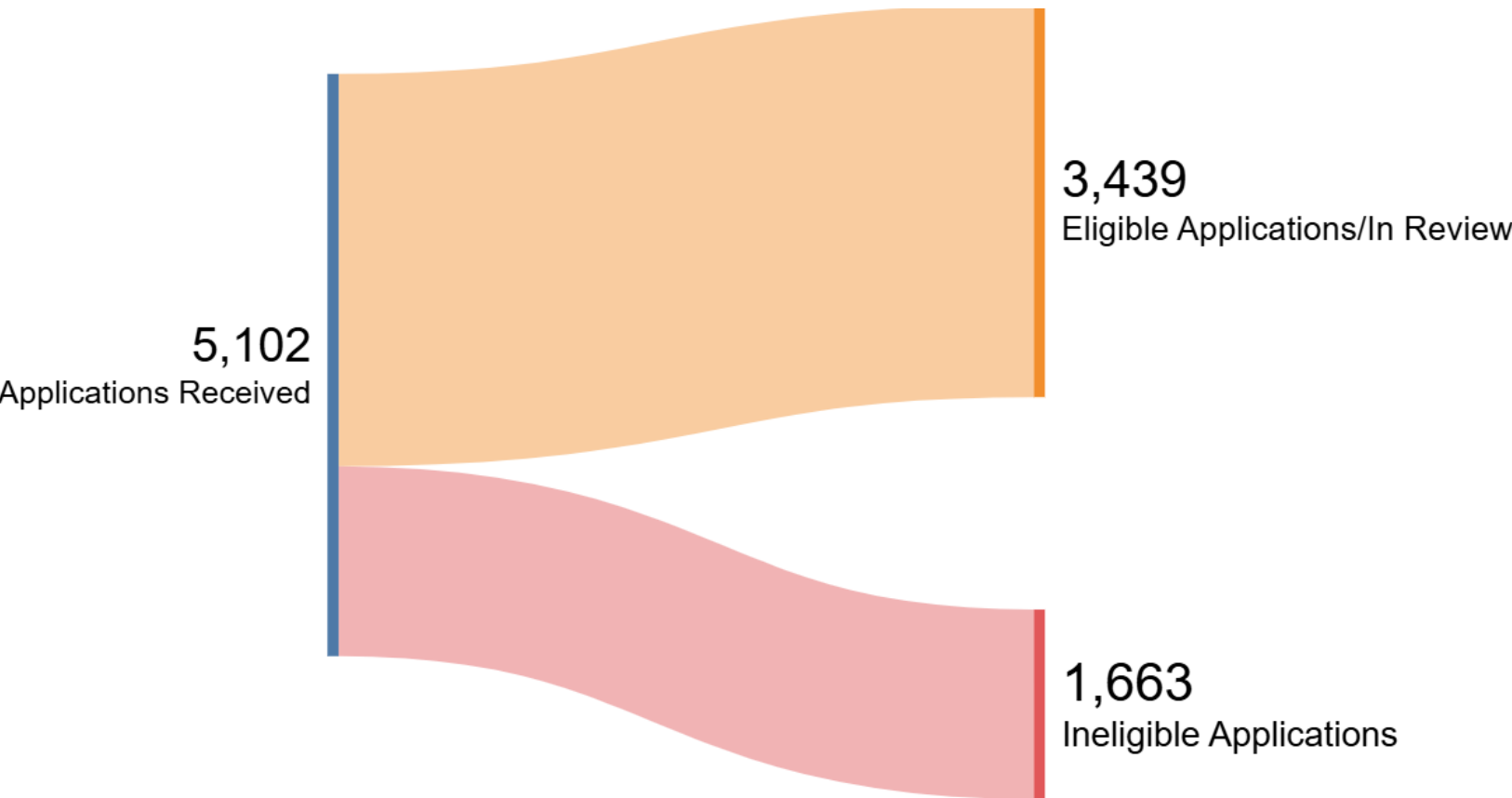
~38% of eligible applicants can provide care in Spanish.

Nearly half of the eligible applicants have 5+ years of experience working or training in a Medi-Cal safety net setting, while almost 70% of eligible applicants are employed in a Medium or High Shortage Area.

About 70% of eligible applicants are Clinical Social Workers or Marriage and Family Therapists (both Associate and Licensed).

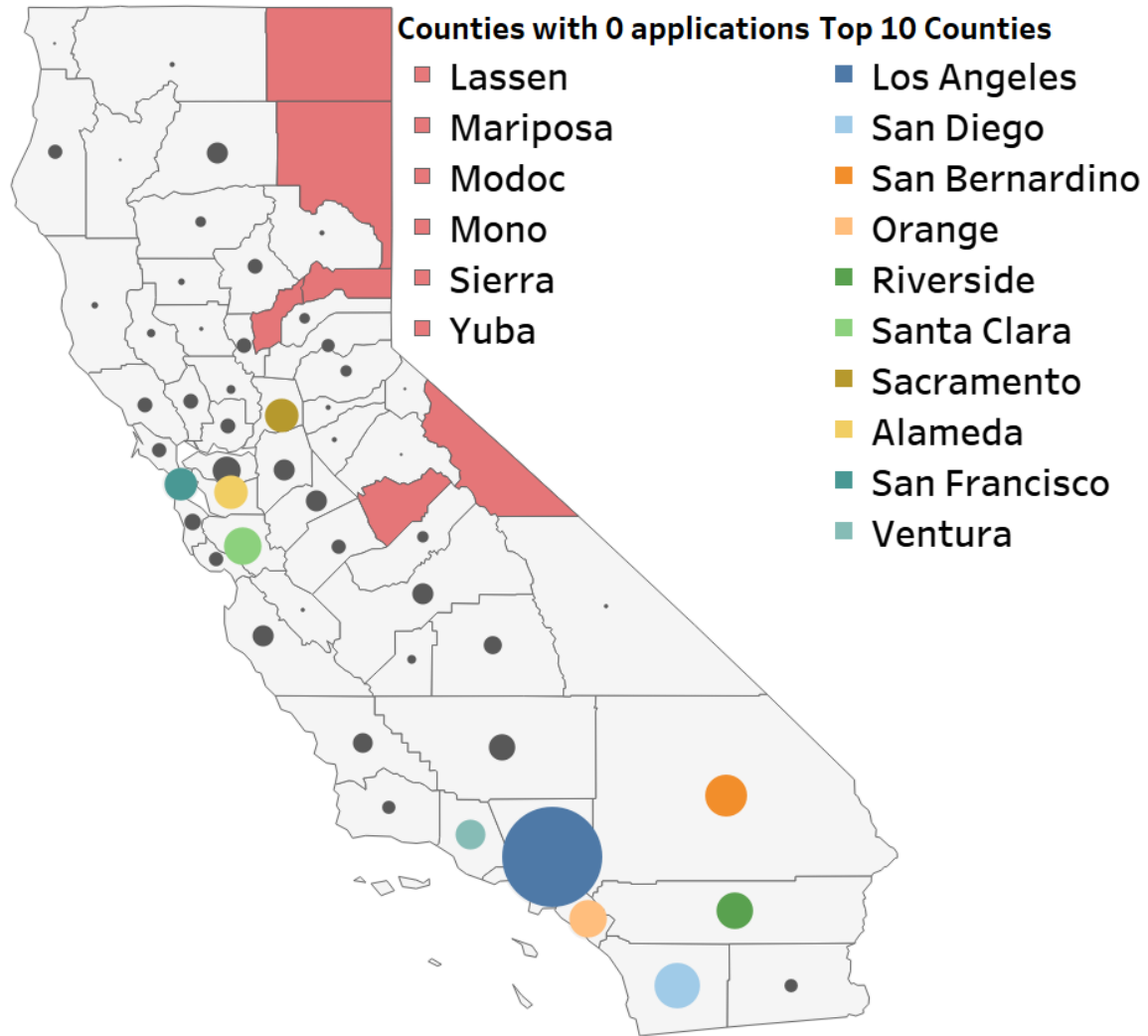
Nearly 1/3 eligible applicants are in Los Angeles.

Applications Summary as of 10/1/2025



Application Status	\$ Requested
Ineligible	\$178,678,573.79
Eligible	\$331,364,366.86
Total Applications	\$510,042,940.65

County Map of Eligible Applicants – Top 10



Rank	County	Count	Percent
1	Los Angeles	1,123	32.65%
2	San Diego	232	6.75%
3	San Bernardino	197	5.73%
4	Orange	161	4.68%
5	Santa Clara	158	4.59%
6	Riverside	150	4.36%
7	Sacramento	129	3.75%
8	Alameda	127	3.69%
9	San Francisco	119	3.46%
10	Ventura	100	2.91%

Scoring Overview of Eligible Applicants

MBH-SLRP Scoring Overview	
Average Score	47.1
Median Score	50
Mode Score	53
Highest Score Possible	70
Highest Applicant Score	70
Lowest Applicant Score	3

Languages Spoken

Points Possible: 15

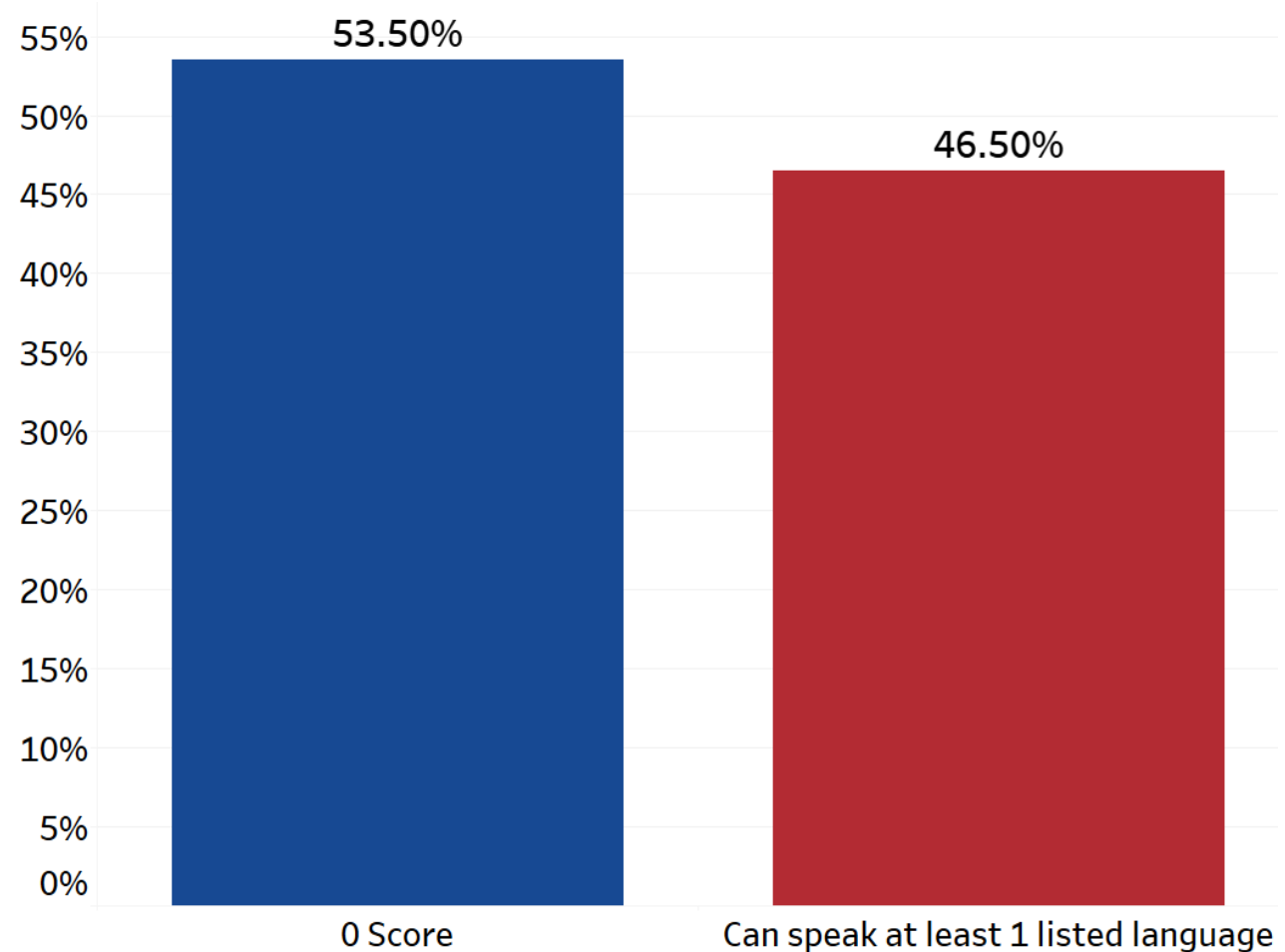
Scoring Guideline: Speaks any of the listed languages fluently/well enough to be able to provide direct care services to clients without additional translation services.

10 points for each listed county-level Medi-Cal threshold language spoken that matches the language based on the county's (where services are provided) need, according to the Department of Health Care Services' [list\(s\)](#).

5 points for each listed state-level Medi-Cal threshold language.

5 points for each Indigenous and/or Tribal language and/or Sign language (up to 10 points).

0 points: Does not speak any of the listed languages.



Publicly Funded Grants/Programs

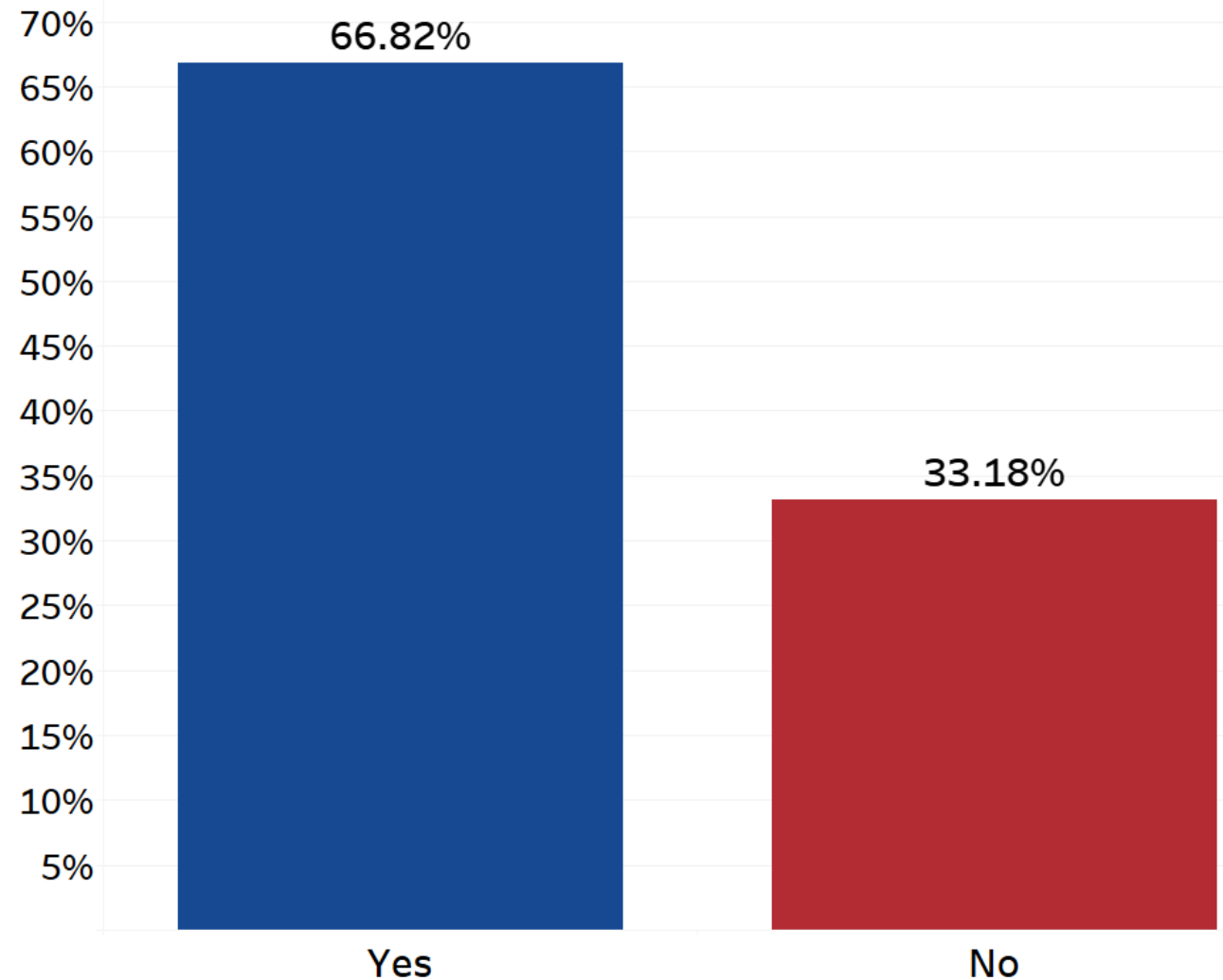
Points Possible: 20

Scoring Guideline: Have you received/participated in any of the following:

- The Health Resources and Services Administration's (HRSA) Scholarship for Disadvantaged Students.
- Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG).
- Pell Grants.
- Perkins Loan.
- Work Study Program.
- California College Promise Grant from a California Community College.
- Food Stamp Program (e.g., CalFresh, SNAP, EBT).

20 points: Yes

0 points: No



Medi-Cal Safety Net Setting

Points Possible: 10

Scoring Guideline: How many years of experience do you have working or training in a Medi-Cal safety net setting?

10 points: 5 years

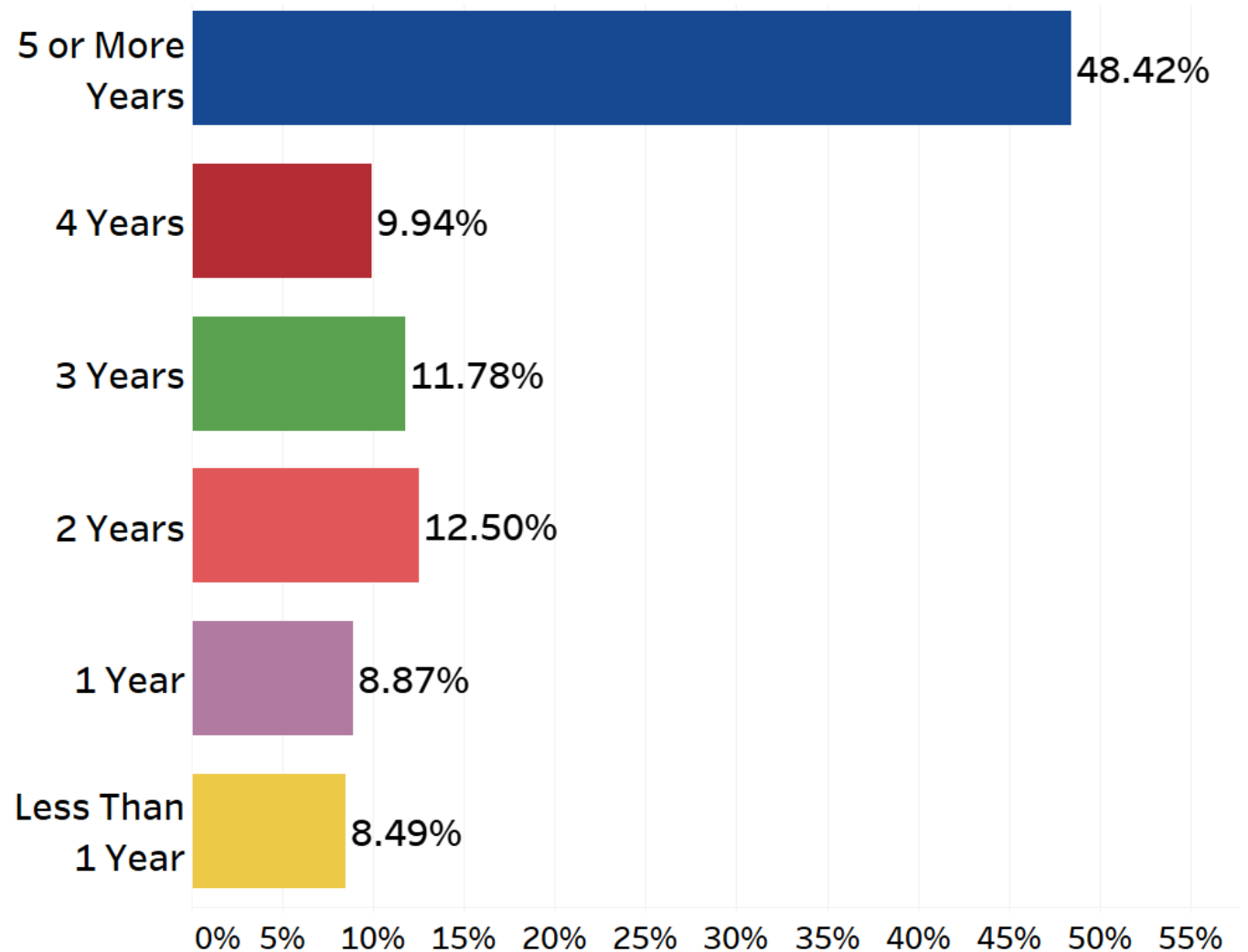
8 points: 4 years

6 points: 3 years

4 points: 2 years

2 points: 1 year

0 points: less than 1 year



Shortage Area

Points Possible: 5

Scoring Guideline: Is your employment site(s) located in an HCAI-identified shortage area?

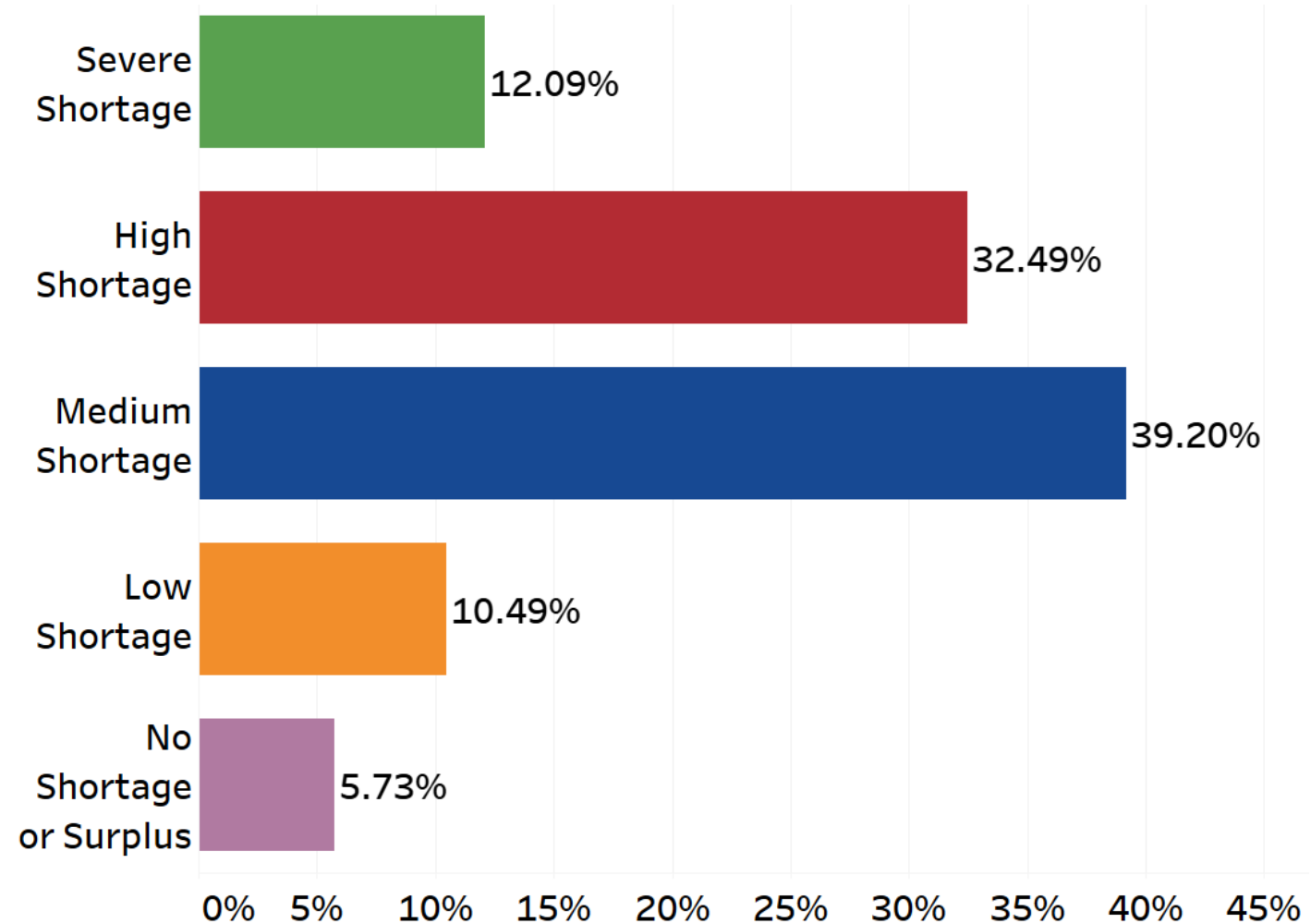
5 points: Severe Shortage (-50% or more)

4 points: High Shortage (-35% to -49.99%)

3 points: Medium Shortage (-20% to -34.99%)

2 points: Low Shortage (-5% to -19.99%)

0 points: No Shortage or Surplus (-4.99% or less)



Severe and High Shortage Areas Breakdown – Top 10 by Profession + County

Profession + County	Count	Percentage
Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Los Angeles	189	12.32%
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Los Angeles	118	7.69%
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in Riverside	37	2.41%
Psychiatrist in Los Angeles	35	2.28%
Associate Clinical Social Worker in Santa Clara	34	2.22%
Associate Marriage and Family Therapist in Santa Clara	34	2.22%
Licensed Clinical Social Worker in Orange	33	2.15%
Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist in San Bernardino	32	2.09%
Associate Marriage and Family Therapist in Orange	31	2.02%
Associate Marriage and Family Therapist in Sacramento	30	1.96%

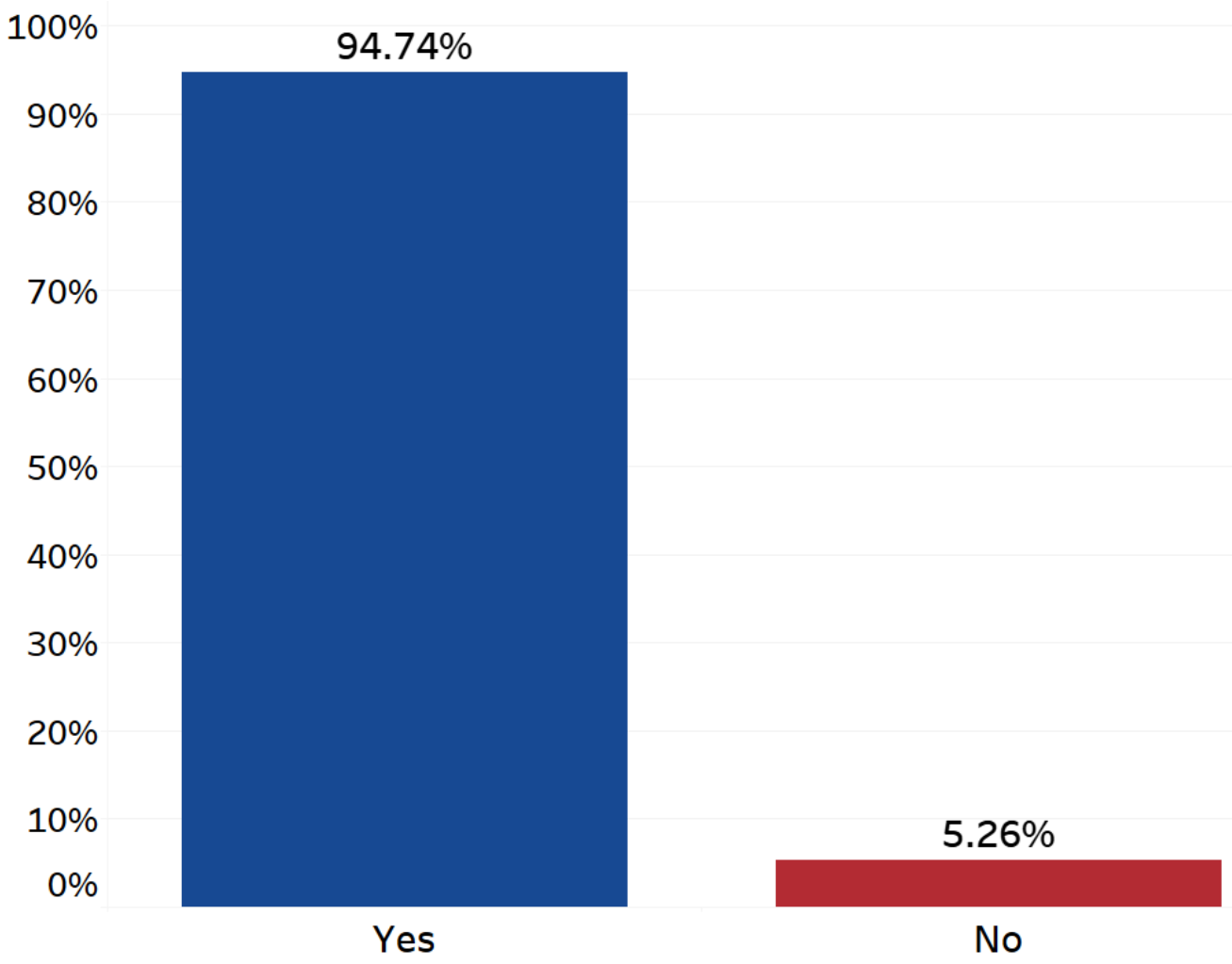
County Behavioral Health Site

Points Possible: 20

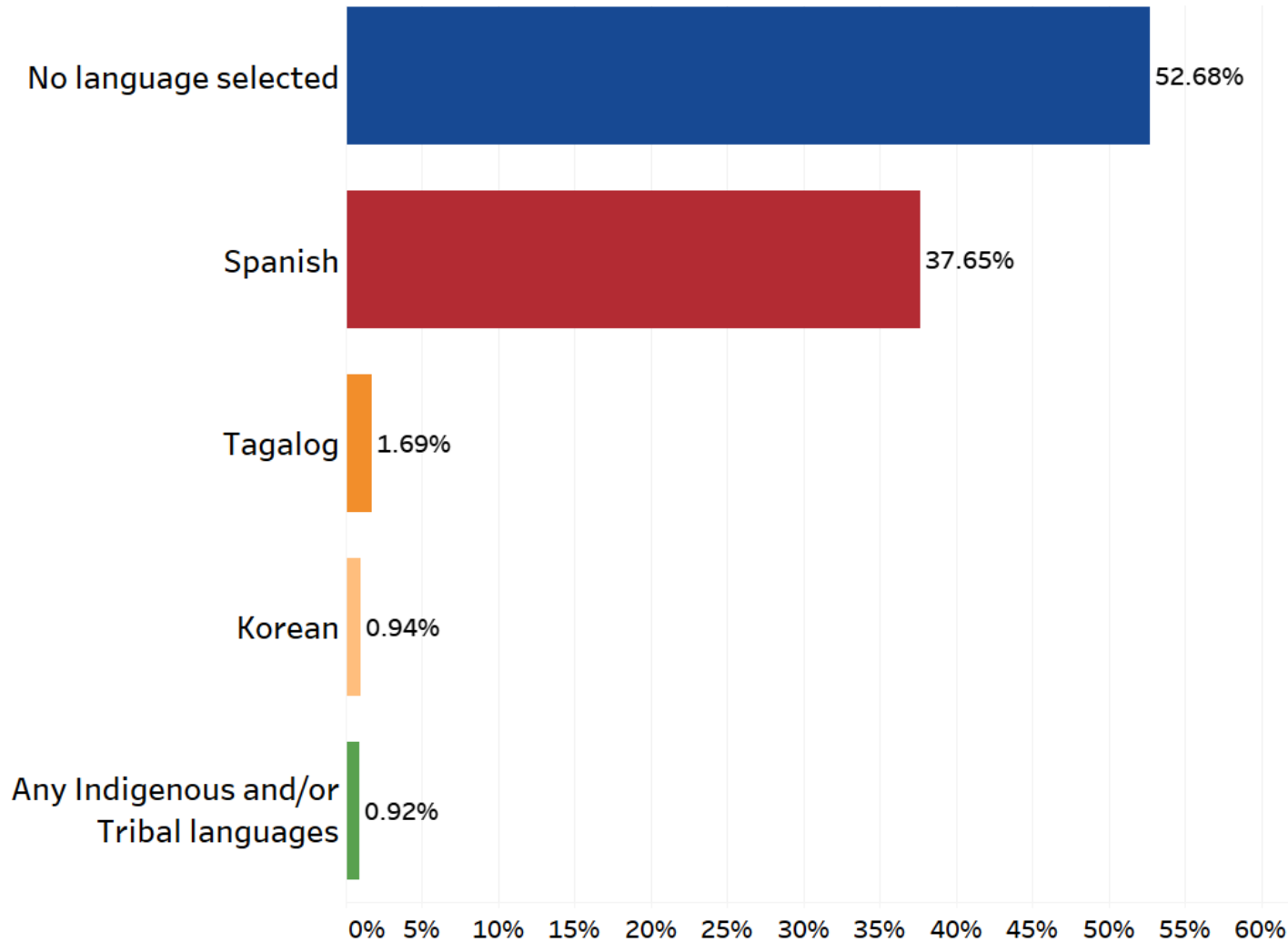
Scoring Guideline: Are you providing services at an organization that delivers Medi-Cal specialty behavioral health services (i.e., Specialty Mental Health, Drug Medi-Cal, or Drug Medi-Cal Organized Delivery System services)?

May include both county-operated sites and community-based sites that are contracted with a county behavioral health agency; may also include individual practitioners contracted with a county behavioral health agency.

20 points: Yes
0 points: No

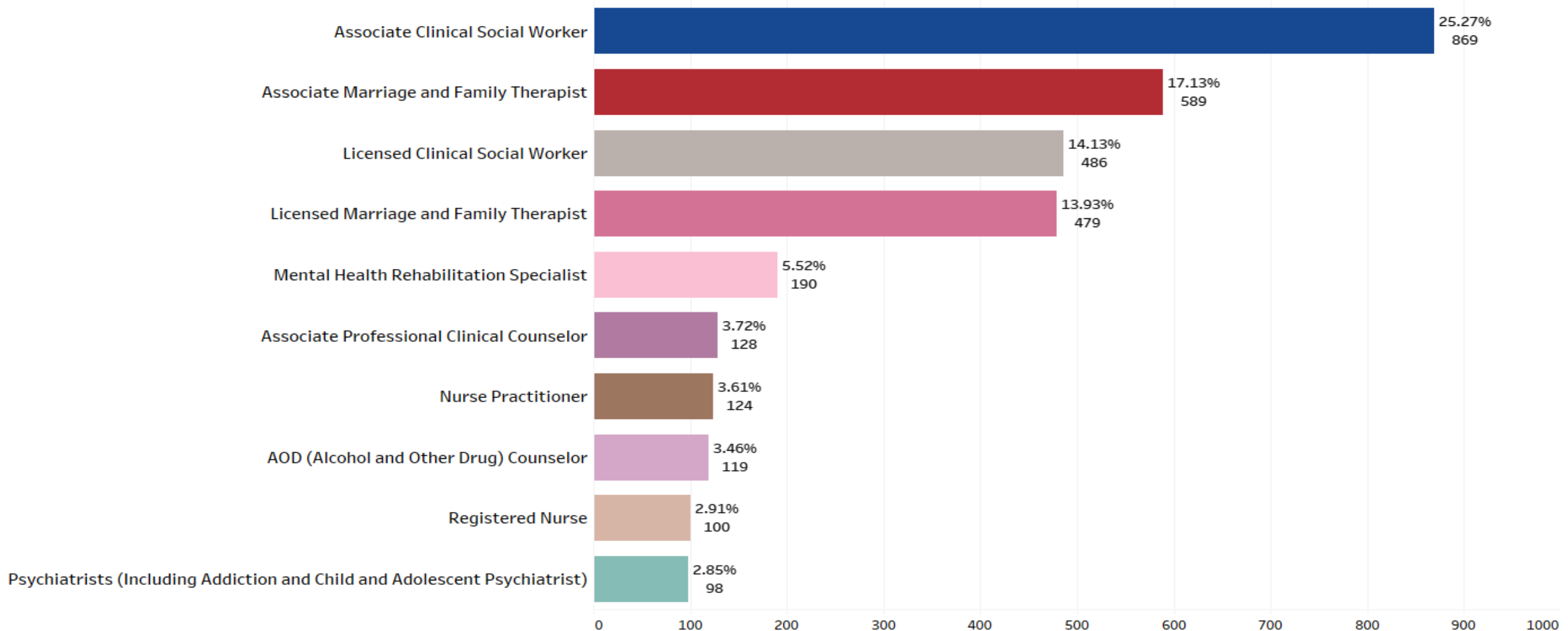


Languages of Eligible Applicants

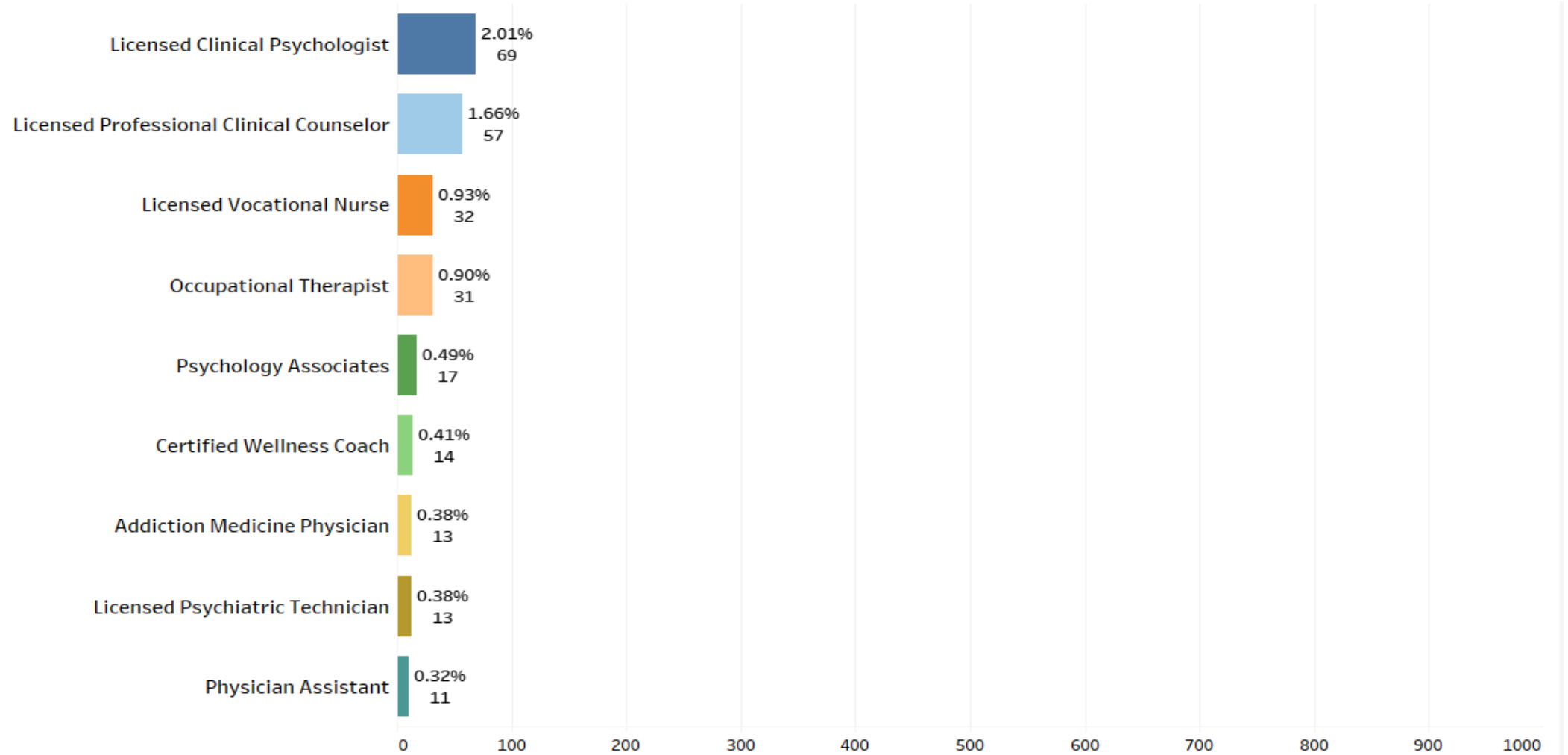


Rank	Selected Language	Count	Percent
1	No language selected	1,841	52.68%
2	Spanish	1,316	37.65%
3	Tagalog	59	1.69%
4	Korean	33	0.94%
5	Any Indigenous and/or Tribal languages	32	0.92%
6	Chinese	30	0.86%
7	Farsi	28	0.80%
8	Any Sign Languages	24	0.69%
9	Vietnamese	22	0.63%
10.	Hindi	21	0.60%
11	Armenian	19	0.54%
12	Punjabi	16	0.46%
13	Russian	15	0.43%
14	Arabic	12	0.34%
15	Hmong	11	0.31%
16	Cambodian	4	0.11%
17	Thai	3	0.09%
17	Japanese	3	0.09%
18	Laotian	2	0.06%
18	Mien	2	0.06%
18	Ukrainian	2	0.06%

Professions of Eligible Applicants



Professions of Eligible Applicants Cont.



Next steps

Compare results to planned goals, assess program performance, identify successes, challenges, and areas for improvement.



After award decisions are processed, complete the Post-Cycle Review and replicate the analysis for Awardees, then compare Applicants to Awardees.



Develop insights regarding whether program objectives are being met.



Develop the next iteration of the application and/or update processes, strategies, or methodologies for program refinement.

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