

# Newton's William James Colleges Receives \$5.9M Grant By Dept. Of Ed.

The funding will go to students from underserved communities studying to become school psychologists and behavioral health counselors.

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NEWTON, MA – William James College in Newton has received a \$5.9 million grant from the Department of Education to support students from underserved communities studying to become school psychologists and behavioral health counselors in high-need school districts.

The Mental Health Services Professional (MHSP) Development Grant Program will support the college's efforts to build a well-trained and diverse behavioral health workforce that can deliver trauma-informed and culturally responsive care to children and adolescents, and promote inclusive practices in high-need schools across the state.

The college is a private college of psychology, and the funding would go to students who are first-generation students, have a disability, are from an ethnic, linguistic, or racial minority group, or those in the LGBTQ+ community, and are committed to working as school psychologists and behavioral health counselors in high-need public school districts.

“The pandemic disrupted normal social development, causing a significant increase in anxiety and depression among our young people,” Nicholas Covino, President of William James College, said in a news release.

“It is critical that students receive services in a school setting where they spend most of their day. Without these interventions, the normal trajectory of learning cannot happen. The U.S. Department of Education's financial support will change the lives of youth and families for the better in communities throughout the state,” Covino added.

Over the next five years, the Center for Workforce Development and the School Psychology Department at WJC will offer scholarships, stipends,

mentorship, and professional development training to 100 of its graduate students who work in high-need schools.

Graduate students who enroll in WJC's master's or certificate of advanced graduate study in school psychology or a master's in clinical mental health counseling programs will be awarded \$10,000 scholarships and field education stipends of up to \$10,000 to complete their practicum and internship training at the college's partner school districts, which include Abington, Lynn, Milford, Weymouth, and Worcester.

The MHSP grant will also create career pathways for 100 school-based paraprofessionals to complete their undergraduate studies at local community colleges and through WJC's bachelor's completion program in psychology and human services. College partners include Middlesex Community College, Quincy College, and Quinsigamond Community College.

"We are grateful to the U.S. Department of Education and the MHSP Development Grant Program for recognizing the need to prepare professionals for mental health careers in our school systems," Jason Kaplan, chair of WJC's school psychology department and the grant's project director, said in a news release.

"Their investment in the college's behavioral health workforce will increase the number and diversity of mental health service professionals with the requisite knowledge, skills, and expertise to provide culturally responsive services to children and adolescents in underserved communities," Kaplan said.