



AREA OF FOCUS

COMPETITIVE PAY

In the United States, low pay in the behavioral health field has long been a concern for retaining current employees and recruiting new employees to the field.



Recommendations

Performance bonuses and annual pay increases

In order to retain employees, regular pay increases and performance bonuses are encouraged to remain competitive.¹

Benefits packages and other forms of compensation

In addition to regular pay increases, organizations can remain competitive and increase retention by offering benefits packages that promote work-life balance.²

Compensation Studies

Compensation studies (to be completed every two to four years) review an organization's pay structure and compare salaries for roles in similar organizations, encouraging employers to update their salary structures to retain employees.³

Student Loan Forgiveness/Repayment

In addition to competitive pay, organizations can offer student loan relief as incentives to their employees.



Examples

Nevada - Increase Cost of Living Allocation

In 2023 the Nevada System of Higher Education awarded a 12% Cost Of Living Allocation increase year-over-year for all NSHE institutions.⁴

Floating Holidays

A growing trend in agencies across the country is to provide a few days a year for employees to use at their discretion as a floating holiday.

Self-care PTO for Domestic Violence Workers

In one domestic violence agency, direct care workers receive an additional two weeks of PTO separate from personal PTO. This PTO was a requirement and had to be taken in one chunk.

4 Day/32 Hour Work Week

Industries both in the United States and abroad have adopted a four-day, 32-hour work week. This approach could also be more widely adopted in the behavioral workforce to address employee retention.



Action Steps

State level

Allocation of funds to regularly increase pay with COLA adjustments to salary schedules.

Organizational level

Leadership can consider ways in which they can adjust worker schedules, including adding floating holidays, self-care PTO, and 32-hour work weeks. Managers must consider how scheduling and budgets are affected before implementing these changes.



ATTC

Addiction Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

¹ Addressing Burnout in the Behavioral Health Workforce Through Organizational Strategies. SAMHSA. (2022). https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA_Digital_Download/pep22-06-02-005.pdf

² "Addressing Burnout in the Behavioral Health Workforce Through" <https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/pep22-06-02-005.pdf>. Accessed 26 Jan. 2024.

³ Compensation Study Frequently Asked Questions. City of Madison, Wisconsin. (n.d.). <https://www.cityofmadison.com/human-resources/compensation/compensation-study-frequently-asked-questions>

⁴ Nevada System of Higher Education. (2023, July 5). NSHE Board of Regents Approves Up to 12% Cost-of-Living Allocation (COLA) Increase for Employees. <https://nshe.nevada.edu/system-administration/news/2023/07/nshe-board-of-regents-approves-up-to-12-c>