Spring 2026 Edition

Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists News

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A Word From The Executive Director

Greetings from MHRA,

I want to provide a brief update of where we've been and where we are heading as we transition into the Spring and Summer months.

Where We've Been – December through January was a very busy time as we prepped for the February 2026 short legislative session. February through the beginning of March was a very fast-moving time as we monitored legislation of interest, provided testimony, and responded to requests for information. Since the end of the session in the first week of March, we have been busy incorporating updated budget information, identifying action items from legislation that passed, and beginning the planning process for new work items.

Most Recent Accomplishment – During its regular meeting on April 3, 2026, the Board voted to approve the Spanish-Language Form of the National Counselor Examination (NCE), one of the exam op-tions available to professional counselor licensure candidates. Previ-ously, a Spanish version was previously only offered in Puerto Ri-co. This redesigned form of the NCE, now available in all jurisdic-tions, was developed to ensure that the examination content, form quality, and outcomes are comparable to the English-language forms and will be valid and credible to serve as the assessment of knowledge for eligibility for licensure and national certification for counselors.

Future Projects – This summer promises to be busy, with the pro-jects below, which represent some, but not all, of the various work items we have identified:

Licensed Behavioral Health and Wellness Specialist -- The Board of Psychology must implement this new license type by Janu-ary 1, of 2027. Related work will primarily include rulemak-ing and system programming. Although this work won't directly

Director's Update ……..1-2
Administrative Rulemaking…...3
New Resources for Educators & Supervisors……..…...4
OHA Survey Fees…….4
2025 Year End Statistics…..…5-8
2026 Legislative Overview ……9
Calendar & Upcoming Events….9
Contact Us…….....10

A Word from the Executive Director, Cont.

impact the Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists, the prioritization of this workload may result in a temporary shift of MHRA planning/programming resources toward this project.

2027 Legislative session preparation – MHRA is already beginning its preparation for the 2027 session, to include building the 2027-2029 Agency-Requested Budget that will ultimately become part of the budget the Governor presents to the Legislature in the 2027 session. Careful attention to detail will be necessary to ensure we continue to enhance services, respond to increasing workload, and protect the public while avoiding impact to our fee structure.

Reduce compliance backlog – Our compliance team will be fully staffed as of April 20th. Once we onboard the new team member, we will focus their efforts on helping us address and reduce our current backlog of compliance cases. 2025 and the beginning of 2026 have seen an unprecedented number of complaints received (approximately 40% increase from 2024 to 2025, with similar volume so far in 2026) across our two boards, so this remains a formidable challenge.

System tutorial videos – We recognize that sometimes customers find it difficult to navigate the online application/licensing portals. We are developing short tutorial videos to provide some assistance and clarity to minimize frustration and improve self-reliance for our customers using the portals. Thank you to our licensing team members for identifying this need and working to produce these videos.

New resources for educators and supervisors – Educators and Supervisors are very critical to the behavioral health workforce pipeline. The Board's Education/Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and the MHRA Policy and Licensing teams have been working hard to provide updated educator training and supervision guidance. I appreciate the leadership the Committee and staff have shown in developing these resources.

Continued system, process, and rule streamlining – - Although it is not always visible from the outside, our licensing and compliance teams foster continuous improvement by identifying issues and solutions in their daily operations. We are always reviewing and updating our system and processes, carefully balancing the needs of licensees with our statutory charge of public protection. Additionally, a review of board minutes will show that both of our boards have been very busy identifying and implementing appropriate rule changes to reduce barriers and strengthen public protection.

Licensing system upgrade – MHRA has joined a statewide initiative with other licensing boards to identify multiple licensing system vendors as options for licensing system upgrades. This will help minimize costs of the procurement process as well as provide some consistency across the various boards. As this effort is still in the planning phase, costs and timelines for this upgrade are unknown at this time. As more information becomes known to us, we will update our customers.

Continued policy work – As I have discussed before, MHRA was a participant on the First Lady's **Behavioral Health Talent Council** - (https://www.oregon.gov/gov/policies/Pages/Behavioral-Health-Talent-Council.aspx). The Council has released their report, and the Governor will work with the Council to identify and prioritize action items from the report. MHRA will continue to consult and participate in any actions that impact our boards.

As you can see, we have a full agenda this year with worthwhile projects. We look forward to improving our service to all of our customers: educators, applicants, registered associates, supervisors, licensees, and the public members our boards are charged with protecting. We hope you have an enjoyable, safe summer, and will provide more updates in our next newsletter.

Administrative Rulemaking

On April 9, 2026, the Board filed a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for the following rule amendment:

Update terms, accuracy in representations to the Board, applications, examination failure and study plan.

- Amend OAR 833-020-0041: Clarifies requirements for direct method application.
- Amend OAR 833-020-0081: Removes automatic license denial and one-year wait period for licensure candidates that fail the competency examination for a third time, and adds provision for study plan after second failure.
- Amend OAR 833-050-0011: Clarifies requirements for associate registration method application.
- Amend OAR 833-110-0031: Prohibits licensees, residents, temporary practitioners, and applicants from making misrepresentations to the Board or allowing third parties to submit responses to Board forms on their behalf. Sets forth that failure to comply violates statute and may be grounds for sanction.

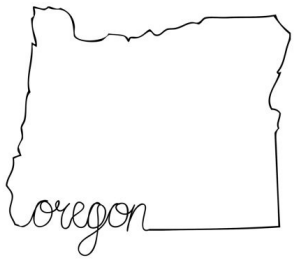
The agency requests public comment regarding the above proposal on whether other options should be considered for achieving the rule's substantive goals while reducing negative economic impact of the rule on business. Please email your comments to laree.stashek@mhra.oregon.gov or mail them to the Board's office at 3218 Pringle Road SE, Ste. 120, Salem, OR 97302. All comments must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on May 21, 2026. A public remote hearing will be held at 9:00 a.m. on May 21, 2026.

On February 9, 2026, the Board filed a Permanent Administrative Order for the following rule amendment (effective February 9, 2026):

Educational requirements for unaccredited programs.

- Amendment to OAR 833-030-0011: The educational requirements for licensure as a professional counselor that apply to unaccredited programs at regionally accredited institutions were amended as follows:
  - The minimum two-year duration requirement was removed.
  - The graduate degree must now be in mental health counseling or a related behavioral science field.
  - Provisions for degrees granted prior to October 1, 2014 to have lesser minimum credit hours and supervised experience hours were removed.
  - Other clarifications, updates, and conforming language changes were applied.
- Amendment to OAR 833-040-0011: The educational requirements for licensure as a marriage and family therapist that apply to unaccredited programs at regionally accredited institutions were amended as follows:
  - The minimum two-year duration requirement was removed.
  - The graduate degree must now be in marriage and family therapy or a related behavioral science field.
  - The required coursework hours for counseling and/or systems approaches supporting coursework were reduced by 44%.
  - Provisions for degrees granted prior to October 1, 2014 to have lesser minimum credit hours and supervised experience hours were removed.
  - Other clarifications, updates, and conforming language changes were applied.

Please visit our **Administrative Rulemaking Webpage** for more information.



New Resources for Oregon Supervisors & Educators

The Board has launched new resources to support supervisors, registered associates, and educators.

Supervision Success

The Board's Education and DEI Committee has developed resources specifically designed to facilitate a smoother supervision process and ensure that registered associate hours are properly tracked and qualify toward licensure. The new Overview for Supervisors and Checklist available on the **Supervisor Webpage** helps supervisors and registered associates clarify post-degree requirements and avoid common compliance pitfalls. These resources were created with a focus on equity, aiming to provide clear, accessible guidance for all associates entering the mental health profession. The checklist covers essential steps, including reviewing laws/rules, executing a supervision plan, and ensuring the Board has approved the registration plan before clinical services begin.

Request a Live Training

The Board is pleased to announce a new dedicated page: **Trainings for Educational Programs.** This resource is designed for educators at accredited Oregon counseling and marriage and family therapy programs that lead to LPC or LMFT licensure. Educators can now request live sessions presented by our licensing team. These sessions are tailored to help students navigate the path to licensure and can include:

- **Board Functions:** Understanding the Board's role vs. professional associations.
- **Licensing Insights:** Current statistics, recent Board initiatives, and licensure qualifications.
- **Application Support:** A walkthrough of the Applicant Portal and forms, plus helpful tips and common pitfalls to avoid.
- **Interactive Q&A:** Direct access to our team for specific student or faculty questions.

Coming Soon

We are currently developing a series of training videos that will be hosted on this new page for easy, on-demand viewing.

This initiative is part of our commitment to transparency and building stronger partnerships with the academic community. We look forward to supporting you and your students!



Photo by Eric Muhr on Unsplash

Increase in OHA's Survey Fee

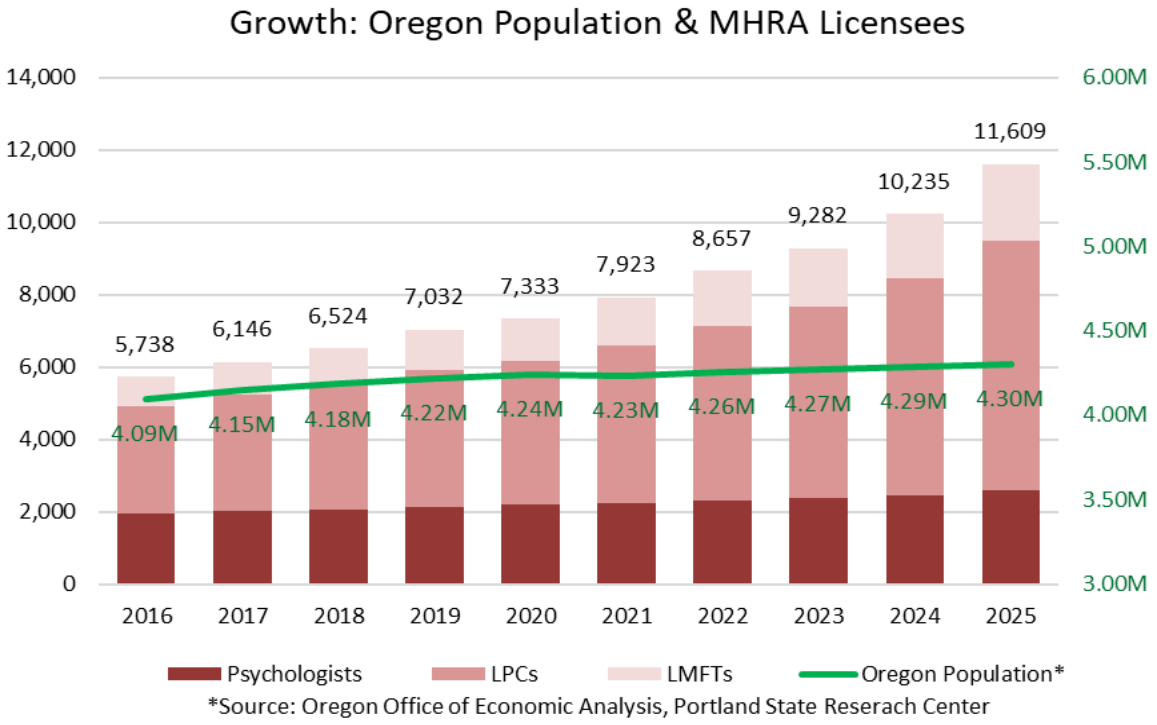
Beginning July 1, 2026, the Board must start collecting an increased fee on behalf of the Oregon Health Authority (OHA): from $4 to $8 during each renewal. OHA establishes this fee pursuant to **ORS 676.410**, to create and maintain its health care workforce database.

You may visit the OHA **Health Care Workforce Reporting Webpage** for more information about the program, which includes data and reports about Oregon's healthcare workforce.

2025 Year-End Statistics

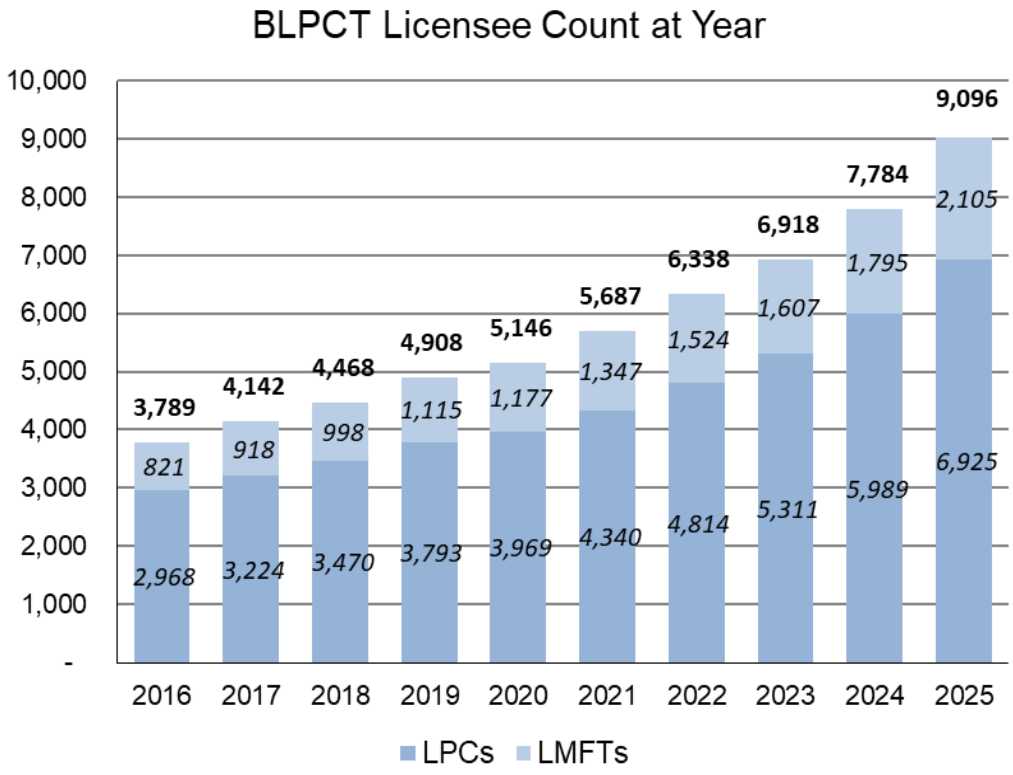
Licensing

The following graphic displays the total year-end count of all Mental Health Regulatory Agency as compared to the Oregon population overall over the past decade.

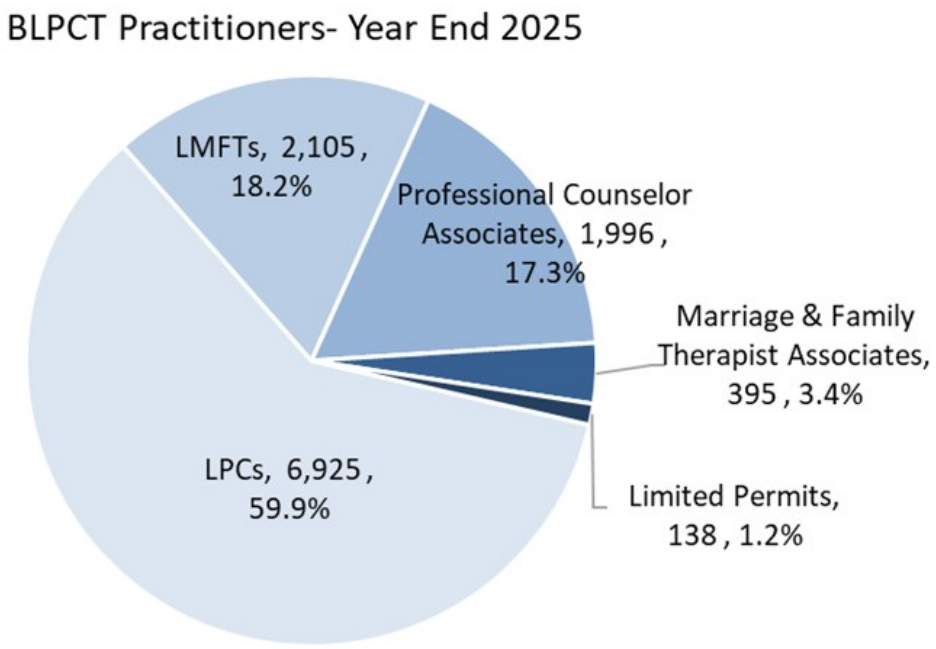


The following graphics display the total volume of fully licensed, independently practicing licensees at the end of each year over the past decade.

The total number of licensed counselors and therapists in Oregon has increased by 140% over the past decade. Of the 6,925 LPCs at year-end 2025, 6,750 were on active status (97.5%) and 175 were on inactive status (2.5%). Of the 2,105 LMFTs, 2,030 were on active status (96.4%) and 75 were on inactive status (3.6%). Licensee growth has averaged 10.3% per year over the past decade. LPCs have grown at an average rate of 9.9%, and LMFTs at 11.1% per year.

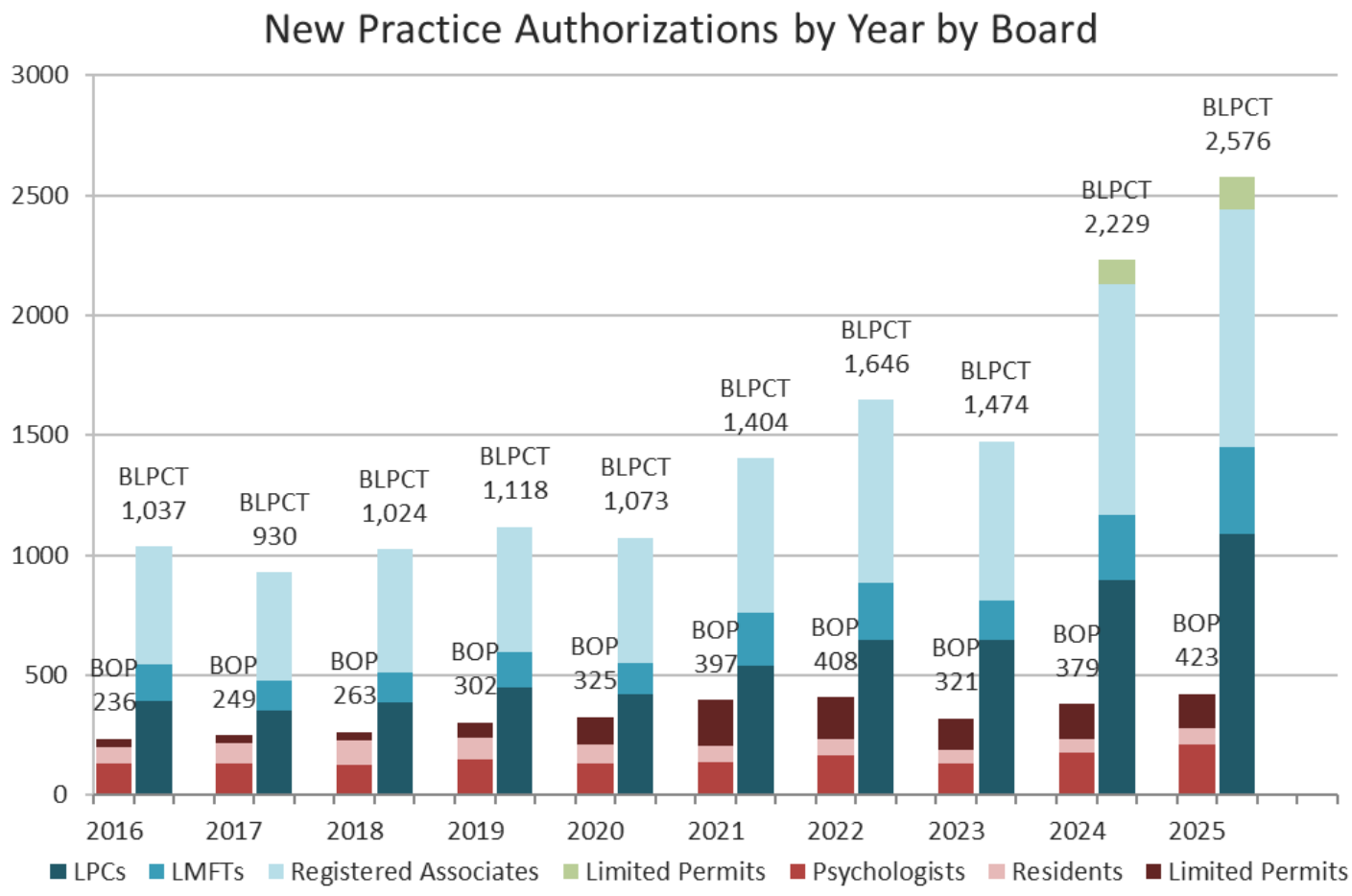


2025 Year-End Stats Cont.



There were a total of 11,559 LPCs, LMFT, registered associates, and limited permit holders providing services to Oregonians as of the end of 2025. The chart on the left shows the breakdown by authorization type.

The graphic below displays the volume of new licenses, associate registrations, residents, and limited permits issued by the Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists (BLPCT) and the Board of Psychology (BOP) over the last 10 years.

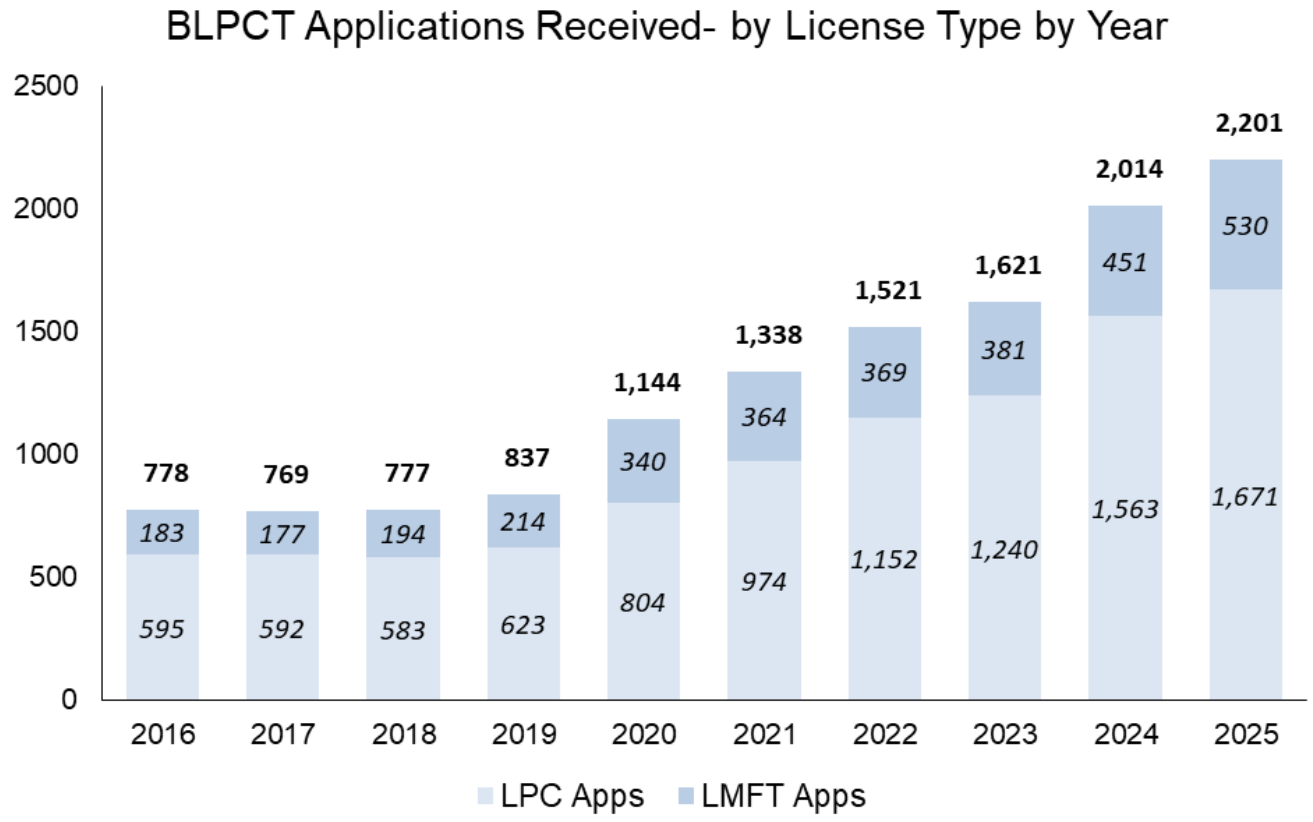


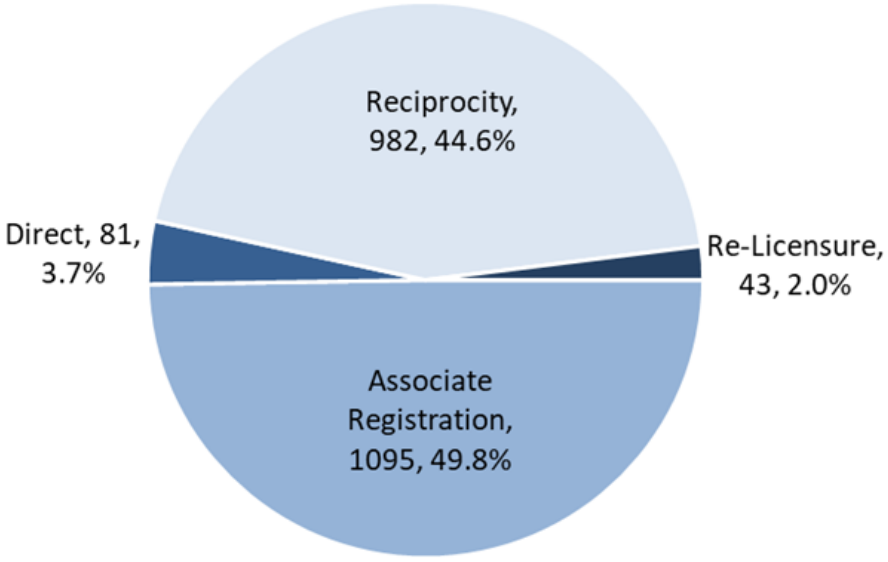
2025 Year-End Stats Cont.

BLPCT has grown an average of 12.2% per year in the volume of new authorizations issued. 2024 saw a 51.2% record high increase from the prior year. The 2025 growth was less drastic but still significant at 15.6%, with 1,087 new LPCs, 362 new LMFTs, and 989 new registered associates, including 842 professional counselor associates and 147 marriage and family therapist associates.

BOP has grown an average of 7.4% per year in the volume of new authorizations issued. 2025 saw an 11.6% increase from the prior year, with 213 new licensees, 145 limited permits, and 65 new psychologist residents. The volume of new psychologists increased by 19.7% over 2024.

The graphic below displays the volume of LPC and LMFT licensure applications received.



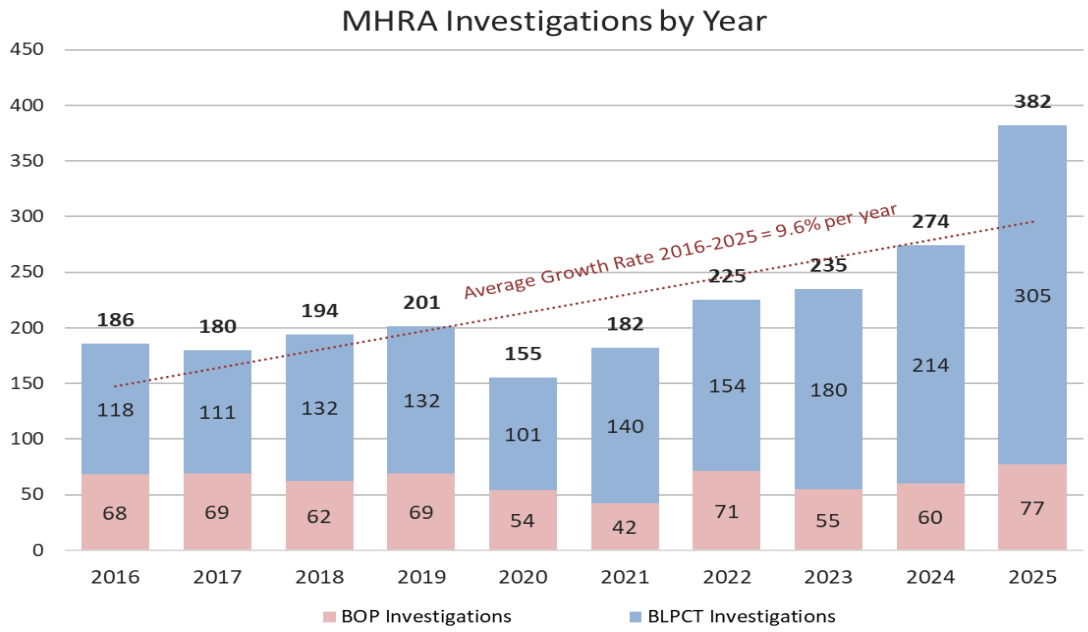


There were 2,201 licensure applications in 2025, another all-time high. The volume has nearly tripled over the past decade, growing by an average of 12.8% per year. The two professions are increasing similarly, with LPC applications growing at 12.7% and LMFT applications growing a bit higher at 13.7% on average per year. Though in 2025 LMFT growth outpaced LPCs significantly, at 17.5% versus 6.9%.

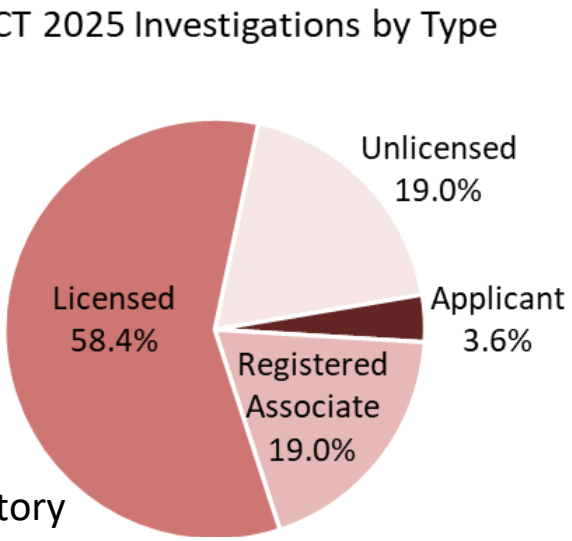
2025 Year-End Stats Cont.

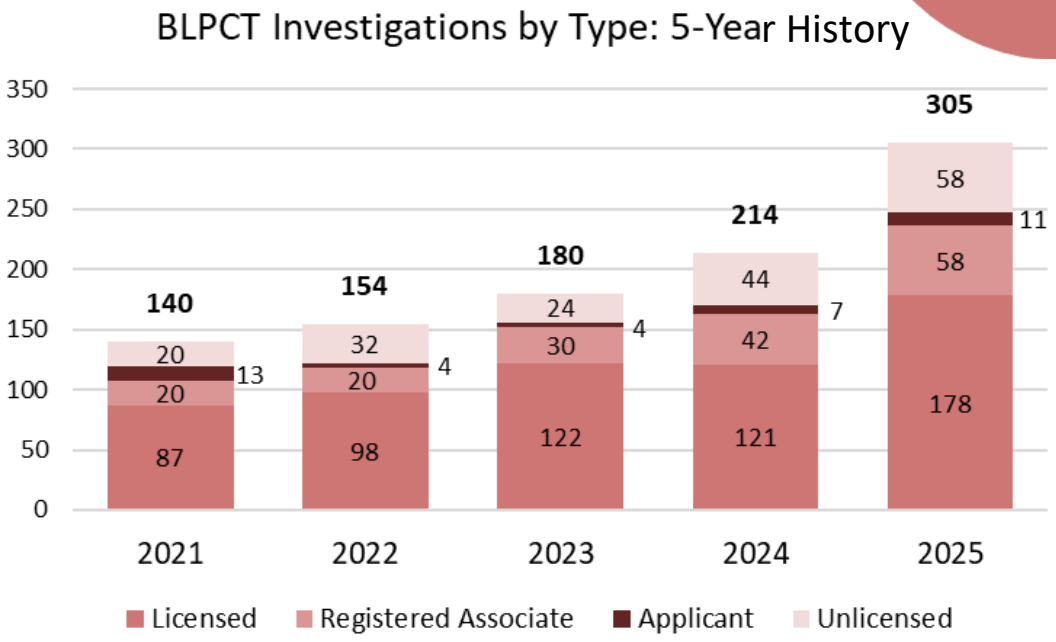
Compliance

The graphic on the right displays the volume of investigations received each year by the boards.



In 2025, MHRA saw an unprecedented volume of 382 cases, reflecting a 39.4% increase over 2024. BOP cases have grown by an average of 4.8% per year over the past ten years, and BLPCT cases have grown an average of 12.9%, for an overall 9.6%. The graphics right and below break down BLPCT cases by type.





Reminder- you can find statistics and helpful Q&A on the Board's **General Practice** webpage.

2026 Legislative Session Overview

The 2026 Oregon Legislative Session began on February 2, 2026 and adjourned sine die on March 6, 2026. Here are a couple of important measures that affect the agency:

- **House Bill 4083-** This is the Governor's Behavioral Health bill, which mostly places requirements on the Oregon Health Authority related to its provider credentialing procedures. The bill was originally proposed to place the Board of License Social Workers (BLSW) under the Mental Health Regulatory Agency umbrella, along with the Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists (BLPCT) and the Board of Psychology (BOP), but this component was removed in an amendment. It requires BLSW and BLPCT to adopt rules that allow cross-licensure supervision of associates by other licensees of BLPCT, BLSW, and BOP. There is no action required of BLPCT, since the Board has already allowed registered associates to be supervised by LCSWs and psychologists since its inception.
- **Senate Bill 1547-** This establishes a new bachelor's level license type- the Licensed Behavioral Health and Wellness Practitioner- under the Board of Psychology, to be operational on January 1, 2027. This was one of the recommendations made by the Task Force on Youth Behavioral Health established by House Bill 4151 in 2024. The scope of practice includes behavioral health promotion, prevention, and brief intervention. It explicitly excludes diagnosis, independent treatment, and administration or interpretation of intelligence, academic achievement, or neuropsychological tests. These new licensees will only be authorized to provide services under the direct supervision of psychologists, psychiatrists, LPCs, LMFTs, LCSWs, or psychiatric nurse practitioners. Expect to see draft administrative rules to implement this new license before BOP in September, with a notice of proposed rulemaking out for public comment shortly thereafter.

This is provided for informational purposes only. Please note that the Board cannot provide additional information or advice about outside bills. Each measure above includes a hyperlink where you can find more information on the Oregon State Legislature website.

Calendar/ Upcoming Events

May 2026
05/11: Education/ DEI Committee Meeting
05/14 Consumer Protection Committee Meeting
05/25: *Office Closed, Memorial Day*

June 2026
06/05: **Board Meeting**
06/08: Education/ DEI Committee Meeting
06/19: *Office Closed, Juneteenth*

July 2026
07/03: *Office Closed, Independence Day*
07/09: Consumer Protection Committee Meeting
07/13: Education/DEI Committee Meeting

August 2026
08/07: **Board Meeting**
08/10: Education/DEI Committee Meeting

September 2026
09/07: *Office Closed, Labor Day*
09/10: Consumer Protection Committee Meeting
09/14: Education/DEI Committee Meeting

October 2026
10/02: **Board Meeting**
10/12: Education/DEI Committee Meeting

November 2026
11/06: Strategic Planning Meeting
11/09: Education/DEI Committee Meeting
11/11: *Office Closed, Veteran's Day*
11/12: Consumer Protection Committee Meeting
11/26—11/27 *Office Closed, Thanksgiving*

Committee meetings are tentatively scheduled. Please also visit our **Board Meeting Webpage.**

Contact Information



Photo by Yan Liu on Unsplash

BLPCT News is the official newsletter of the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists and is edited by board staff. Please contact us with any comments or suggestions.

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If you would like to submit an 'In Memoriam' tribute for a member the LPCT community, please email us: lpct.board@mhra.oregon.gov.