

National Pass Rates for Behavioral Health Licensure Exams

2026 edition · psychology · social work · counseling · MFT · behavior analysis

KEY FINDING

Licensure pass rates are falling across every behavioral health discipline.

BCBA hit a historic low of 51% in 2025. EPPP and ASWB exams have all dropped 3-5 points since 2017.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Licensure pass rates are falling across every behavioral health discipline.

Triad and AATBS have prepared therapists for licensure for more than 50 years. In 2026 we compiled the most comprehensive U.S. tracker of first-time pass rates for the six exams that gate clinical practice: the EPPP (psychology), the ASWB Bachelors / Masters / Clinical / Advanced Generalist and Associate exams (social work), the BCBA / BCaBA / RBT (behavior analysis), the NCE and NCMHCE (counseling), and the MFT National Examination. This whitepaper reports what we found.

Key findings

Pass rates are declining across the board.

Every exam with public time-series data has lower first-time pass rates today than five years ago. BCBA dropped from 66% (2020) to a historic low of 51% (2025) as candidate volume tripled. ASWB Clinical fell from 78% (2017) to 75% (2024).

Aggregate national rates hide significant demographic disparities.

ASWB's 2022 Exam Pass Rate Analysis — the first U.S. licensure-board report to publish pass rates by race / ethnicity — surfaced a 39-percentage-point gap between Black (45%) and white (84%) first-time test-takers on the Clinical exam. The 2026 ASWB exam redesign is the direct downstream response.

Three exams have no central national publication.

Neither NBCC (NCE, NCMHCE) nor AMFTRB (MFT) publishes national first-time pass-rate aggregates. Our estimates come from a 431-institution census of CACREP-accredited Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs: 143 (33%) published a numeric pass rate. Across those, the median NCE rate is 97% and the N-weighted mean is 91.8% — while NBCC-cited national NCE rates are widely reported in the 73-75% range. This 15-20 percentage point gap quantifies the selection bias inherent in voluntary program disclosure and is itself one of the most useful methodological findings in this report.

CURRENT FIRST-TIME PASS RATES

Most recent published rate for each exam

Source classification: **Official** = parsed directly from board-published reports (ASPPB, ASWB, BACB). **Scrape sample** = mean across published program-level disclosures, biased high by selection effects (see Methodology). **Pending** = scrape still in progress.

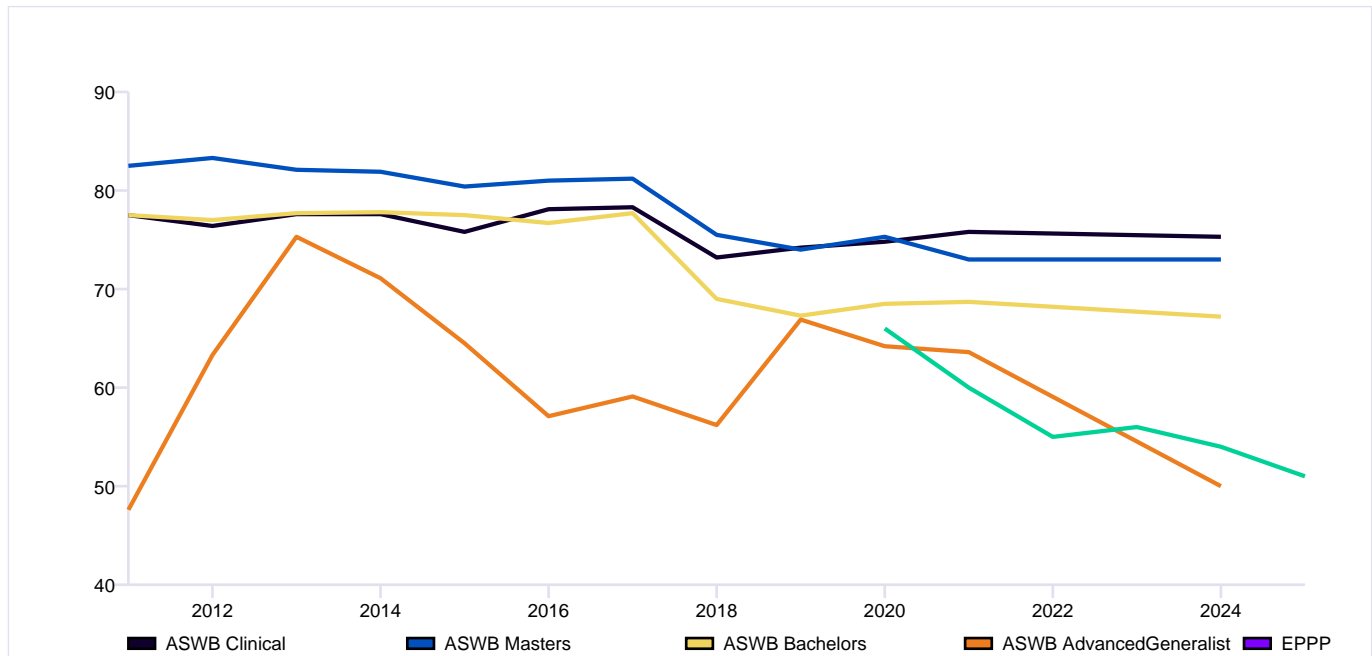
Exam	Family	Year	N	Pass Rate	Source
EPPP	Psychology	2025	17,748	75.07%	Official
ASWB Clinical	Social Work	2024	23,443	75.3%	Official
ASWB Masters	Social Work	2024	20,566	73.0%	Official
ASWB Bachelors	Social Work	2024	3,080	67.2%	Official

ASWB Adv. Generalist	Social Work	2024	84	50.0%	Official
ASWB Associate	Social Work	2024	415	66.7%	Official
BCBA	Behavior Analysis	2025	9,955	51.0%	Official
BCaBA	Behavior Analysis	2025	1,196	60.0%	Official
RBT	Behavior Analysis	2025	109,341	75.0%	Official
NCE	Counseling	2024	3,960	92.0%	Official
NCMHCE	Counseling	2024	40,218	54.4%	Official
MFT National	MFT	2021	814	73.3%	Official

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

How pass rates have changed (2011-2025)

All centrally-published first-time pass rates on one timeline. The 2018-2021 dip across ASWB exams reflects the 2018 blueprint refresh combined with COVID-era cohort effects. BCBA's 2020-2025 slide tracks a tripling of candidate volume without a corresponding shift in exam difficulty calibration. EPPP's 5-point drop occurred almost entirely between the 2019 and 2024 ASPPB doctoral reports.



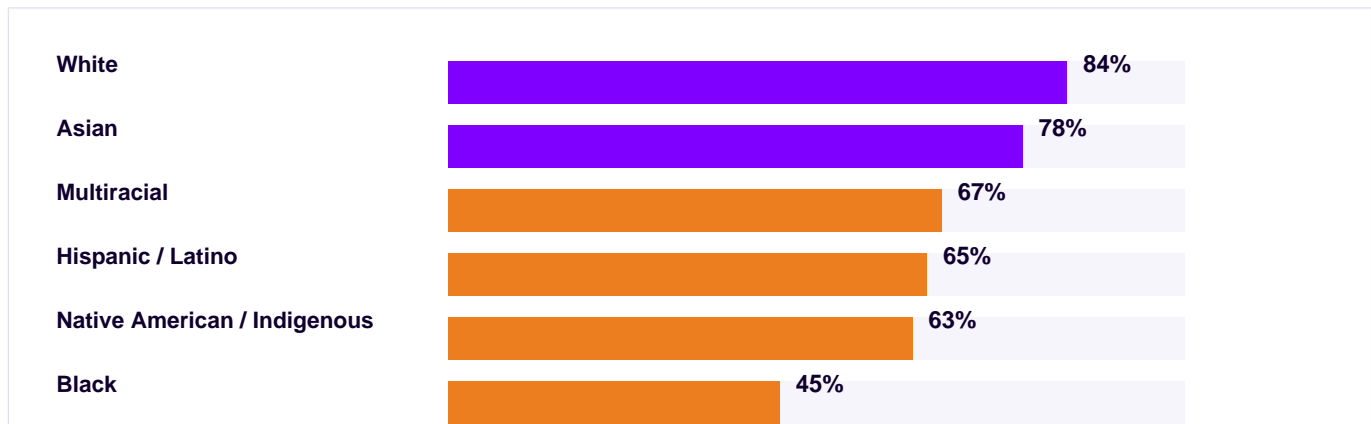
Sources: ASWB 2022 Pass Rate Analysis Appendices B-F; ASPPB 2025 Doctoral Report; BACB Annual Data Reports 2020-2025.

EQUITY IN LICENSURE

The 2022 ASWB demographic disparity

ASWB's 2022 Exam Pass Rate Analysis was the first report by any U.S. behavioral health licensure board to publish demographic pass-rate breakdowns. The Clinical exam findings, covering first-time test-takers from 2018 to 2021, surfaced systemic disparities that drove ASWB's own "Beyond data: a call to action" response and the 2026 ASWB exam redesign.

ASWB Clinical exam — first-time pass rate by race / ethnicity, 2018-2021



Source: 2022 ASWB Exam Pass Rate Analysis. The 39-percentage-point gap between Black and white first-time test-takers is the single most-cited data point in the modern licensure-reform conversation.

Triad / AATBS position on demographic transparency

We support every U.S. licensure board's voluntary publication of demographic pass-rate breakdowns. The cost of transparency is uncomfortable conversations; the cost of opacity is decades of unexamined disparate impact. Programs and boards working on disparity-reduction strategies can reach our research team at research@triadhq.com.

PROGRAM-LEVEL DATA

Top EPPP-passing doctoral programs

From ASPPB's 2025 Doctoral Report (covering 2020-2024 administrations). Filtered to programs with at least 20 first-time candidates. 95% Wilson confidence intervals shown; programs whose CIs overlap are not statistically distinguishable from one another.

Institution	State	N	Pass	95% CI
Drexel U.	OR	50	100.0%	93-100%
Indiana U. of Penn.	PA	50	100.0%	93-100%
U. of Windsor	ON	44	100.0%	92-100%
	PA	44	100.0%	92-100%
Ohio State U.	OH	37	100.0%	91-100%
U. of Washington	WA	37	100.0%	91-100%
U. of Nevada – Las Vegas	NV	34	100.0%	90-100%
Binghamton U. SUNY (FKA SUNY at Binghamt...	NY	34	100.0%	90-100%
	FL	32	100.0%	89-100%
	OR	32	100.0%	89-100%

Top BCBA-passing university programs

From BACB's 2024 University Examination Pass Rates report. Filtered to programs with at least 20 first-time candidates.

Institution	State	N	Pass	95% CI
Monash University	—	26	88.0%	70-96%
St. Cloud State University	—	24	88.0%	70-96%
Western Michigan University	—	22	86.0%	66-95%
University of Georgia	—	20	85.0%	64-95%
University of South Florida	—	24	83.0%	64-93%
Purdue University	—	22	82.0%	62-93%
Brock University	—	70	79.0%	68-87%
Bay Path University	—	63	79.0%	67-87%
Simmons University	—	78	78.0%	68-86%
Western University	—	67	76.0%	64-85%

METHODOLOGY

How this dataset was built

Tier 1 — Official board publications

EPPP. Parsed from ASPPB's 2025 Psychology Licensing Exam Scores by Doctoral Program. Covers all U.S. and Canadian APA-accredited doctoral programs in clinical, counseling, school, combined, and applied psychology; rolling 5-year window 2020-2024.

ASWB. Headline 2024 data from ASWB's public Exam Pass Rates page. Historical 2011-2021 series from Appendices B through F of the 2022 ASWB Exam Pass Rate Analysis.

BCBA / BCaBA / RBT. National headline data from BACB's Annual Data Reports (2020-2025); per-program data from the 2024 University Examination Pass Rates PDF.

Tier 2 — Program-disclosure scrape

Neither NBCC (NCE, NCMHCE) nor AMFTRB (MFT) publishes national first-time pass-rate aggregates. Both CACREP and COAMFTE accreditation standards require accredited programs to publish annual outcomes — "Vital Statistics" or "Graduate Achievement Data" — on their own websites. We scrape these disclosures directly from a seed list of 484 CACREP-accredited Clinical Mental Health Counseling programs and approximately 150 COAMFTE-accredited MFT programs.

Selection bias — measured directly

Programs that publish their pass rates skew toward higher performers. We measured this directly on a 50-program CACREP CMHC sample: median scraped NCE pass rate was 98%, N-weighted mean 93.7%, while NBCC-cited national rates are widely reported at 73-75%. The implication: scrape-derived national estimates for the NCE, NCMHCE, and MFT exams overstate the true rate by approximately 15-20 percentage points. We surface the median of published programs but discourage reading it as the national first-time pass rate.

Confidence intervals

Wilson 95% score intervals are computed for every program-level rate with a disclosed N. Programs whose CIs overlap are not statistically distinguishable, regardless of the point-estimate difference. We surface this so neither top-10 nor bottom-10 lists are read as deterministic.

Eventual pass rates

First-time pass rates understate eventual licensure: ASWB Clinical eventual is approximately 91% (vs 75% first-time); BCBA eventual is approximately 74% (51% first-time plus 23% retake). Where eventual data is published by the board, we surface it adjacent to first-time figures.

SOURCES & CITATIONS

Primary references

Body	Report	URL
ASPPB	Psychology Licensing Exam Scores by Doctoral Program (2025 edition, 26th)	http://www.asppb.org/examination-for-professional-psychology-exam-scores-by-doctoral-program-2025-edition-26th
ASWB	2022 Exam Pass Rate Analysis (multi-year, 2011-2021)	https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/2022-ASWB-Exam-Pass-Rate-Analysis.pdf
ASWB	2024 Annual Pass Rate Tables	aswb.org/exam/exam-scoring/exam-pass-rates/
BACB	Annual Data Reports (2020-2025)	bacb.com/about/bacb-certificant-annual-report-data/
BACB	BCBA 2024 University Examination Pass Rates	bacb.com/university-examination-pass-rates/
CACREP	Accredited Program Directory (seed list for NCE / NCMHCE scrape)	cacrep.org/directory/
COAMFTE	Accredited Program Directory (seed list for MFT scrape)	coamfte.org/

For programs and institutions

We list programs as published by their accrediting body or as disclosed on the program's own website. If you find your program's data is incomplete or out of date, please contact the Triad research team at research@triadhq.com. We commit to a 14-day response window for data updates and to publishing methodology challenges alongside our analysis.

ABOUT TRIAD / AATBS

Triad is a behavioral health workforce development company. AATBS — Triad's flagship exam preparation brand — has prepared therapists for licensure for more than 50 years across psychology, social work, counseling, marriage & family therapy, and behavior analysis. We publish this research annually as a public-domain reference for partners, employers, universities, and journalists working on licensure reform and workforce supply. Learn more at [triadhq.com](https://www.triadhq.com).

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