

APA 2025 Practitioner Pulse Survey Methodology

SURVEY HISTORY

The 2025 Practitioner Pulse Survey is the most recent survey cycle of a series of annual, online surveys conducted by the American Psychological Association (APA) that explores the nature of psychologists' practice patterns. First launched in 2020, the survey has different names, including the 2020 COVID-19 Telehealth Practitioner Survey, 2021 COVID-19 Telehealth Practitioner Survey, 2022 COVID-19 Practitioner Impact Survey, the 2023 Practitioner Pulse Survey, and the 2024 Practitioner Pulse Survey. Another related, periodic survey is the 2021 Survey of Health Service Psychologists. Earlier survey cycles focused primarily on the shift from in-person practice to telehealth and the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2025 Practitioner Pulse survey focused more broadly on psychological practice, including work settings, how specialty areas, the nature of professional practice in psychology, insurance participation, artificial intelligence, and additional topics. The survey was conducted on the Qualtrics survey platform in 2020-2022 and again in 2025. From 2023-2024, the survey was conducted on Alchemer (formerly SurveyGizmo).

PARTICIPANTS AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

The target population was doctoral-level psychologists who held a license to practice in at least one U.S. state. The population was identified by state licensing board lists obtained from the National Center for the Analysis of Healthcare Data. Psychologists were invited to respond to the survey if they had an active license and were further screened for eligibility within the survey. Eligibility criteria included all the following: holding a doctoral degree, actively working, actively treating patients, and holding an active license to practice psychology in at least one state. The APA included both members and non-members in its sample selection.

Previous cycles of the survey screened out individuals who did not meet the eligibility criteria. Ineligible respondents were notified that they did not qualify to complete the survey and were thanked for their interest. In 2025, instead of screening these participants out, the survey instrument had a new section specifically for respondents who did not meet the eligibility criteria. These respondents were asked a smaller set of similar questions than the target population. The responses gathered by this new section will not be included in this report but, instead, will be used internally at APA to inform survey strategy.

2025 SAMPLE

The 2025 Practitioner Pulse survey sample was a probability-based random sample, meaning any licensed psychologist with an email address had an equal likelihood of being invited to participate in the survey. A list of doctoral-level licensed psychologists with email addresses was generated and de-duplicated. A total of 126,562 psychologists were identified, and 57,494 had email addresses. Email addresses were pulled from APA membership records and state licensing lists. To select the sample, each psychologist was assigned a random value between zero and one, and then these random values were sorted from lowest to highest. A sample of psychologists having the lowest 30,000 random values was then selected.

An initial survey invitation was sent to the random sample of 30,000 psychologists on September 3, 2025. Potential respondents who unsubscribed from the survey, who were unreachable because of bounced/undeliverable email addresses, or who did not meet the qualification requirements were

removed from the email campaign and received no further emails. Respondents who completed the survey were also removed from the email campaign. Up to two reminder emails were sent September 10, 2025, and September 18, 2025. A final email extending the deadline was sent on September 25, 2025. The survey closed on September 29, 2025.

Of the 30,000 licensed psychologists invited to participate in the 2025 Practitioner Pulse Survey, 3,498 did not receive the invitation due to bounced emails or other errors. An additional 293 potential respondents unsubscribed from the survey, but they were counted as having successfully received a survey invitation, since they had to open the email to find the opt-out link at the bottom of the message. A total of 26,502 licensed psychologists received survey invitations; the number is the denominator in calculating the response rate. An additional 342 respondents began the survey but either did not complete the informed consent statement at the beginning of the survey or did not meet the eligibility criteria. Ultimately, 1,742 licensed psychologists completed the survey, resulting in a response rate of 6.6%.

SAMPLE COMPARISONS OVER TIME

Six cycles of data have been collected with the Practitioner Pulse Survey from 2020 to 2025. Below, we present descriptive statistics for selected demographic and work characteristics. In general, patterns were similar over time; there were small fluctuations between survey cycles but, overall, there were no major shifts in adjacent survey cycles. The implementation of a random sample from 2023 to 2025 improved the generalizability of the findings.

Response Rate

The 2025 survey saw the third-highest number of completions in the history of the survey, and the second-highest response rate (Table 1).

Table 1. Survey Response Rates, 2020-2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Total Sample	26,602	26,400	70,034	16,557	35,000	30,000
Delivered Invitations	22,802	*	62,877	14,601	27,188	26,502
Completions	1,787	1,141	2,295	561	852	1,742
Response Rate	7.8%	4.3%	3.6%	3.8%	3.1%	6.6%

*This value was not tracked in survey year 2021. Response rate = completions/delivered invitations, except in 2021 where response rate = completions/total sample.

Select Sample Demographics

Race/Ethnicity (Table 2) and gender (Table 3) of the 2025 sample were in keeping with previous years' samples.

Table 2. Survey Sample Demographics, Race and Ethnicity, 2020-2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
American Indian, Alaska Native, and/or Indigenous	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Arab American, Middle Eastern, or North African	-	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%

Asian or Asian American	3%	3%	2%	3%	2%	2%
Bi/Multi-racial	-	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%
Black or African American	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Latino/a/x or Spanish Origin	5%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Southeast Asian	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
White/ European American	88%	87%	84%	82%	81%	78%
Another race or ethnicity not listed	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	3%
Prefer not to answer	3%	3%	3%	3%	5%	6%

Table 3. Survey Sample Demographics, Gender, 2020-2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Female/Woman	68%	70%	69%	64%	65%	67%
Male/Man	32%	30%	28%	33%	31%	29%
Nonbinary	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%
Prefer not to answer	-	0%	2%	2%	3%	3%
Prefer to self-describe	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Two-spirit	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

Respondents were assigned to career stage categories based on year of highest degree:

- Early Career: Psychologists who are 10 or fewer years after receiving their doctorate
- Mid-Career: Psychologists who are 11 to 20 years after receiving their doctorate
- Senior Career: Psychologists who are 21 to 30 years after receiving their doctorate
- Late Senior Career: Psychologists who are 31 or more years after receiving their doctorate

The 2025 sample had the highest proportion of early career practitioners and the lowest proportion of senior career practitioners in the history of the survey. While noteworthy, the 2025 sample is more in-keeping with the current workforce than previous years' samples.

Table 4. Survey Sample Demographics, Career Stage, 2020-2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Early Career	17%	12%	14%	16%	12%	18%
Mid-Career	23%	24%	26%	27%	24%	26%
Senior Career	28%	26%	26%	26%	28%	24%
Late Senior Career	32%	38%	34%	31%	36%	32%

Practice Characteristics

Regarding employment status, the 2025 sample had more psychologists reporting working full-time or being retired but still working compared to previous samples (Table 5).

Table 5. Survey Sample Demographics, Work Status, 2020-2025

	2020	2022	2022	2023	2024	2025
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2020-2025: Working full-time, including self-employed, consulting and practice (at least 35 hours per week or at least 31 client hours per week)	55%	54%	52%	53%	48%	56%
*2025: Working full-time, including self-employed, consulting and practice (at least 35 hours per week)	-	-	-	-	-	60%
2020-2025: Working part-time (less than 35 hours per week or less than 31 client hours per week)	40%	41%	39%	33%	35%	34%
*2025: Working part-time (less than 35 hours per week)	-	-	-	-	-	28%
2020-2025: Postdoctoral study	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
*2025: Postdoctoral training	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Not working and seeking work	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Not working and NOT seeking work	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Retired and NOT working	1%	1%	3%	4%	5%	2%
Retired and STILL working	4%	3%	5%	5%	7%	9%
Not applicable	0%	0%	0%	4%	5%	1%

*In 2025, new qualifier question language was debuted alongside the old language.

Of note, the definitions for “working full-time” and “working part-time” were changed from previous years; in prior iterations of the survey, working full-time included the clause “or at least 31 client hours per week” and working part-time included the clause “or less than 31 client hours per week”. This change was to both simplify the language and to shift focus more towards total hours worked as opposed to hours spent with clients. Testing on this language change found respondents given the new, simpler language reported working part-time in statistically significant ($p < 0.05$, two-tailed) lower proportions than respondents given the old language. As such, it is possible the language change may account for some of the shifts in work status recorded in 2025.

Primary work setting for the 2025 sample fell within historic ranges for all answer categories, except for private practice, which saw its lowest reported proportion in the history of the survey (Table 6). This could be, in part, due to the greater proportion of early career psychologists in the 2025 sample; private practice tends to be a more common setting among practitioners once they reach mid or senior career status. The “Veteran’s Affairs Medical Center or military hospital” setting was added as a new answer category in 2025, whereas in previous surveys it was included under the “Hospital” category.

Table 6. Survey Sample Demographics, Primary Work Setting, 2020-2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Private Practice	77%	79%	76%	65%	70%	64%
2020-2024: Hospital (including VA Medical Centers) 2025: Hospital (not including VA Medical Centers)	6%	6%	9%	11%	11%	7%
Medical School/Academic Health Center	3%	2%	4%	6%	4%	6%
Veteran’s Affairs Medical Center or military hospital	-	-	-	-	-	5%

Organized Human Service Settings	5%	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%
University	3%	2%	2%	4%	3%	4%
2020-2024: Government Settings 2025: Government Settings (not including VA or military settings)	2%	1%	1%	3%	3%	2%
K-12 School	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Business & Other Settings	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%
Other Educational Settings (includes Independent Professional Schools of Psychology)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Four-year College	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
None of these	2%	1%	1%	2%	3%	4%

Self-reported primary areas of specialty of the 2025 sample were similar to previous survey cycles (Table 7).

Table 7. Survey Sample Demographics, Primary Area of Specialty, 2020-2025

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Behavioral and Cognitive Psychology	8%	7%	5%	3%	9%	3%
Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology	15%	12%	12%	15%	10%	11%
Clinical Health Psychology	6%	5%	6%	6%	5%	5%
Clinical Neuropsychology	4%	4%	5%	6%	4%	6%
Clinical Psychology	48%	55%	57%	48%	50%	55%
Clinical Psychopharmacology	-	-	-	0%	0%	0%
Counseling Psychology	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	9%
Couple and Family Psychology	4%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Forensic Psychology	1%	1%	1%	3%	3%	3%
Geropsychology	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Group Psychology and Group Psychotherapy	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Industrial-Organizational Psychology	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Police and Public Safety Psychology	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%
Psychoanalytic and Psychodynamic Psychology	3%	4%	4%	4%	5%	3%
Rehabilitation Psychology	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	0%
School Psychology	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Serious Mental Illness Psychology	-	-	-	1%	1%	0%

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Practitioner Pulse Surveys

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Related Surveys

American Psychological Association. (2022). *2021 Survey of Health Service Psychologists*. <https://www.apa.org/workforce/publications/health-service-psychologists-survey>