

APA Fact Sheet Series on Psychologist Supply and Demand Projections 2015-2030:

Supply Scenarios for the Psychologist Workforce

Key Findings

- Under a scenario where current trends in new entrants and retirement rates persist (baseline), the supply of licensed, doctoral-level psychologists who provide health services are expected to increase from **95,180 FTEs** in 2015 to **107,410 FTEs** in 2030, an increase of 13% between 2015 and 2030.
- The projected supply of psychologists could be significantly impacted by changes in graduation rates and/or the age of retirement:
 - If graduation rates decrease by 10%, the supply of psychologists in 2030 is estimated to be 101,620. If graduation rates increase by 10%, that number will rise to 113,190.
 - Likewise, if psychologists retire two years earlier, the number of psychologists in 2030 is estimated to be 103,450. If they retire two years later, that number will rise to 111,330.

Background

Workforce projections¹ examine current and future psychologist supply and demand in the United States from 2015 to 2030. Supply is determined on the basis of the number of licensed psychologists active in the workforce,² new entrants, and workforce participation patterns. The baseline supply scenario assumes current graduation and retirement rates persist into the future. Supply scenarios examine the hypothetical impact of changing the number of new entrants (increasing or decreasing graduates by 10%) and changing retirement patterns (retiring two years earlier or later). These projections are described in terms of full-time equivalent (FTE) psychologists. An FTE was defined as a licensed, doctoral-level psychologist who worked 39 hours per week.

Findings

In 2015, there were an estimated 104,940 licensed doctoral-level psychologists in the U.S., with 95,180 actively working in the profession. An estimated 3,700 graduates received a doctoral-level degree in a health service psychology subfield (e.g., clinical, counseling, and school psychology),³ and approximately 2,500 to 3,000 psychologists retired from the workforce.

Under the baseline supply projections, the total psychologist supply is expected to increase to 107,410 in 2030. Between 2015 and 2030, this scenario projects an increase of 12,230 (13%) FTE psychologists.

However, supply projections are sensitive to key variables that may affect the supply pool. For example, if graduation rates *increase* by 10%, the supply of FTE psychologists between 2015-2030 is expected to increase by 19% to 113,190. If graduation rates *decrease* by 10%, the supply will increase by only 7% to 101,620. Likewise, if psychologists retire two years *earlier*, supply between 2015-2030 would increase by only 9% (103,450) but would increase by 17% (111,330) if they retire two years *later*.

¹ IHS Markit. (2018). *Psychologist workforce projections for 2015-2030: Addressing supply and demand*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

² Includes licensed psychologists actively working in a position that requires a psychology license, or in a position that does not require a psychology license but uses clinical skills and/or training as a psychologist.

³ Also includes smaller HSP subfields: applied psychology, applied behavior analysis, clinical child psychology, family psychology, forensic psychology, geropsychology, health/medical psychology, and other clinical/counseling/applied psychology.

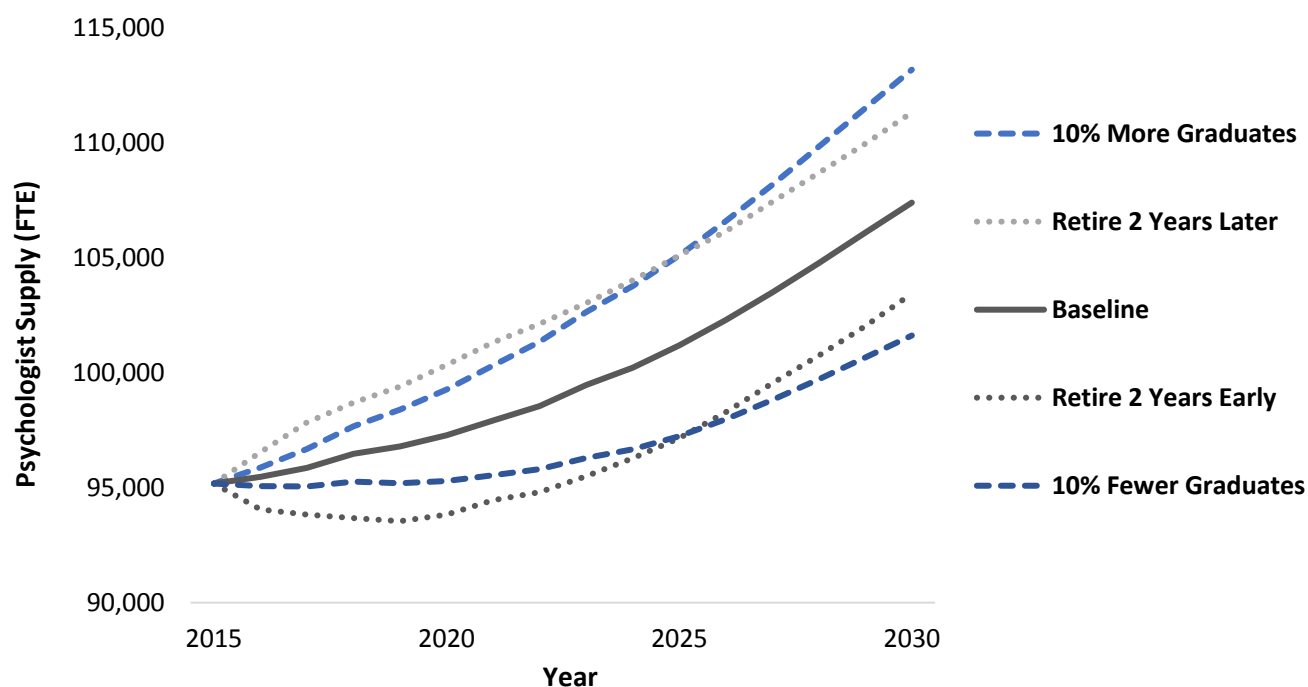
Projected Supply for Psychologists under Different Scenarios, 2015-2030

Scenarios	2015 Supply	2030 Supply	FTE Change	Percent Change
Baseline	95,180	107,410	12,230	13%
10% Fewer Graduates	95,180	101,620	6,440	7%
10% More Graduates	95,180	113,190	18,010	19%
Retire 2 Years Earlier	95,180	103,450	8,270	9%
Retire 2 Years Later	95,180	111,330	16,150	17%

Note: This table summarizes projected supply for psychologists based on number of licensed psychologists active in the workforce, new entrants, and workforce participation patterns. FTE Change = 2030 Supply – 2015 Supply; Percent Change = FTE Change / 2015 Supply. Projected FTEs were rounded to nearest ten. Details may not sum to totals due to rounding.

Source: IHS Markit. (2018). *Psychologist workforce projections for 2015-2030: Addressing supply and demand*.

Projected Supply for Psychologists under Different Scenarios, 2015-2030



Source: IHS Markit. (2018). *Psychologist workforce projections for 2015-2030: Addressing supply and demand*.

Limitations

Workforce projections are based on available data that reflect current patterns. There is limited information on how many psychologists work in various employment settings and areas of specialization. As such, it is difficult to determine if there is an adequate supply of psychologists who specialize in serving specific subpopulations, such as geropsychologists.



AMERICAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION

CWS CENTER FOR
WORKFORCE
STUDIES
AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION