

PA Senate Passes Counseling Compact Bill to Address Mental Health Care Gap

By Senator Lisa Boscola

HARRISBURG, PA – July 17, 2025 — The Pennsylvania Senate today approved legislation sponsored by Senators Lisa M. Boscola (D-Lehigh/Northampton) and Judy Schwank (D-Berks) to authorize Pennsylvania's participation in the National Counseling Compact, with broad bipartisan support, in a vote of 45-5.

The Compact allows licensed professional counselors in Pennsylvania to provide services across state lines in any of the 37 member states, including nearby states such as Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, West Virginia, and Virginia.

Senate Bill 604 expands access to care while maintaining strong professional standards, a critical step as the United States faces a projected shortage of more than 40,000 mental health counselors by 2030, according to federal health workforce data.

"This bill is about removing barriers to mental health care," Boscola said. "Joining the Compact helps ensure Pennsylvania keeps pace with growing demand for qualified counselors and gives people better access to the support they need, no matter where they live."

Schwank added, "Allowing licensed professional counselors to practice across state lines means greater access for individuals in underserved and rural areas, especially those areas where mental health services are often hard to come by. It also means greater access to continuity of care, so clients can keep working with their same trusted counselors, without interruption. This bill is a major win for mental health professionals, patients, and our Commonwealth as a whole."

Pennsylvania has already joined interstate compacts for nurses, physicians, psychologists, and physical therapists. Including counselors continues the Commonwealth's bipartisan effort to modernize licensure and strengthen behavioral health access.

The bill is being supported by the Pennsylvania Counseling Association, the largest of the state chapters of the American Counseling Association. In reaction to the vote, PCA President, Dr. Joe Charette said, "We are so grateful for the work that our legislators have done to get PA one step closer to joining the Interstate Counseling Compact. We're eager for this bill to become law so that we can expand access to mental healthcare and enhance our professional counseling workforce."

The bill now heads to the House of Representatives, where a companion bill, House Bill 668, has already passed with broad support.

PHFA Accepting Bids for \$4.5 Million of Mixed-Use Development Tax Credits

Deadline Alert: Friday, July 18, 2025 – 2:00pm

By Senator Lisa Boscola

The Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) is accepting bids for the purchase of \$4.5 million in mixed-use development tax credits. The funds collected from successful bidders will be used for the construction or rehabilitation of mixed-use developments in Pennsylvania communities. The deadline for bids is 2 p.m. on Friday, July 18.

PHFA These tax credits will be used by the winning bidders to reduce their state tax liability. The bidders can be companies, organizations, or individuals. The intent of the bidding process is to raise as much funding as possible from the \$4.5 million in tax credits being made available to provide for a significant investment in community revitalization projects in various communities. The projects to receive this funding will be selected during a competitive Request for Proposals process later this year.

This tax credit program was created as part of the commonwealth's fiscal year 2016-2017 budget (implemented July 1, 2017), and PHFA was directed to administer the credit. PHFA was authorized to sell these tax credits through directed or negotiated sale to any qualified taxpayer. It is expected that the tax credit awards will be made within 90 days after bidding closes. The credit awards will be made in 2025, but they are not effective for utilization until 2026 against a 2025 tax liability.

More information about the mixed-use development tax credit and the current bidding process, including program guidelines and bid criteria is available by clicking here. Interested organizations can learn more by contacting Shelby Rexrode at PHFA by phone at 717-780-1854 or by email at srexrode@phfa.org.



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