

## CCPPP TRAINING DIRECTORS' FINANCES COMMITTEE REPORT & ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

### Understand your institution



### Know the data



### Consider your approach



### Advocate



### Think outside the box



The Canadian Council of Professional Psychology Programs (CCPPP) Training Directors' Finances Committee would like to acknowledge the important work of the CCPPP Student Finances Committee and the numerous pre-doctoral psychology residents who responded to the Residency Finances Survey Report ("the Report"; see [https://ccppp.ca/resources/Documents/Member%20Resources/Surveys/CCPPP%20survey%20report\\_final.pdf](https://ccppp.ca/resources/Documents/Member%20Resources/Surveys/CCPPP%20survey%20report_final.pdf)). In particular, the remarkable vulnerability of the qualitative responses has offered a valuable window into the challenges most residents face in coping with financial insecurity during their final year of training. This is an important issue facing the training community that demands a response.

***We call upon Residency Training Directors across the nation to advocate for resident salaries to meet or exceed the living wage for your region.*** In addition to being an advocacy issue, this is an ethical and equity issue facing our profession. Ethically, residency training directors should serve and protect psychology residents who are in a low-power position to advocate for their salaries and benefits with the host institution. Furthermore, low salaries perpetuate inequity and restrict diversity in the profession since applicants are restricted to those who can supplement their residency salary with additional resources (e.g., savings, family/spouse support) or those who are willing/able to accrue more debt.

Residency training directors face many hurdles within their institutions. The challenge of raising residency salaries intersects with many professional practice issues such as low salaries for psychologists/supervisors and the institution's value of psychology services. There are also many administrative and institutional hurdles such as budget constraints, competing institutional demands and non-psychology administrators who are in positions of power over psychology programs. These hurdles exist along a dialectic which call us to acknowledge the challenges while also committing to action for the benefit of residents and the profession.

The primary recommendation from the Report was to increase resident salaries. As such, the primary aim of this response is to empower residency training directors with practical strategies for advocating for increased residency salaries. Given that training directors function within a variety of institutional settings, there is no "one size fits all" approach to advocacy. Rather, we propose a conceptual framework with suggested action items, which will need to be tailored to the unique demands of each institution. Hopefully, the strategies listed here will also engender other creative approaches since the list is certainly not exhaustive.



### *Understand your institution's policies and procedures for approving salary increases*

- Identify the process for how changes are requested and how decisions are made (e.g., formal written proposals, decision briefs, informal conversations, etc.).
- Understand the role of the Psychology Chief/Practice Leader in the organizational structure (e.g., do requests for salary increases come from the Training Director or the Psychology Practice Leader?).
- Determine who has informal power (e.g., physician colleagues) and seek their support/alliance.



### *Know the data*

- Read the CCPPP Residency Finances Survey Report (see [https://ccppp.ca/resources/Documents/Member%20Resources/Surveys/CCPPP%20survey%20report\\_final.pdf](https://ccppp.ca/resources/Documents/Member%20Resources/Surveys/CCPPP%20survey%20report_final.pdf)).
- Know how resident salaries in your program compare to other programs in your region and across the nation (see [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1izEla3HIU\\_eiW5IHs-OulPujo4ovr8f8NY\\_NoHnD9cA/edit#gid=29432753](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1izEla3HIU_eiW5IHs-OulPujo4ovr8f8NY_NoHnD9cA/edit#gid=29432753)).
- Understand how benefits are calculated as part of the compensation package for your program and others (e.g., make sure you are “comparing apples to apples”).
- Know how resident salaries compare to psychologists, medical residents, psychological assistants, psychometrists, and masters level clinicians within your organization.
- Identify the living wage for your region (see <https://www.livingwage.ca/>). Consider including unique but relevant information about your region or location that impacts living wage (e.g., cost of food may be disproportionately higher in rural or northern locations).
- Collect data regarding how residents contribute to patient care (e.g., number of patients seen, number of service hours, impact on program development and evaluation, etc.).

- Collect data on the following aspects of resident salaries:
  - Ratio of take-home pay to living expenses
  - Percentage of take-home pay required for rent/housing
  - Amount of debt incurred to cover living expenses not covered by residency salary
  - Impact on physical and emotional well-being
  - Resident's ability to fully engage in residency (e.g., did residents need to take on additional work?).
  
- Conduct post-interview surveys of applicants to quantify/describe applicants not ranking your site given the salary and anticipated expenses. This will provide data about applicants who are *not* coming to your program because of low wages.
  
- Determine the impact to patient care when supervisors allot time to supervision in lieu of direct patient care. Most decision-makers recognize that the number of patients seen by residents needs to be “netted” from the number of patients *not* seen by the supervisor due to supervision requirements.
  
- Determine the clinical impact to the organization of not taking psychology residents (e.g., greater wait times, more cost to hire additional staff, etc.)



### *Consider your approach*

- Ensure that your request is linked to a “motivational hook” for the organization. How does a request for increased resident salaries fit into the overall values/goals of the organization? Some examples might include:
  - Recruitment and retention crisis for psychology. Can you argue that the residency program supplies a steady stream of new hires for the organization?
  - The organization's responsibility to being a teaching hospital/organization.
  - The organization's responsibility to equity, diversity and inclusion. Lower salaries attract less diverse residents and future employees of the organization.

Consider backing these arguments with data to support how the residency program supports the organization's values and objectives.
  
- Consider presenting data showing salary increases from similar programs. Some institutions may lean strongly on comparisons to similar programs in their decision making about increasing salaries.

- Be flexible in tailoring reports/conversations to the style of the manager/institution. Remember that non-psychologist managers may require data that is easily digested or may value qualitative data over quantitative data.
- Write a proposal that stands out. Remember that institutions have many “outstretched hands” for limited funds. If there are 50 well-reasoned proposals in front of a manager, what will increase the chance of your proposal standing out?
- Consult with other training directors who have been successful in raising resident salaries.



### *Advocate*

- Collaborate with your Psychology Chief/Practice Leader for a consistent message to management.
- Share the survey report OR an executive summary with the manager in charge of residency salary budget.
- Create and share a business case for raising residency salaries through formal and informal channels.
- Consider flexible proposals that are not “black and white” (e.g., propose a 3-year role out plan to minimize impact to a single year’s budget).
- Consider creating a pilot program measuring the impact of salary increase.
- Consistently add the topic of residency salaries to meeting agendas (broken record technique).
- Leverage the CPA accreditation standards with your institution’s administration.
- Educate decision-makers about the training, skills and ability (nearly independent) of psychology residents.
- Keep the contribution/value of the psychology residency program on the radar of administrators – highlight psychology residents during psychology month; provide quarterly or annual reports to budget holders regarding psychology residency’s contribution to direct patient care.
- Be transparent with residents about your advocacy efforts to establish trust and rapport related to this issue



### *Think outside the box*

- Identify residents' largest living expense(s) (usually housing) and identify creative ways to support them (e.g., student housing, subleasing from other graduate students leaving the area for residency, etc.).
- Advocate for resident benefits to reduce the cost of living (e.g., moving cost reimbursement, extended health insurance, bus fare, parking, etc.).
- Review the mandate letters of the Minister of Mental Health in your province. Identify ways that resident salaries align with their mandate and seek a meeting with the minister or someone from their office.
- Consider whether progress can be made outside of formal channels. Can the topic of residency salaries get media attention without violating collection agreements? What are the pros/cons of the psychology residents writing a letter to the institution's President or Board of Directors?
- Connect with your region/province's advocacy group to highlight this issue and yoke your goals to other ongoing initiatives.
- Consider the pros and cons of advocating for psychology residents to be included in the collective bargaining agreements in your region.

### **Concluding Comments**

The committee would like to thank the CCPPP for shining a spotlight on the important issue of resident salaries, and its impact on the well-being of residents and the profession. Of the many "hats" that training directors wear, perhaps advocacy is the least developed skill in our graduate training. It is hoped that this toolkit will help empower training directors to better advocate for the financial needs of residents across the country.

"All advocacy is, at its core, an exercise in empathy." Samantha Power, United States Ambassador to the United Nations (2013-17).

"Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will." Frederick Douglass, American social reformer, abolitionist, orator, writer and statesperson.

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