



Drawing on insights from the Immigrant Mental Health in North Carolina Landscape Analysis, the Immigrant Mental Health Solidarity Network (IMHSN) convened two policy workgroups in Fall 2025 to develop actionable recommendations for improving mental health care access for immigrant communities. These proposals aim to guide state and local policy changes that better address the needs of North Carolina's immigrant population.

Access to Linguistically Appropriate Services

SUPPORTING BILINGUAL PROVIDER WORKFORCE

Support Bilingual Mental Health Providers

- Develop systems to reduce burnout among bilingual providers who are tasked with additional roles (e.g., interpreting, case management) and create space for self-advocacy within organizations and in policy.
- **Responsible parties:** Immigrant Mental Health Solidarity Network, philanthropy, multilingual mental health providers, mental health provider trade associations

Simplify Credentialing for Foreign-Trained Providers

- Offer financial and administrative support for foreign-trained bilingual providers navigating U.S. licensure; begin by researching similar efforts in other states.
- **Responsible parties:** Immigrant Mental Health Solidarity Network members, immigrant mental health providers, mental health provider licensure boards (i.e., fee-Based practicing pastoral counselors, marriage and family Therapists, psychologists, professional counselors, social workers), mental health provider trade associations

Targeted Workforce Development for Bilingual Mental Health Professionals

- Expand initiatives to grow the multilingual mental health and interpreter workforce, especially in underserved areas. Strategies may include:
 - Scholarships and paid internships
 - Interpreter training and hands-on experience (e.g., UNC Greensboro, Durham Tech)
 - Courses for providers serving immigrant communities (e.g., UNC Charlotte)
 - Bilingual workforce training at community colleges (e.g., Forsyth Tech)
 - Career exposure for high school students through service learning and CTE programs
- **Responsible parties:** Immigrant Mental Health Solidarity Network members, NC Community College System, UNC System, NC Department of Public Instruction

SYSTEMS TO SUPPORT LINGUISTIC ACCESS

Develop Language Access Plans

- Managed care organizations should assess enrollee language needs and create provider-facing access plans. NC Medicaid should prioritize funding for interpreters, scholarships, and related supports.
- **Responsible parties:** NC Medicaid, managed care organizations serving Medicaid enrollees

Enhance Reimbursement for Bilingual Services

- Implement higher reimbursement rates for bilingual care and interpretation to incentivize linguistically accessible services.
- **Responsible parties:** NC Medicaid, managed care organizations serving Medicaid enrollees, NC private insurance payers

Centralize Language-Accessible Provider Information

- Create and promote a centralized database of multilingual mental health providers and interpreters using existing sources:
 - NC Medicaid
 - Private insurers
 - Psychology Today
- **Responsible parties:** Immigrant Mental Health Solidarity Network

Train Providers and Interpreters in Cultural Humility

- Develop CE courses and recertification requirements focused on cultural humility, tailored to regional immigrant communities.
- **Responsible parties:** NC AHEC, mental health provider trade organizations

Expand Interpreter Training for Mental Health Settings

- Strengthen interpreter training specific to behavioral health care.
- **Responsible parties:** NC AHEC, NC Community College System, interpreter training programs

Integrate Language Justice in Provider Education

- Embed language justice and cultural humility in all mental health education programs to prepare future providers.
- **Responsible parties:** NC Community College System mental health provider training programs, UNC System mental health provider training program