

## FY 2026 Funding Request for the Health Resources and Services Administration's Title VII Oral Health Training and Workforce Programs

Appropriations Request	Amount
FY 2025 Final Appropriations	\$42,673,000
FY 2026 ADEA Appropriations Request	\$43,673,000

The demand for dentists is projected to grow 5% from 2023 to 2033;<sup>1</sup> for dental hygienists, the demand is projected to grow 9% during the same period.<sup>2</sup> Even if the number of oral health providers grows, significant unmet need for oral health care persists.

The Oral Health Training and Workforce Programs, administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), are helping to close the dental access gap. These programs increase access to oral health services by increasing the number of oral health care providers, with a special focus on expanding the oral healthcare workforce in underserved and rural areas. Over 59 million people live in the 7,067 designated Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) nationally.<sup>3</sup> The following examples show how HRSA is helping to improve the nation's oral health.

**Offering loan repayment to encourage professional service in high-need areas.** HRSA's National Health Service Corps (NHSC) program offers loan repayments and scholarships to health professionals, including dentists and dental hygienists who practice in a dental HPSA. In FY24, 873 dentists and 357 registered dental hygienists were in the NHSC Loan Repayment Program, and 263 dental students were awarded NHSC dentist scholarships.<sup>4</sup>

**Attracting and retaining dental and allied dental faculty.** The Dental Faculty Loan Repayment Program increases the number of dental and dental hygiene faculty in the workforce by aiding dental and dental hygiene education and training programs' efforts to attract and retain dental and dental hygiene faculty through loan repayment. HRSA conducted a six-year evaluation of the Dental Faculty Loan Repayment Programs and found that, between academic years 2016 and 2022, awardees provided \$12.2 million in loan repayments, which relieved an average of 43% of student loan debt for oral health professionals. In exchange for this assistance, 148 dentists and dental hygienists provided 424 years of clinical care and didactic service as full-time dental faculty.<sup>5</sup>

**Supporting and encouraging the oral health profession.** HRSA provides scholarships and loans to disadvantaged students. HRSA is also cultivating the dental pipeline through programs like the Health Careers Opportunity Program, which provides students from disadvantaged backgrounds opportunities to develop the skills needed to enter the health professions.

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Outlook Handbook. Healthcare, Dentists. Revised Aug. 29, 2024. Accessed March 19, 2025. At: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dentists.htm#tab-6>

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. Occupational Outlook Handbook. Healthcare, Dental Hygienists. Revised Aug. 29, 2024. Accessed March 19, 2025. At: <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/healthcare/dental-hygienists.htm#tab-6>

<sup>3</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation. Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs). Timeframe: Dec. 31, 2024. Accessed March 19, 2025. At: <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/dental-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colld%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

<sup>4</sup> Health Resources and Services Administration. Bureau of Health Workforce field Strength and Students and Trainees Dashboards, Student and Trainee Dashboard. Dentists and Registered Dental Hygienists. Revised Sept. 30, 2024. Accessed March 19, 2025. At: <https://data.hrsa.gov/topics/health-workforce/field-strength>

<sup>5</sup> HRSA Dental Faculty Loan Repayment Program Evaluation. 2023. Accessed March 19, 2025. At: <chromeextension://efaidnbmninnibpcapcglclefindmkaj/https://bhw.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/bureau-health-workforce/funding/dental-faculty-lrp-outcomes.pdf>