

RECRUITING CASE STUDIES

How Strategic Recruitment Solved Critical Staffing Challenges

CASE STUDY: INDIAN CREEK FOUNDATION

BCBA Placement for Behavioral Health Services | Souderton, Pennsylvania

About the Client

Indian Creek Foundation (ICF) is a nonprofit human services organization founded in 1975 and headquartered at 420 Cowpath Road in Souderton, Pennsylvania. With roots tracing back to 1958 — when a local Mennonite family sought community support for their son with a developmental disability — ICF has grown into a comprehensive provider serving more than 1,200 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) and autism.

The Foundation operates through three primary divisions: residential and community-based services, vocational day services, and behavioral health services. Its Intensive Behavioral Health Services department provides therapeutic support to children and adults with IDD, autism, and co-occurring mental health challenges, using evidence-based approaches including Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). The Transition Age Youth Program specifically serves young people ages 15-18 on the autism spectrum, preparing them for adult life through skills-building and community integration. With an annual operating budget of approximately \$23.5 million, ICF represents a major anchor of disability services in Montgomery County and the surrounding region.

The Role: Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA)

A Board Certified Behavior Analyst is a master's-level clinician credentialed by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB). BCBAs design and oversee Applied Behavior Analysis programs, conduct functional behavior assessments, develop individualized treatment plans, supervise behavior technicians, and work directly with clients and their families. In educational and human services settings, BCBAs are essential to delivering structured behavioral support to individuals with autism and developmental disabilities.

The path to BCBA certification is lengthy and demanding: candidates must complete a qualifying master's degree program, accumulate 1,500 to 2,000 supervised fieldwork hours (which cannot be compressed or accelerated), and pass a rigorous national examination. As of 2025, first-time pass rates on the BCBA exam dropped to a historic low of 51% — meaning roughly half of all candidates must retake the exam, further delaying the pipeline of new credentialed professionals entering the workforce.

Why BCBAs Are Among the Hardest Roles to Fill

Supply-Demand Gap

By the end of 2025, approximately 81,566 BCBAs held active credentials nationwide — while employers posted over 132,000 BCBA positions. Only an estimated 30,000 BCBAs work in direct clinical service, while workforce analysts estimate 100,000 are needed. The gap is not closing.

Long Credentialing Pipeline	The minimum path to BCBA certification requires a master's degree plus 1,500-2,000 hours of supervised fieldwork. This multi-year process severely limits the pace at which new BCBAs can enter the market.
Exam Barriers	In 2025, first-time BCBA exam pass rates fell to 51% — a historic low. Many candidates face repeat attempts, further delaying their availability and thinning the active candidate pool.
Fierce Competition	ABA therapy clinics, private practices, school districts, and health systems all compete for the same limited BCBA talent pool, often offering signing bonuses and premium compensation that smaller nonprofits and human services organizations cannot easily match.
Geographic Constraints	46% of U.S. counties have no BCBA at all. Even in populated areas, candidates with the right credentials and experience for a specific setting may be scarce. Passive sourcing — finding people not actively looking — is essential.

The Shortage: By the Numbers

- Demand for BCBAs grew 28% from 2024 to 2025, with 132,307 BCBA job postings recorded in 2025 alone — up from just 789 nationwide in 2010.
- Pennsylvania saw a 54% jump in BCBA job demand from 2023 to 2024 alone, with 3,828 positions posted statewide, making it the 9th highest-demand state in the nation.
- Among children ages 26-34 (a cohort now driving adult services demand), ASD diagnosis rates increased 450% over a recent study period — each new diagnosis creating ongoing demand for BCBA-supervised services.
- The shortfall nationally stands at approximately 50,000 positions — a deficit that translates directly into longer waitlists, reduced access to care, and an extremely competitive hiring environment for any organization seeking to bring on a BCBA.

"With roughly 50,000 fewer BCBAs than job openings, the gap between supply and demand is striking. This shortage makes it difficult for organizations to fill roles, limiting access to care and extending already long waitlists." — ABA Resource Center, 2026

The Challenge

Indian Creek Foundation had a clear and pressing need: a Board Certified Behavior Analyst to support students at their Souderton campus. Despite their own efforts, they had been unable to identify a qualified candidate. The combination of a thin local candidate pool, intense regional competition for BCBA talent, and the passive nature of most credentialed candidates — who are rarely browsing job boards because they are already employed — meant that conventional job postings were not sufficient.

Every week a critical clinical role goes unfilled in a behavioral health setting carries real consequences: students wait longer for structured programming, staff carry additional supervisory burden, and the organization's ability to serve its mission is constrained.

Our Approach

- Built a comprehensive candidate map — sourcing a targeted list of 160 BCBA's and BCBA-eligible candidates in the Souderton, PA region and surrounding market area.
- Deployed a multi-channel outreach campaign reaching candidates across professional networks, credential databases, and direct contact methods — not relying on a single platform or passive inbound application.
- Prioritized passive candidates: credentialed professionals already working in the field who would not have seen or responded to a standard job posting.
- Moved with urgency, compressing what is typically a months-long search into a focused, high-activity campaign.

The Results

160

Candidates Sourced

~10

Days to Identify Successful
Candidate

Multi

Channels Deployed

Within approximately ten days of launching the search, our multi-channel outreach campaign had identified and made contact with the successful candidate — a BCBA who was not actively searching for a new position. Indian Creek Foundation was able to move forward with a hire that their own efforts had failed to produce, despite an extended search period.

A qualified BCBA identified and delivered in roughly ten days — ending months of unsuccessful searching and restoring ICF's capacity to deliver ABA services to the students who needed them.

What This Means for Similar Organizations

Human services organizations, behavioral health providers, and school-based programs serving individuals with autism and developmental disabilities face an extraordinarily difficult market when recruiting BCBA's. In a field where demand has more than doubled in two years and nearly half of all U.S. counties have zero certified professionals, passive candidate outreach and multi-channel sourcing are not optional extras — they are requirements.

If your organization has an open BCBA position that standard recruitment efforts have not been able to fill, our targeted search model can penetrate the passive candidate market that job postings simply cannot reach.

Ready to solve your most difficult staffing challenges?

Contact us to discuss your open roles.