Social Work Licensing: A Professional Responsibility

2019-2020 Academic Year

MINNESOTA BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK

Protecting the Public  Licensing Social Workers  Resolving Complaints

Qualified • Professional • Ethical • Accountable
Agenda

• Role of the Board and Board mission
• Minnesota license requirements
• Standards of Practice and complaint resolution
• Application and examination process
• Supervised Practice requirements
• Continuing Education requirements
• License Renewal requirements
What does the Board do?

...and what is social work regulation?
MISSION: “To ensure residents of Minnesota quality social work services by establishing and enforcing professional standards.”
What is the Board?

**Independent State Regulatory Agency**
- Law enacted 1987 – effective 1989
- Entirely fee supported; no tax dollars
- Executive Branch Agency: Accountable to Legislature, Governor, the public, other state agencies, stakeholders
- 15 Board members; 12 staff

**Public Protection**
- License qualified social workers
- Establish and enforce ethical practice standards
- Resolve complaints about social work practice
- Provide information to the public
Number of Licensees by Fiscal Year (FY00-FY18)

60% increase in number of licensees from 2000 to 2019
What are the Board’s responsibilities?

**Statutory Duty:** “To promote and protect the public health, safety, and welfare through the licensure and regulation of persons who practice social work in this state.” *(MS 148E.030)*

- Protect the public
- Investigate reports of misconduct
- Require licensees to follow the Standards of Practice
- Ensure that licensed social workers are:
Social Work Practice Act

Minnesota Statutes Chapter 148E

- Laws governing social work practice in Minnesota
- Board has authority to enforce

- Definition of social work practice
- When a license is required
- Application requirements
- Exemptions
- License renewal
- Continuing education
- Supervised practice
- Standards of Practice and ethics
- Compliance and grounds for disciplinary action
- Fees
Other Relevant Statutes

- **Minnesota Statutes Chapter 214** – applies to all Health Licensing Boards and includes:
  - Fingerprint-based criminal background check
  - Complaint process
  - Classification of data

- **Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13** – Government Data Practices
  - Defines public, private, and confidential licensing data

- **Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13D** – Open Meeting Law
  - Requires Board and committee meetings to be open to the public
A Regulated Profession

- Social work is regulated across the United States and Canada
- Each state/jurisdiction has own statutory requirements
- No national license
- Licensing ensures that social workers meets standards of ethics and competence for entry into practice

As a licensed professional, you are responsible for being aware of and complying with all licensing requirements
When is a license required?

...and why is it important?
What is social work practice?

“Working to maintain, restore, or improve behavioral, cognitive, emotional, mental, or social functioning of clients...”

Defined in law:

• Social Work Practice: Minn. Stat. section 148E.010, subd. 11
• Clinical Practice: Minn. Stat. section 148E.010, subd. 6
What is social work practice?

- **Direct Practice:****
  - Working with individuals
  - Clinical and non-clinical

- **Indirect Practice:**
  - Working with organizations
  - Program planning
## What is social work practice?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment</th>
<th>Clinical practice—diagnosis and psychotherapy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>Advocating for policies for client well-being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case management</td>
<td>Developing and administering social service programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client education</td>
<td>Community organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>Teaching social work students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crisis Intervention</td>
<td>Supervising social workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Referral</td>
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</table>
Where do social workers practice?

- Universities
- Mental health clinics
- Hospitals
- Schools
- Health insurance companies
- Corporations
- Child protection agencies
- Community centers
- Non-profit agencies
- Public policy
- Federal, state and county agencies
- Tribal agencies
Board’s Licensing Authority

• The Board has authority over individuals who have an accredited degree in social work
  • Social Work Practice in Minnesota
  • Title: Social Worker
• The Board does not have jurisdiction over agencies
Board’s Licensing Authority

• **Only the Board** has the authority to determine whether a person is engaged in social work practice and must be licensed.

• A license may still be required even if:
  • The employer does not require a license
  • The job does not require direct client contact
  • The job title is not social worker
Licensing Exemptions

Current law does not require a social work license for:

- Students in internships required for social work degree
- Social workers employed by the county
- Social workers employed by federally recognized tribes
- Other licensed professionals
Licensing protects the public by ensuring that social workers are qualified, professional, ethical, and accountable.

Licensing strengthens the profession by informing employers and clients that you have met the educational and examination standards needed to practice professional social work competently and ethically.

It’s the law: Minnesota Statutes Chapter 148E.
If you have a social work degree, a license is required if you provide social work services as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 148E.010, subdivisions 6 or 11, or use the title social worker, unless you are employed by a county or a federally recognized tribe.
What are the Standards of Practice?

...and how do they protect the public?
Minnesota Statutes sections 148E.185-148E.290

• Legal requirements for licensed social workers
• Different than Code of Ethics
• Protect the public by ensuring social workers are accountable

Grounds for action:
• Competence
• Impairment
• Representation and use of titles
• Professional and ethical conduct
• Responsibilities to clients
• Boundaries
• Confidentiality
• Documentation and billing practices
• Reporting requirements
• Unlicensed/Unauthorized practice
What happens if a complaint is filed?

- A complaint is a report that a licensed social worker has violated the Standards of Practice.
- Board staff reviews complaint for jurisdiction and begins investigation.
- Board has two Compliance Panels comprised of Board members.
  - “Due Process” procedures required to resolve complaints.
- Panel members review evidence of the investigation and decide the outcome—**Board members are the decision-makers**.
Who files complaints?

- Social workers and other licensed health professionals
- Clients and clients’ families
- Employers
- Supervisors
- Social workers self-reporting
- Board staff based on application, supervision, and other data
- Other Health Licensing Boards
Common Complaints

- Unlicensed practice
- Boundaries violations
- Confidentiality
- Documentation and billing
- Reporting requirements
- Termination of client services
- Impairment
Health Professionals Services Program (HPSP)

- Non-disciplinary diversion program for all licensed health professionals, who may be impaired by chemical dependency or by mental or physical illness
  - May be able to practice under strict monitoring, and supervision by the HPSP and a worksite monitor
  - May condition, restrict, or prohibit continued practice
  - More Information at: mn.gov/boards/hpsp
How do I apply for a license?

...and when should I apply?
License Types

**Licensed Social Worker**
- Accredited BSW
- ASWB Bachelors exam

**Licensed Graduate Social Worker**
- Accredited MSW
- ASWB Masters exam

**Licensed Independent Social Worker**
- Accredited MSW
- Supervised practice
- ASWB Advanced Generalist exam

**Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker**
- Accredited MSW
- Supervised practice
- 360 Clinical Clock Hours
- ASWB Clinical exam
Step 1: Submit Application and Fee

• Apply online at Board’s website

$60 application fee + $33.25 criminal background check fee

• For the **best application process**, Board recommends applying six months before graduation
  • Report your anticipated graduation date on application (MM/DD/YYYY)
  • May need to re-affirm graduation date if you apply earlier than six months before graduation
Step 2: Complete Fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check

• Fingerprint-based criminal background check (CBC) required unless you hold a current Minnesota social work license

• CBC Program Office will email instructions to you after the Board receives your application and fee

• Start fingerprint process as soon as you receive instructions from CBC Program Office
Step 3: Take ASWB Exam

- ASWB Exam Policy does not allow Board to approve current students for exam sooner than six months prior to graduation
- Board will send you a letter by mail if you are approved for the ASWB exam
- Contact ASWB to register for the exam
  - $230 exam fee paid directly to ASWB
- Schedule exam date with Pearson VUE after registering with ASWB

Passing the exam is not the equivalent of being licensed
Step 4: Submit Official Transcript

• Wait to submit your official transcript until you have completed all degree requirements

• Transcript must include **degree, major, and date degree conferred**—typically takes a few weeks after graduation

• Contact Registrar’s Office to request official transcript sent directly to the Board
Final Step: Pay Initial License Fee

• Board will send you a letter once your application is complete
• LGSW 24-month initial license fee is $167.75
  • 25% less than renewal fee as “new grad discount”
• Initial license fee is prorated based on number of months in first renewal term
  • Two years in the future to your birth month

Your license is not effective until the Board receives your initial license fee payment
Temporary License for Students

• If you will be starting a social work position soon after graduation, apply for a temporary license to be authorized to practice while you wait for your official transcript

• You are eligible for a temporary license if you have:
  ✓ Applied for a permanent license
  ✓ Passed the ASWB exam
  ✓ Submitted fingerprints for criminal background check
  ✓ Completed all degree requirements
Temporary License for Students Graduating from a Program in Candidacy Status

• Your permanent license cannot be issued until the social work program is fully accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)

• You are eligible for a temporary license if you have:
  ✓ Applied for a permanent license
  ✓ Passed the ASWB exam
  ✓ Submitted fingerprints for criminal background check
  ✓ Completed all degree requirements

• Candidacy temporary licenses are valid for one year and may be extended if program remains in candidacy status
Applicants for LICSW must document **360 Clinical Clock Hours** in **six clinical knowledge areas**

- Academic graduate coursework and/or learning must include:
  - **108 hours in differential diagnosis** and biopsychosocial development and psychopathology across the life span
  - **36 hours in assessment-based clinical treatment planning** with measurable goals
  - **108 hours in clinical intervention methods** informed by research and current standards of practice
  - **18 hours in evaluation methodologies**
  - **72 hours in social work ethics and values** including cultural context, diversity, and social policy
  - **18 hours in culturally specific clinical assessment and intervention**
What is the 360 Clinical Clock Hour Requirement for LICSWs?

• Obtain through **MSW coursework**, additional **graduate coursework** or **continuing education** (CE) activities with a post-test (**max. 90 CE hours**)
• Review requirement with MSW program to determine how many hours may be completed through MSW coursework
  • Minnesota schools have created grids outlining clinical course content
  • May need to educate out-of-state schools about this requirement
  • Board defers to schools to evaluate academic course content
• Do not submit documentation to the Board until you apply for the LICSW
What do I need to know about the ASWB exam?

...and how can I prepare?
Exam Information

• National licensing exam owned and maintained by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)
• 170 multiple choice questions on computer
  • Includes 20 pre-test question not included in score
• 4 hour limit
• Administered at Pearson VUE testing centers
  • National and international locations
  • Exam administered Monday-Saturday
  • Maintain exam security
Exam Scoring

• Unofficial score report received after completing the exam
• Official exam results will be forwarded to the Board about two weeks after exam date
• Candidates who do not pass the exam will receive a performance report
  • ASWB requires a 90-day wait before retaking the exam
  • Must pay another exam registration fee to ASWB
Test Day Tips

- Before your test day, carefully review the ASWB Candidate Handbook for important exam information!

✓ Know where your test center is and plan to arrive 30 minutes before your appointment
✓ Bring two valid forms of acceptable ID—name on IDs MUST match name on exam authorization (name on file with Board)
✓ Failing to follow strict security requirements at test center can result in invalidation of exam score
Exam Tips

• Answer all questions—guessing is better than no answer, which is always wrong!
• If you get stuck, mark question and come back
• Read carefully to identify general topic area, then reread and dissect stem of question
• Eliminate obviously wrong answers

• Look out for multiple choice question “distracters”
  • Pay attention to qualifying words, i.e., first, best, most, least
  • Only one correct answer—eliminate answers which are:
    • True, but irrelevant
    • Too broad or too narrow
    • Common misconception
    • Plausible, but wrong
How can a social worker BEST establish rapport with a client in the first interview?

(A) Understand the client’s view of the problem
(B) Ask only factual information about the problem
(C) Conduct the interview on a first name basis
(D) Allow time for informal, personal conversation
How can a social worker BEST establish rapport with a client in the first interview?

(A) Understand the client’s view of the problem
A social worker is receiving repeated telephone calls from a previous client who has completed treatment and resolved the targeted problem. What should the social worker do?

(A) Inform the client that the therapeutic relationship is finished
(B) Refer the client to another social worker in the agency
(C) Limit the number of calls that the social worker will accept
(D) Schedule a session to assess the client for further problems
A social worker is receiving repeated telephone calls from a previous client who has completed treatment and resolved the targeted problem. What should the social worker do?

(D) Schedule a session to assess the client for further problems
## 2018 Exam Pass Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam Type</th>
<th>North America (1st Time)</th>
<th>Minnesota (1st Time)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Generalist</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
What is licensing supervision?

...and what are the requirements?
What is licensing supervision?

• An **intentional professional relationship** between a supervisor and a social worker
• Promotes **competent** and **ethical** services to your clients and develops your ability to apply accepted professional social work knowledge, skills, and values
• Licensing supervisor is not required to be employed in the same agency

• Your licensing supervisor **evaluates and provides direction of your social work practice**, developing your:
  • Professional values and practice skills
  • Ongoing continued competency
  • Ethical standards of practice

• **It’s the law**: Minnesota Statutes section 148E.100 to 148E.125
When is licensing supervision required?

**Supervision and social work practice go together**

- **Nonclinical Practice**: Once licensed, licensing supervision is required for the first 4,000 hours of social work practice.
- **Clinical Practice**: Once licensed, ongoing licensing supervision must be maintained until an LICSW is issued.
How much licensing supervision is required for nonclinical practice?

- 4 hours of supervision for every
- 160 hours of practice to obtain a total of
- 100 hours of supervision over 4,000 hours of nonclinical practice
What types of nonclinical supervision are acceptable?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minimum 50 hours one-on-one supervision:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• 25 hours in-person required</td>
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<tr>
<td>• No more than 25 hours via eye-to-eye electronic media</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Up to 50 hours other types supervision:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Group supervision (limited to six supervisees)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One-on-one phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Eye-to-eye electronic media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More in-person</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How much licensing supervision is required for clinical practice?

4 to 8 hours of supervision for every 160 hours of practice to obtain a total of 200 hours of supervision over 4,000 to 8,000 hours of clinical practice including 1,800 hours of direct clinical client contact.
What types of clinical supervision are acceptable?

Minimum 100 hours one-on-one supervision:

- 50 hours in-person required
- No more than 50 hours via eye-to-eye electronic media

Up to 100 hours other types supervision:

- Group supervision (limited to six supervisees)
- One-on-one phone
- Eye-to-eye electronic media
- More in-person
Who can provide licensing supervision?

- **LGSW** (has completed their supervision requirement) may supervise...
  - LGSW in nonclinical practice

- **LISW**

- **LICSW** (has completed 2,000 hours practice post-LICSW including 1,000 hours clinical practice) may supervise...
  - LGSW in clinical practice

- **Alternate Supervisor** (another Licensed Mental Health Professional) may supervise for up to 25% of hours...
  - LGSW in clinical or nonclinical practice

All supervisors must have completed 30 hours of training in supervision. Approved supervisor by their licensing board.
Documenting Supervised Practice

**Supervision Plan**
- Tells the Board that you have started social work practice and are receiving supervision.
- Submit within 60 days of beginning a social work position, and a new form within 60 days if there are changes to your supervision or position.

**Supervision Verification**
- Reports the supervised practice hours you have completed.
- Submit at the time of license renewal and when applying for LISW or LICSW.

Supervision forms are like bookends.
What is the continuing education requirement?

...and how do I complete it?
What is continuing education?

• Social work continuing education (CE) is education and training to **maintain**, **improve**, and **enhance** competent social work practice

• CE is an **ongoing** license requirement

• CE is completed during each license renewal term and must be **reported when you renew your license**
What activities are acceptable?

• Educational workshops or conferences
• Staff training offered by an employer
• Academic coursework completed after your license is issued
  • One semester credit = 15 CE hours
• Live, interactive webinars
• Independent study including online activities without live interaction, or research for public, presentation, or professional development
  • Up to 15 hours per two-year renewal term
How much is required?

For every two-year license renewal term, **ALL LICENSEEES** must complete:

- Licensing Supervisors: 6 hours in the practice of supervision also required
- CE hours for your first renewal are prorated: first license renewal term may be more or less than two years
  - Find the CE hour requirement your online profile at the Board’s website
- Keep records for one year after expiration date in case you are audited

40 total hours, including

2 hours ethics
What are the requirements for license renewal?

...and when do I renew my license?
License Renewal

• License renewal is required every two years to maintain an active license and continue social work practice

• You may keep an active license even if you are not practicing social work

• Your license expiration date is the last day of your birth month
  • First license renewal term is prorated from the issue date of your license to the last day of your birth month two years in the future
  • License expires automatically if not renewed
License Renewal Requirements

• Submit application and renewal fee
  • LGSW renewal fee is $195
• Attest to completing continuing education (CE) hours for previous renewal term
• Submit Supervision Verification Form(s) to document supervision received during previous renewal term
Resources

• **BOSW**—licensing and application questions:
  • Website: [mn.gov/boards/social-work](http://mn.gov/boards/social-work)
  • Social Work Students page under Applicants tab
  • Email: [social.work@state.mn.us](mailto:social.work@state.mn.us)

• **Criminal Background Check Program Office**—questions about fingerprint-based criminal background check:
  • Website: [mn.gov/boards/cbc/](http://mn.gov/boards/cbc/)
  • Email: [criminal.background.check@state.mn.us](mailto:criminal.background.check@state.mn.us)

• **ASWB**—questions about the exam and registering for the exam:
  • Website: [aswb.org](http://aswb.org)
  • Exam candidate services: 888.579.3926
Thank you for your service to the profession!