

Social Work Licensing: A Professional Responsibility

Baccalaureate
2020-2021 Academic Year



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



MN BOSW Online Resources

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Minnesota Board of Social Work. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there are several menu items: Applicants, Licensees, Public, COVID Providers, About the Board, Law & Regulations, Fees, Resources, Board Meetings, Login, and Public License Lookup. A dropdown menu is open under 'Applicants', showing options like 'Apply for a license', 'What is a license required?', 'Social Work Systems', 'Criminal Background Check', 'Professional License', and 'Fees'. The main content area features a 'BOARD MISSION' statement: "To ensure the residents of Minnesota quality social work services by establishing and enforcing professional standards." Below this, there are three circular icons representing 'Protecting the Public', 'Learning Social Workers', and 'Resolving Complaints'. A section titled 'PROTECTING THE PUBLIC WITH SHARED GOALS' contains news about 'RESCINDED: MN Telehealth Emergency Registration Effective May 27, 2021' and 'DOSH Response to COVID-19'. At the bottom, there are buttons for 'LICENSEE/APPLICANT LOG IN', 'PUBLIC LICENSE LOOKUP', and 'DOWNLOADABLE FORMS', along with a footer with 'LICENSEES', 'APPLICANTS', 'PUBLIC', and 'RESOURCES' categories.

This screenshot is similar to the one on the left, but with a dropdown menu open under the 'Resources' link in the navigation bar. The dropdown menu lists various resources: 'COVID-19 Information', 'Forms', 'Board Reports', 'Budget Reports', 'Learning Tables', 'Brochures', 'Quarterly Newsletter', 'Student & Educators', 'Exam Preparation Resources', and 'Outside Resources'. The rest of the page content, including the mission statement and the 'PROTECTING THE PUBLIC' section, is identical to the previous screenshot.

What does the Board do?

...and what is social work regulation?



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





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:**

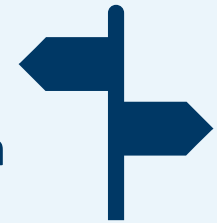


Social Work Practice Act

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?





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





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?

- Assessment
- Intervention
- Case management
- Client education
- Consultation
- Counseling
- Crisis Intervention
- Referral
- Clinical practice—diagnosis and psychotherapy
- Advocating for policies for client well-being
- Developing and administering social service programs
- Community organization
- Research
- Teaching social work students
- Supervising social workers





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

- **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





What are the Standards of Practice?

..and how do they protect the public?

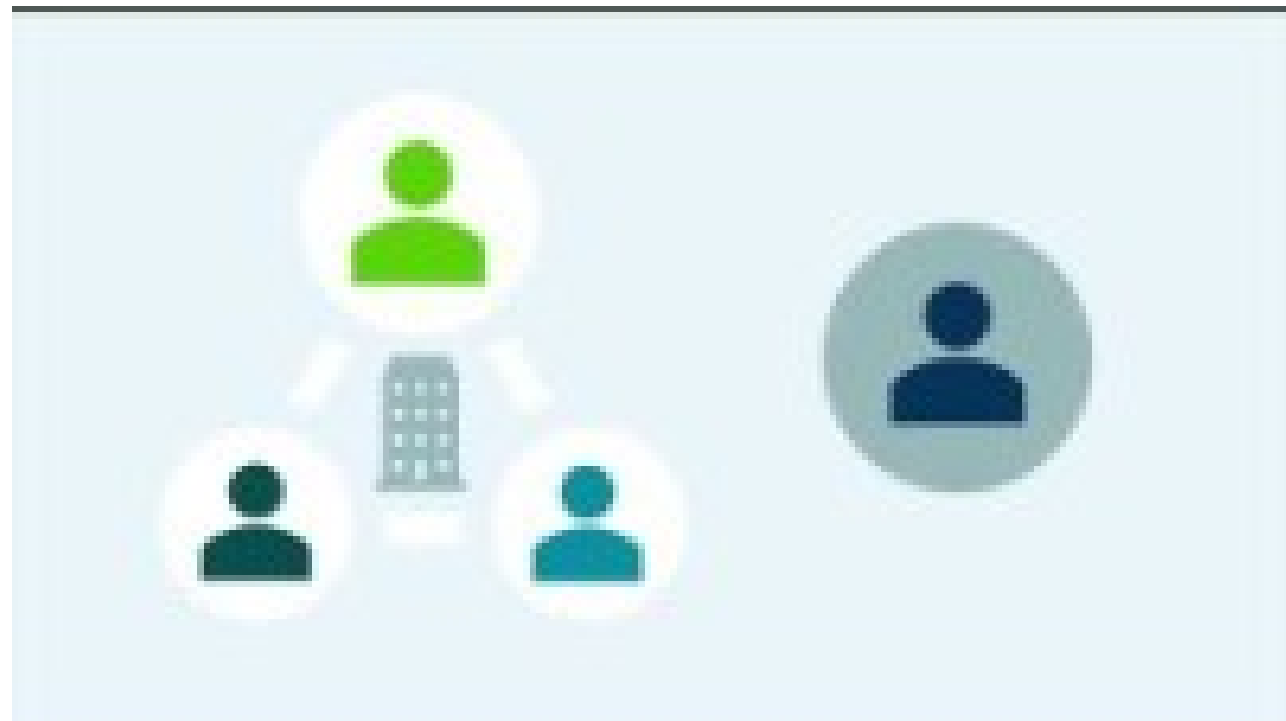
Minnesota social work licensees

What is ETHICAL

SOCIAL WORK practice?



m MINNESOTA
BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK





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
(unless currently licensed)

- Provide valid email address on your application
- Apply six months or less before graduation
 - Report anticipated graduation date on application (MM/DD/YYYY)





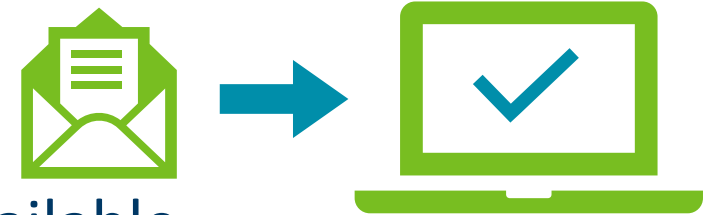
Step 2: Complete Fingerprint-based Criminal Background Check

- 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

- 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
 - ESL & ADA provisions and accommodations available
- Schedule exam date with Pearson VUE after registering with ASWB

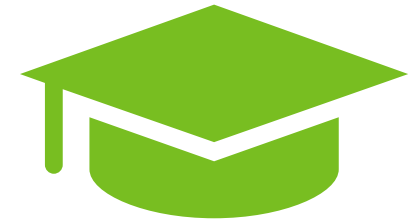


Passing the exam is not the equivalent of being licensed



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
- LSW 24-month initial license fee is \$93.50
 - 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

- To start a social work position soon after graduation, apply for a temporary license 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
 - ✓ Submitted a Temporary License Application and \$50 fee

Provisional License

- Eligibility
 - Foreign Born
 - English as a second language
 - CSWE accredited social work degree
 - Not obtained a passing score on the ASWB exam
 - Meet all other requirements for licensure
 - Contact Board directly for application process





What is the 360 Clinical Clock Hour Requirement for LICSWs?



- 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 (*max. 120 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

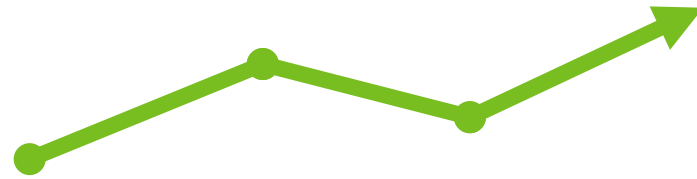


Exam Tips

- 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



2020 Exam Pass Rates



Exam Type	North America (1 st Time)	Minnesota (1 st Time)
Bachelors	68%	68%
Masters	75%	89%
Advanced Generalist	64%	80%
Clinical	75%	87%

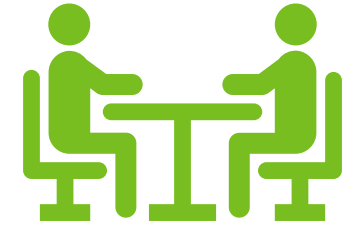


What is licensing supervision?

...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

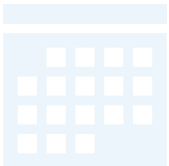


How much licensing supervision is required for nonclinical practice?



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?



100 hours required



Minimum 50 hours one-on-one supervision:

- 25 hours in-person required
- No more than 25 hours via eye-to-eye electronic media

Up to 50 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?





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





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 learning including online activities without live interaction, or research for public, presentation, or professional development
 - Up to 50% of the required CE hours per two-year renewal term



How much is required?

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

40 total hours, including
2 hours ethics

- 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



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
 - LSW renewal fee is \$110
- 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
 - Social Work Students page under Applicants tab
 - Email: social.work@state.mn.us
- **Criminal Background Check Program Office**—questions about fingerprint-based criminal background check:
 - Website: mn.gov/boards/cbc/
 - Email: criminal.background.check@state.mn.us
- **ASWB**—questions about the exam and registering for the exam:
 - Website: aswb.org
 - Exam candidate services: 888.579.3926



Thank you for your service
to the profession!

