

# Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners



## Louisiana Social Work Licensure: A Handbook for Students

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# LOUISIANA STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS

## A HANDBOOK FOR STUDENTS

This handbook provides an overview of the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act and the Rules, Standards and Procedures. This information is intended to serve as a guide, from a student’s perspective, to the application process and licensure requirements the Board is authorized to implement and enforce. Complete information, including the Rules, Standards, and Procedures, is available at the Board’s website [www.labswe.org](http://www.labswe.org).

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## ■ Section 1: Board Mission

The mission of the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners (LABSWE or Board) is to safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare of the people of the state against unauthorized, unqualified and improper practice of social work. Declared by legislature, it is necessary that a proper regulatory authority be established and adequately provided for.

The Board is an agency of the State of Louisiana. The Board is comprised of seven members who are appointed by the Governor. The members are persons licensed as social workers, at the bachelors or masters level, and represent various practice settings. The Board's purpose is to regulate social workers and social work practice. The Board has a different purpose than a professional association such as the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), which is to provide services and assistance to social workers. The Board, by contrast, ensures that social workers meet appropriate standards of professional competence. Thus, the Board exists to serve the public. As a state regulatory agency, the duty of the Board and purpose of licensure is "safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare of the people of the state against unauthorized, unqualified and improper practice of social work."

The Louisiana Social Work Practice Act (Louisiana Revised Statutes 37:2701-2724) is the law enacted by the Louisiana Legislature, which governs the practice of social work in the State of Louisiana. The Board's duties include, but are not limited to:

- establishing qualifications and procedures for licensure and continued competence, including supervised practice and continuing education requirements;
- issuing licenses to qualified individuals;
- establishing standards of practice and ethical conduct for social workers;
- conducting hearings on charges calling for disciplinary action; and
- administering funds for the training and education of social workers.

## ■ Section 2: Licensing Required

The Social Work Practice Act requires that persons with a social work degree who practice social work in the state of Louisiana, hold a current, valid license, certificate, or registration issued by the Board. Therefore, based on the statutory definition of "social work practice," a person with a bachelor's and/or master's degree in social work is engaged in the practice of social work even if the person has another job title, or even if an employer does not require social work licensure for a position.

Social work practice is defined as the professional application of social work values, theories, and interventions to one or more of the following: enhancing the development, problem-solving, and coping capacities of people; promoting the effective and humane operations of systems that provide resources and services to people; linking people with systems that provide them with resources, services, and opportunities; developing and improving social policy; and engaging in research related to the professional activities. The practice of social work includes, but is not limited to, clinical social work, planning and community organization, policy and administration, research, and social work education. Social work practice is guided by knowledge of human behavior, biopsychosocial development, social systems and resources, economic and cultural institutions, and their interactions.

As a student, you may practice social work without a license for the purpose of completing an internship experience that is required for the completion of your social work degree. However, you

may **NOT** begin social work practice in Louisiana, outside the parameters of your internship, in a setting for which licensure is required until you are licensed. **Applying for licensure and beginning the application process does NOT authorize you to begin practice.**

Practicing social work practice without a current, valid license, certificate, or registration, is a misdemeanor which may be prosecuted by the district attorney of the judicial district in which the offense was committed.

### **Consent Agreement and Order:**

Individuals that practice social work without a license will be issued a cease and desist order and offered a Consent Agreement and Order. The Consent Agreement and Order **is disciplinary action which will be reported** in the board's newsletter, in addition to reporting to ASWB's Public Protection Database (PPD), and the National Practitioner Data Bank and the Healthcare Integrity and Protection Data Bank (NPDB-HIPDB). The levels listed below include sanctions for the length of time someone practiced without a license. For the levels which require supervision, the supervisor must submit quarterly progress reports to the board.

#### **Level 1 (6 months or less)**

- ✓ Open book exam
- ✓ 3 pre-approved hours of continuing education in ethics
- ✓ Fine up to \$1000
- ✓ 3 months from date license is issued to complete sanctions

#### **Level 2 (7 – 12 months)**

- ✓ Open book exam
- ✓ 6 pre-approved hours of continuing education in ethics
- ✓ Fine up to \$1000
- ✓ 6 months from date license is issued to complete sanctions

#### **Level 3 (13 – 24 months)**

- ✓ Open book exam
- ✓ 9 pre-approved hours of continuing education in ethics
- ✓ Fine up to \$1000
- ✓ 1 hour of supervision per month for 6 months by a LCSW
- ✓ 9 months from date license is issued to complete sanctions

#### **Level 4 (more than 24 months)**

- ✓ Open book exam
- ✓ 12 pre-approved hours of continuing education in ethics
- ✓ Fine up to \$1000
- ✓ 1 hour of supervision per month for 12 months by a LCSW
- ✓ Unable to practice independently (LCSWs) for 12 months
- ✓ LCSWs can reapply for BACS after 12 months
- ✓ 12 months from date license is issued to complete sanctions

## **License Requirements:**

### **Registered Social Worker (RSW) Eligibility Requirements:**

**Academic Degree:** Applicants must have obtained either a bachelor's or master's degree in social work from academic program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). A license cannot be issued until the student has completed the degree requirements and has been issued the degree.

**Background Check:** Applicants must authorize a state and federal criminal records check through Louisiana State Police.

**Ethical Conduct:** Applicants must answer questions on the Application for Registration. Applicants answering in the affirmative are required to submit a notarized explanation.

**Supervision Requirements:** None; however, shall work as an employee in an agency and shall not engage in advanced practice or clinical social work.

**Examination Requirements:** None

### **Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW) Eligibility Requirements:**

**Academic Degree:** Applicants must have obtained a master's degree in social work from academic program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE). A license cannot be issued until the student has completed the degree requirements and has been issued the degree.

**Background Check:** Applicants must authorize a state and federal criminal records check through Louisiana State Police.

**Ethical Conduct:** Applicants must answer questions on the Application for Licensure. Applicants answering in the affirmative are required to submit a notarized explanation.

**Supervision Requirements:** Supervision by a LCSW is required if providing clinical services.

**Examination Requirements:** Passing score on the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Masters examination.

### **Certified Social Worker (CSW) Eligibility Requirements:**

The CSW is a temporary credential issued after the Board approves an application for LMSW. The applicant for LMSW is required to take the Masters examination within 6 months from the date the CSW is issued. If a passing score is not achieved, the CSW is required to retake the Masters examination within one year from the date the CSW failed the exam. The CSW must be renewed annually. It can be held for a maximum of 3 years from the original date of issue.

### **Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) Eligibility Requirements:**

**Academic Degree:** Applicants must have obtained a master's degree in social work from academic program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE).

**Background Check:** Applicants must authorize a state and federal criminal records check through Louisiana State Police.

**Ethical Conduct:** Applicants must answer questions on the Application for Licensure. Applicants answering in the affirmative are required to submit a notarized explanation.

**Supervision Requirements:** Applicants must have completed 5,760 professional experience hours, 3,840 of those hours must have been supervised by a LCSW-BACS.

**Examination Requirements:** passing score on ASWB Clinical examination

The following table outlines the specific requirements for each of the four licenses.

<b>LICENSE REQUIREMENTS</b>			
<b>License</b>	<b>Degree (BSW &amp; MSW)</b>	<b>ASWB Exam</b>	<b>Supervised Practice</b>
Registered Social Worker <b>(RSW)</b>	BSW Or MSW	Not required	Not required for initial licensure*
Certified Social Worker <b>(CSW)</b>	MSW	Not required	Not required for initial licensure*
Licensed Master Social Worker <b>(LMSW)</b>	MSW	Masters	Not required for initial licensure*
Licensed Clinical Social Worker <b>(LCSW)</b>	MSW	Clinical	Required for eligibility 3,840 BACS Supervised Hrs 5,760 Total Professional Experience Hrs

\*Does not require documentation of supervised practice for license eligibility. Supervised practice may be required once a license is issued and practice begins.

**Authorized Scope of Practice:**

The following table outlines the authorized scope of practice for each of the four licenses.

<b>SCOPE OF PRACTICE</b>	
<b>License</b>	<b>Authorized Scope of Practice</b>
Registered Social Worker <b>(RSW)</b>	May engage in generalist social work practice based on the application of social work theory, knowledge, ethics, and utilizing problem-solving methods to restore or enhance social functioning of individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities through assessment, prevention, and intervention and evaluation, case management, information and referral, supportive counseling, advocacy, research, supervision, community organization, and the implementation and administration of policies, programs, and activities.
Certified Social Worker <b>(CSW)</b>	May engage in advanced social work practice based on the application of social work theory, knowledge, ethics, and methods to restore or enhance social, psychosocial, or biopsychosocial functioning of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The practice requires the application of specialized knowledge and advanced practice skills which include prevention or intervention, or both, service or treatment planning and evaluation, case management, information and referral, counseling, employee assistance services, addiction services,

	<p>advocacy, teaching, research, supervision, consultation, community organization, and the development, implementation, and administration of policies, programs, and activities. A social worker at this level may practice clinical social work and psychotherapy within an agency under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker.</p>
<p>Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW)</p>	<p>May engage in advanced social work practice based on the application of social work theory, knowledge, ethics, and methods to restore or enhance social, psychosocial, or biopsychosocial functioning of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The practice requires the application of specialized knowledge and advanced practice skills which include prevention or intervention, or both, service or treatment planning and evaluation, case management, information and referral, counseling, employee assistance services, addiction services, advocacy, teaching, research, supervision, consultation, community organization, and the development, implementation, and administration of policies, programs, and activities. A social worker at this level may practice clinical social work and psychotherapy within an agency under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker.</p>
<p>Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)</p>	<p>May independently engage in advanced social work practice based on the application of social work theory, knowledge, ethics, and methods to restore or enhance social, psychosocial, or biopsychosocial functioning of individuals, couples, families, groups, organizations, and communities. The practice of clinical social work requires the application of specialized clinical knowledge and advanced clinical skills in the areas of prevention, assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, emotional, and behavioral and addiction disorders. Treatment methods include the provision of individual, marital, couple, family, and group psychotherapy. The practice of clinical social work may include private practice, employee assistance and addiction services, and the provision of clinical supervision. A licensed clinical social worker may work as an employee in a practice setting or independently in private practice.</p>

### ■ Section 3: Application Process

Applications must be submitted online through the Board's website at [www.labswe.org](http://www.labswe.org). A log in account will need to be created if the applicant has never applied with the Board.

A new online application must be submitted for any change in social work credentials.

Applications for license, certification or registration are reviewed and approved by the board at regularly scheduled board meetings.

Applications and supporting documents must be received in the board office at least 7 days prior to the Board's meeting to be eligible for consideration at that meeting.

The board shall refuse to consider any application not complete in every detail, including submission of every document required by the application form. At the board's discretion a more detailed or complete response to any request for information set forth on the application form may be required.

As one element of good moral character, the board shall require each applicant to submit a full set of fingerprints for the purpose of obtaining State and Federal criminal records check, pursuant to authorizing state statute and applicable federal law. The state agency responsible for managing fingerprint data may submit fingerprints to and exchange data with the FBI. All good moral character information, including the information obtained through criminal records checks, shall be considered in licensure decisions to the extent permissible by all applicable laws.

The application for licensure, certification, and registration shall include the applicant's Social Security number in accordance with R.S. 37:23. Submission is not optional.

An applicant shall be deemed to have abandoned the application if the requirements for the credential are not completed within one year of the date on which the application was received. An application submitted subsequent to the abandoned application shall be treated as a new application.

#### **Procedure for Applicants with Felony Convictions:**

The burden of proof for submitting the requested documentation is the responsibility of the applicant in order to convince the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners that he/she has good moral character and fitness to practice social work.

The applicant should collect and deliver the following documents to the board office promptly:

- a. copies of all court records containing information of the conviction and the imposition of sentence;
- b. the current name, address, and telephone number of the judge who imposed sentence and who presided at the trial and/or accepted any plea upon which the felony conviction was based;
- c. any documentation or records which reflect the term of any probationary period, the conditions of probation and the fulfillment and completion of all terms and conditions of probation;
- d. the current name(s), addresses and telephone numbers of any probation officers or persons of similar title or job function to whom the applicant has reported or who has any information concerning the applicant's conduct during any probationary period;
- e. if any form of restitution to a victim or victims was part of a sentence imposed or a condition of probation the applicant must provide the names, current addresses and telephone numbers of any such victim or victims and an affidavit of the applicant that affirms that all required restitution has been completed;



- f. if the sentence included any form of imprisonment, residence at a half-way house, other forms of correctional and/or treatment facilities, the applicant must provide the complete address, names and current addresses of any persons having information relating to the satisfactory completion of any such prison term, residence or treatment, and any related documents. In the event that medical, psychiatric, psychological, substance or alcohol abuse evaluation, treatment and rehabilitation was in any way part of the sentence or a term or condition of probation, the applicant will execute any releases which may be required for the board to obtain information. Such information obtained will be maintained by the board on a confidential basis;
- g. all records or documents relating to any arrest or conviction of any felony or misdemeanor which has occurred at any time since the applicant's original felony conviction or which occurs at any time during which the application is pending or being investigated (this requirement is an ongoing responsibility of the applicant);
- h. any documents, records, or information which the applicant wishes to present in support of his or her application which shows or evidences rehabilitation, positive social contributions, awards, commendations, social or lifestyle adjustments, positive treatment outcomes, employment or academic evaluations, volunteer work or any other area in which the applicant participated which would reflect on the applicant's good moral character and fitness to practice social work. (The applicant should provide the names, current addresses and telephone numbers of any references or persons having information in support of the application. While information in support of an application which occurred prior to the conviction may be submitted, the board will place greater emphasis on supporting documentation and information concerning events which have occurred since the felony conviction.);
- i. true copies of any licenses, certificates to practice or similar documents issued by any board or licensing authority of any other state or the state of Louisiana obtained by the applicant since the date of the felony conviction. The applicant should provide a complete listing of any college, graduate school, trade or business school and employers to whom he or she has made application since the date of the felony conviction. This request includes any applications which were denied for any reason, including the felony conviction.

Applicants should be aware of the following:

- a. any delay in providing the requested information will delay the board's action on the application;
- b. providing any false or misleading information, being evasive, concealing or making material omissions, or failing to cooperate shall form a basis for the denial of the application;
- c. in the event that the application is denied by the board, the applicant may request a compliance hearing provided the application for such a hearing is made in writing within 30 days after the applicant receives the notice of the denial of the application. The request shall contain the applicant's receipt of the notice of the denial of the application, and the applicant's grounds for opposition to the denial of the application. The applicant is further aware that at such a hearing the applicant may be represented by legal counsel and the applicant bears the burden to establish that he or she meets the criteria for licensure;
- d. the intent of the above enumerated items is to obtain the information upon which the board will evaluate the application.

### **Additional Requirements for International Applicants/Speakers of English as a Second Language:**

Any document required to be submitted to the board with an application for license, certification or registration shall be in the English language, or accompanied by a certified translation thereof into the English language.

As a condition of the board's consideration of the application of a graduate of a foreign college or university, the applicant shall provide the board with a statement from the Council on Social Work Education that the applicant's degree is equivalent to an accredited social work degree in the United States.

### **Submit an Application:**

It is acceptable and encouraged to begin the application process prior to graduation. Within 10-15 business days from the date the online application is received, the applicant's Dashboard will be updated to reflect documents received by the Board's office and milestones met. Applicants must meet the requirements and achieve all the milestones for application in order for the Board to review the application. Please allow 2-3 weeks for milestones to be updated and 6-8 weeks for application approval. **\*Board approval of an application pending transcript can be issued if the new graduate/ applicant submits all other documentation by the Board meeting deadline date. Once the official transcript is received, the credential can then be issued.**

A student must submit the following documentation when applying for licensure:

#### **Registered Social Worker:**

- A completed, online Application for Registration.
- Current passport/professional photo uploaded on the online application.
- A completed Criminal Record Check by the Louisiana State Police (LSP).
- Official transcript verifying receipt of Bachelor's degree in Social Work mailed directly from the university or submitted by the applicant in a sealed university envelope.
- The required, non-refundable online application fee of \$53.

#### **Licensed Master Social Worker:**

- A completed, online Application for License.
- Current passport/professional photo uploaded on the online application.
- A completed Criminal Record Check by the Louisiana State Police (LSP).
- Official transcript verifying receipt of Master's degree in Social Work mailed directly from the university or submitted by the applicant in a sealed university envelope.
- The required, non-refundable online application fee of \$78.

#### **Licensed Clinical Social Worker:**

- A completed, online Application for License.
- Current passport/professional photo uploaded on the online application.
- A completed Criminal Record Check by the Louisiana State Police (LSP).
- Official transcript verifying receipt of Master's degree in Social Work mailed directly from the university or submitted by the applicant in a sealed university envelope (unless already on file with LABSWE).
- Verification of 5,760 hours of professional social work experience (Professional Experience Verification form) of which 3,840 hours must be under the supervision of a LCSW-BACS (Record of Supervision form).
- Supervision forms.
- The required, non-refundable online application fee of \$103.

### **Submit Official Transcript:**

Request the transcript from the Registrar's Office after your degree is awarded and has been posted to your transcript. The Board accepts transcripts mailed directly from the university to the board office or those provided by the applicant in an university sealed envelope. Electronic transcripts can be sent to the Board office as long as the university sends it directly.

### **How to obtain the Criminal Record Check:**

There are two ways to obtain the Criminal Record Check. You can either submit all the requirements to our office and we will forward to the LSP or you can bring the required forms and money orders to the LSP and get your fingerprints done electronically. All required forms can be found on the Board's website at [www.labswe.org](http://www.labswe.org) under "Licensee Info/Application Information".

### **Submit to LABSWE:**

#### **If you submit the CRC to our office, you must include:**

- Authorization form
- Rap Disclosure form
- 2 completed fingerprint cards
- Money order in the amount of \$38.00 made payable to the La. Dept of Public Safety.

NOTE: This process can take up to 8 weeks for us to receive the CRC back from the LSP.

### **Submit to LSP:**

#### **If you are hand delivering the CRC to the LSP, you must bring:**

- Authorization form
- Rap Disclosure form
- Automatic Processing form (they will stamp this form and give back to you. You must then send it to our office)
- Money order in the amount of \$38.00 made payable to the La. Dept of Public Safety.
- Money order in the amount of \$10.00 made payable to the La. Dept of Public Safety. (this fee is for electronic fingerprinting)

NOTE: This process can take 2-3 weeks for us to receive the CRC back from the LSP.

\*The results of the CRC are required before an application can be reviewed by the Board.

### **Board Review of Application Materials:**

Applications and supporting documents are reviewed by the Board at a scheduled board meeting. Board meetings are held every five to six weeks. Applications and all supporting documents are to be received in the board office at least seven days prior to the meeting to be included on the meeting agenda. This includes the CRC response from the LSP. The Board cannot review your application until all requirements are complete and documentation is received.

Applicants must complete all requirements specified within one year of the time the Board receives your application. Applications not completed within one year shall be considered abandoned and a new application, along with all requirements will have to be resubmitted.

### **Approval Notice for License:**

Within 10 days following the meeting, the results of the Board's review will be mailed. For LMSW applicants, your notification will inform you that you have been approved to take the examination and will explain how to proceed with registering for the examination. Individuals approved for LMSW will automatically be issued certification as a CSW. The CSW will allow you to begin practicing social work, conditional that you take the ASWB Masters exam within 6 months from the date of issuance.

### **Denial Notice for License:**

Applicants whose applications are denied will receive notice through certified mail. The notice will include the reason(s) for denial and will advise of the right to a Compliance Hearing<sup>1</sup> to appeal the Board's decision. Examples of reasons the Board may deny an application include, but are not limited to, recent arrests, recent substance abuse treatment, and information from the CRC which conflicts with the information provide on the application.

### **Process for Taking the Master's Examination:**

#### **Step 1: Contact the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB):**

Once you receive the examination approval notice from the Board, contact the ASWB Candidate Registration Center directly to register and pay for the examination. Registration can be completed online at [www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org) or by calling the Candidate Registration Center at 1-888-579-3926. The examination fee, which is paid to ASWB when you register for the examination, is \$230.00 and can be paid via credit card, certified check or money order. Once the registration is processed, ASWB will send the "Authorization Letter" either by mail or email.

#### **Step 2: Take the Examination:**

The examination is a national, multiple-choice examination developed and maintained by ASWB. The examination content covers areas such as human development and behavior; issues of diversity; assessment in practice; service delivery; direct and indirect practice; communication; professional relationships; professional values and ethics; practice evaluation and the utilization of research; supervision; and administration.

The examination is administered by PearsonVUE, Inc. and is offered Monday through Saturday at various sites in Louisiana and other states. A current listing of test sites is available via the ASWB website. The examination is administered via computer. There is a tutorial before the examination begins. The maximum time allowed to complete the examination is 4 hours.

#### **Step 3: Exam Results and Notification from the Board:**

You will receive your test results before leaving the testing site. Your official score report is sent to the Board office approximately 2 weeks after you have taken the examination. The Board is unable to accept unofficial score reports as verification of a test score.

If you fail the examination, ASWB policy requires that you wait 90 days before retaking the exam. It is necessary to submit a retake application and \$53.00 retake fee to receive approval to retake the examination. The retake application is available on the licensee Dashboard under the Forms tab.

CSWs are required to retake the exam within a year from the first testing date, and once a year thereafter if failing to achieve a passing score. The CSW becomes "invalid" if testing requirements are not met. The CSW is not authorized to practice social work with an invalid credential. A CSW can be held for a maximum of 3 years from the initial issue date. If you have not passed the examination within 3 years the CSW will lapse. At that time, you may wish to apply for the Registered Social Work credential to practice social work under the scope of practice of a RSW. While there is a limit to how long one can hold a CSW, there is no limit on the number of times one can take the Master's exam.

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<sup>1</sup> §943 of the Rules, Standards and Procedures requires the Board to grant a Compliance Hearing to rejected applicants who request such hearing.

## ■ Section 4: Fees

The fees listed are effective January 1, 2011.

License Type	Application Fee (non-refundable fee)	LA CRC Background Fee (assessed by LA Dept of Public Safety if submitted with your application)	License Renewal Fee (yearly fee)
RSW	\$53.00	\$38.00	\$28.00
CSW/LMSW	\$78.00	\$38.00	\$53.00
LCSW	\$103.00	\$38.00	\$78.00

## ■ Section 5: License Renewal

Initial social work credentials issued during the last quarter of the fiscal year, (i.e., April, May or June) will not be required to renew for the next fiscal year.

Social workers are required to renew annually by August 31. Social workers whose licenses are not renewed by August 31 are not authorized to practice social work on September 1 and until such time as the renewal application is processed.

All social workers, with the exception of CSWs, are eligible to renew online via the Board's website. Those that cannot renew online or choose to not renew online should download the renewal application from the Board's website. Renewal fees may be paid through certified check, credit card or by money order. Personal checks and cash are not accepted.

An updated licensure card will be available on the applicants Dashboard once a renewal application is processed. Processing time for renewals submitted by mail is approximately 4-6 weeks.

## ■ Section 6: Continuing Education (CE) Requirement

20 hours of continuing education is required annually. However, depending on what month you first receive your license, the number of CE hours for your first year may be pro-rated. Your approval letter will indicate the number of CE hours required at your first renewal. CE hours reported at license renewal must be obtained within the current collection period. The collection period for CE hours is July 1<sup>st</sup> - June 30<sup>th</sup> of each year.

Month Received	Hours Required
April, May, June	20
July, August, September	20
October, November, December	15
January, February, March	10

Continuing education hours collected in the month of June may be used for the current collection period or may be carried over to the next collection period.

**Continuing Education Requirements for the Registered Social Worker, Certified Social Worker and Licensed Master Social Worker:**

20 clock hours of continuing education in programs approved by the board shall be obtained prior to each renewal date including 3 clock hours in social work ethics once every 2 years.

**Continuing Education Requirements for Licensed Clinical Social Worker:**

20 clock hours of continuing education in programs approved by the board shall be obtained prior to each renewal date to include:

- a. 3 clock hours in social work ethics once every 2 years;
- b. 10 clock hours each year shall be clinical content, including diagnosis and treatment;
- c. to maintain the board approved clinical supervisor status, obtain 3 clock hours of continuing education in clinical supervision every 2 years, beginning July 1, 2008. These hours must be pre-approved by a LABSWE-designated pre-approval organization.

**Approved Learning Forums for CE:**

1. Educational offerings sponsored by or approved by social work licensing bodies, state and national professional social work organizations, and schools accredited by the Council on Social Work Education;
2. Educational offerings sponsored by or offered by entities approved by the Association of Social Work Boards;
3. Should the individual social worker make the determination that an education offering which is not pre-approved by one of the approval organizations has content applicable to social work practice, the *Guide for Assessment of Continuing Education* must be used. This document, as well as all the relevant course materials, and the certificate of completion should be maintained in the event you are audited;
4. Distance learning (teleconferences, telecourses, home-study courses and internet courses) sponsored by entities listed in item 1, or pre-approved by a LABSWE-authorized pre-approval organization cannot exceed a total of 10 clock hours of the required 20 clock hours of continuing education required annually for renewal of social work credentials;
5. Continuing education activities or academic courses provided by accredited schools of social work. Academic course work counts per actual class hour;
6. Presentations of content applicable to social work practice at professional conferences, staff development meetings, and other appropriate forums in which you are the primary presenter. These presentations count 1.5 times the actual time of the presentation, in order to give credit for preparation time. (Example: You prepare a presentation on Holiday Stress that lasts one hour. You will receive 1.5 hours continuing education credit for this presentation.) Presentation and preparation time may only be counted once for each topic. Academic preparation and teaching of social work content (undergraduate or graduate) may be counted once in the same manner, unless the course has been revised to include substantially new content and text books. Please be prepared to provide the exact nature of the content and presentation;
7. Attendance at staff development presentations with content applicable to social work practice (such as staff meeting with a formal and in-depth presentation on working with clients who present borderline symptoms, etc.). Please be prepared to provide the presenter's name, credentials, date of presentation and

nature of the content covered. Case based staffing meetings are not included as appropriate continuing education experiences;

8. Attendance at professional social work meetings, Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) item writing workshops, symposiums, panel discussions, or conferences sponsored by the professional associations suggested in item 1.

9. Formal study groups of three or more participants. Must submit name, address, telephone number and credentials of group members to the board office. Study groups should maintain records of topics, attendance, meeting times, and presenters for audit purposes;

10. Contracted professional consultation which the credentialed social worker receives. Must provide the paid consultant's name, address, telephone number, credentials, and the dates and focus of the consultation;

11. Preparation of substantial written material with content applicable to social work practice which requires literature search, research, and explication of social work content (such as writing a social work article or book for publication, or a major grant application). Please provide specific information about the nature of the written work, the effort required, and the publisher or funding agency. These activities may be counted for no more than 5 hours continuing education;

### **Guide for Assessment of Continuing Education:**

The Guide for Assessment of CE is available on the Board's website.

An event must receive a total score (combination of all three sections) of 10 to be "clearly acceptable" for continuing education to renew a social work credential. If a category (Program Content, Program Presenter or Program Audience) rates a zero, the education offering is not acceptable for social work continuing education.

## **■ Section 7: Standards of Practice**

The standards of practice apply to all applicants, and those who are registered, certified or licensed. Another reference for the standards of practice is the Code of Conduct. The Standards of Practice/Code of Conduct provide a basis upon which to assess and measure the professional conduct of an applicant and those who are registered, certified or licensed. A violation of the Standards of Practice/Code of Conduct constitutes unprofessional or unethical conduct which is grounds for denying an application or for disciplinary action. Chapter 1 of the Rules, Standards and Procedures is the Standards of Practice. It covers general practice parameters, competence, practice requirements, social work relationships, client confidentiality, conduct, representation to the public, fees and billing practices, and evaluation and research.

## **■ Section 8: LMSW Supervised Practice Requirements**

Licensure supervision is a professional relationship in which the supervisor provides evaluation and direction over the supervisee's practice to promote competent and ethical services to clients and for the purpose of continued professional development. The supervisee must, to the satisfaction of the supervisor, practice competently and ethically in accordance with professional social work knowledge, skills, and values.

### **LMSW Supervised Practice Requirements:**

There are two types of supervision for LMSWs:

- Supervision within the agency

- Supervision towards LCSW licensure

### **Supervision within the Agency**

A CSW or LMSW practicing social work that includes psychotherapy in an agency setting must be supervised by a LCSW for at least 2 hours per month. See Rule No. 505 of Rules, Standards and Procedures. It is the social worker's responsibility to secure a supervisor. A Record of Supervision must be kept.

### **Supervision towards LCSW licensure**

LMSWs pursuing licensure for the LCSW, must first register for supervision with the Board office by filling out a Registration of Supervision form. This form is located on the Board's website. The Supervision Agreement/Plan of Supervision must be completed and mailed to the Board's office within 60 days of the first supervisory session. Credit is not given for supervision occurring prior to 60 days before the form is received.

5,760 accumulated hours of full-time postgraduate social work practice is required for the LCSW license. Of those hours, 3,840 accumulated hours must be supervised by a LCSW-BACS. Postgraduate social work practice which exceeds 80 consecutive hours of practice without at least 2 hours of supervision will not be credited to the 3,840 hours of supervised practice.

### **Types of Supervision:**

- In Person One-on-One Supervision
  - minimum of 2 hours per 80 hour of social work practice are required
  - Total face-to-face supervision must total 96 hours.
- In Person Group Supervision
  - One half (48 hours) of the supervision requirement may be met through group supervision, occurring in increments of no more than 2 hours per group
  - No more than 5 supervisees may be involved in a supervision group.

### **Documentation of Supervised Practice:**

The Board requires documentation of supervised practice on the forms noted below, which are provided by the Board when you register for supervision. Additional copies of these forms can be found on the Board's website under Licensee Info/Supervision.

### **Supervision Agreement/ Plan of Supervision:**

The agreement is a contract between the licensee and supervisor. This form includes information about your supervisor and the structure of the supervision you will receive. The plan of supervision addresses 6 components: Ethics, Professional Growth, Relationships, Intervention Process, Evaluation and Communication. This form is to be submitted within 60 days of the first supervision session. The original shall be mailed to the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners and a copy shall be maintained in the supervisee's personal supervision file. This form is to be submitted along with a completed "Employment Verification." A minimum of 1 session per month is required. Supervision segments of no fewer than 30 minutes and no longer than 2 hours per session will be counted toward meeting the supervision requirements. School social worker shall count hours of postgraduate social work practice and supervision that occurs when they are employed in a social work position. Changes in the supervision arrangements such as employment change of the supervisee, change in LCSW-BACS supervisor or substantial change in job description require a new Supervision Agreement and updated Plan of Supervision. This documentation is required within 60 days of the change.



**Employment Verification:**

This form indicates your employment information: agency's name, effective work date, ending date (if applicable), hours worked per week and agency's representative's signature. You must submit a new Employment Verification for each job you hold after receiving the LMSW. You must submit this form with your initial plan/agreement.

**Record of Supervision:**

The Record of Supervision is **required** for maintaining a written account of dates of supervision and time spent in each session. Identifying client information should not be included when summarizing the major activities and themes covered in supervision. Copies can be made as needed; however, the **ORIGINAL** Record of Supervision is to be submitted to the board.

**Evaluation of Supervision:**

This form must be completed by the supervisor when supervision is completed. It rates the supervisee on the six components that were outlined in the Plan of Supervision. Once this form is completed by the supervisor, it terminates supervision between the supervisor and the supervisee. The original form must be mailed to the Board's office upon completion.

**Professional Experience Verification:**

This form is used to verify the number of postgraduate hours a LMSW practices social work. It is to be completed when a LMSW terminates employment or at the time the LMSW completes 5,760 hours of postgraduate social work practice (whichever comes first). This is a two-sided form that can be duplicated if necessary. A separate record shall be submitted by each place of employment. The original form shall be mailed to the board office.

**Completion of Supervised Practice and Professional Experience:**

After completing all requirements, the LMSW is eligible to apply for the LCSW by submitting an application. Board staff will review a file, including supervision forms, upon receipt of an application. After it is determined that all documents are in order, the file is forwarded to the Board at the next scheduled meeting for review. After the Board approves the application, the applicant will be given permission to take the Clinical examination. The notification of approval is sent by mail. Once the LMSW passes the Clinical examination, the LCSW license will be issued.

**■ Section 9: Frequently Asked Questions****❖ General Information:****Why is licensure required?**

Social workers are the largest professional group providing mental and social health services to the public. Their actions and decisions frequently have permanent, life-changing effects on individuals, families and groups. Because of this, the Louisiana Legislature determined that the public should be protected from incompetent and unethical social work practices.

**What is a social work credential?**

It is the registration, certification or license issued by the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners.

**Who must be licensed to practice Social Work in Louisiana?**

Anyone who possesses an undergraduate or graduate degree in social work.

**What are my responsibilities as a licensee?**

To provide services in accordance with the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act and the Rules, Standards and Procedures.

**When may I start using the titles and initials that indicate my license?**

Once you receive written notice that a credential has been issued.

**Where should my certificate be displayed?**

Your certificate should be displayed at your place of employment at all times. If you need additional copies of your certificate, you can request them on the Board's website under Online Store.

**May I maintain my license if I am not working as a social worker or living in Louisiana?**

Yes. You will need to renew your license yearly and complete the CE requirements for your license to stay active. There is no "inactive" or "retired" status for licenses.

**What if my ID card or certificate is lost or damaged?**

You can request a new ID card and certificate from the Board's website under Online Store. Once the Board receives your request, a new ID card or certificate will be mailed to you.

**What is the best way to contact LABSWE?**

You can contact the Board by phone at (225) 756-3470 or (800) 521-1941, by fax at (225) 756-3472, or by email at [socialwork@labswe.org](mailto:socialwork@labswe.org). Also, the Board's address is 18550 Highland Road, Suite B, Baton Rouge, LA 70809

**How do I update my new address with the Board?**

The Board requires written notification of an address change which can be sent by mail, fax or email. You can also update your address through your licensee Dashboard.

**How do I change my name with the Board?**

The Board requires written notification of a name change. You will need to attach a copy of your driver's license, marriage certificate or divorce decree along with this written request. You can send it by mail, fax or email.

**❖ Eligibility Requirements for Licensure:****Can I obtain a social work license if I have a degree in a field other than social work?**

No. You must obtain a degree specifically in social work to hold a social work credential.

**Can I submit the application online?**

Applications can only be submitted online through the Board's website, however supporting documentation (if applicable) must be submitted by mail.

**Are there exceptions to having to take the licensing exam?**

If you have a license in another state in which you obtained by meeting or exceeding our licensing requirements, you may not be required to test. There are no other exceptions.

## ❖ **Student and Recent Graduate Questions:**

### **Can my MSW internship hours be counted towards my LCSW?**

No. You cannot start counting the required 5,760 hours of professional experience hours until you have earned your Master's degree in Social Work.

### **I just graduated with my MSW and have been offered a job at my internship. Can I work as a social worker if I intend to get my LMSW?**

No, not until you receive a social work credential from the Board.

### **What can I do with my MSW degree if I don't have a credential issued by the Board?**

You are unable to practice social work, as defined by law, in any arena without a credential.

### **When should I submit my application for licensure?**

You can submit your application to the Board prior to graduation; however, one of the requirements for licensure is an official transcript from the university where you received your degree. The transcript must contain the degree awarded and date of graduation.

### **How long will it take for me to receive my license once I apply?**

The process can take up to 8 weeks depending on when the Board receives all the required documents.

### **When is the applicant notified if approval has been granted for licensure and for the exam?**

You will receive written notification 7-10 business days after the Board meets.

## ❖ **Social Workers from Other States:**

### **Does Louisiana accept out of state licenses?**

There is no reciprocity agreement between Louisiana and other jurisdictions. The Board considers the requirements you met to obtain your license and determines if those requirements meet or exceed those of Louisiana. That is the common standard used by other jurisdictions considering applicants for licensure who hold a license in Louisiana. An applicant with a license in another state should apply for a Louisiana license via "Endorsement".

## ❖ **Licensing Examinations:**

### **Who do I contact to register for the exam?**

Once you receive notice that LABSWE has issued approval to sit for the exam, contact the ASWB Candidate Registration Center at 1-888-579-3926, or register online at [www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org).

### **When are the licensing exams given?**

Exams are administered at sites established by the testing vendor, PearsonVUE, Inc. You can link to the PearsonVUE website via the ASWB's website [www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org) for a complete list of testing locations.

### **Can I take the exam before I receive my MSW?**

No. The Board must issue you authorization to sit for the exam. This cannot be done without the Board's approval of the application.

**When must I take the licensing exam?**

If you applied for the LMSW and were granted the CSW, you must take the master's exam within 6 months of your effective date. For example, if you were issued your credential on January 14, 2018, you must take the exam by July 14, 2018.

**What levels of the exam does Louisiana accept?**

Louisiana accepts the ASWB Clinical exam for Licensed Clinical Social Work and the ASWB Masters exam for Licensed Master Social Work.

**How do I prepare for the examinations?**

The Board does not endorse any test preparation venues. ASWB has study guides and online practice tests that can be purchased. Additionally, the NASW-LA Chapter offers exam preparation courses for both the masters and clinical exams.

**Is there a limit to the number of times I can take the exam?**

There is no limit on the number of times a person can take an exam. However, there is a required 90-day wait before retesting can occur. Day 1 of the 90 days begins the day after your test date, and is a straight counting of dates (in other words, not 90 business days, weekdays only, etc.).

**How long do I have to take the exam?**

You have four hours to complete the exam, which is administered electronically.

**How soon after I pass the exam will my new license be issued?**

The Board cannot issue your new license without the official score sheet from ASWB. It can take up to two weeks from the day you pass the exam for the Board to receive the results. Once the Board receives the score, the license will be issued and mailed within 5 – 10 business days.

**How soon after I take the Masters level exam (LMSW) can I take the Clinical level exam (LCSW)?**

Once you pass the masters exam, you will need to complete all the supervision requirements for the LCSW license. Once all those requirements are met, you will then need to apply for the LCSW. Once the Board approves your LCSW application, you will be given permission to take the clinical exam.

**❖ Certified Social Worker (CSW):****Why am I receiving certification as a CSW when I applied for the LMSW?**

If you applied for the LMSW credential, but have not passed the ASWB masters exam, the Board will automatically issue you the CSW. The CSW allows you to practice social work prior to sitting for the Masters exam.

**Once I receive the CSW, how long do I have to take the master's examination?**

You will have 6 months from the date of issuance to take the master's examination for the first time. If you pass, you will receive the LMSW credential. If you are unsuccessful, you will have a year from the date you failed the exam to retest. You must test at least once a year. To receive another approval, you must submit a retake application through your licensee Dashboard.

**Why is my expiration on my ID card for only 6 months?**

You must take the Masters exam within the first 6 months of receiving the CSW credential. Therefore, the expiration on your ID card will be 6 months from the issue date of the CSW. Once you take the exam (pass or fail) you will be issued a new ID card with a new expiration date. If you pass the exam, you will be issued the LMSW with an expiration of 8/31. If you fail the exam, you will be issued a new card with an expiration of 8/31 or 1 year from the last date you tested (whichever comes first).

**Since I can only hold the CSW for 3 years, what will happen if I don't pass the Masters exam in 3 years?**

If you do not pass the masters exam and you have held the CSW for 3 years, your license will lapse effective 3 years from the original date of issuance. You may apply for the RSW credential so that you can practice social work. You can also continue to take the masters exam once you received the RSW credential. However, you must work under the scope of practice for the RSW.

**My CSW license lapsed because I did not pass the master's exam in 3 years and I have recently received the RSW, what do I need to do to retake the master's exam?**

You will just need to submit a Retake Application through your Dashboard for another test approval.

**❖ Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW):**

**How soon after I receive the LMSW can I apply for supervision?**

As soon as the Board issues your LMSW license to you, you can send in the Registration of Supervision form. Supervision forms can be downloaded from the Board's website.

**How can I find a LCSW-BACS to supervise me?**

If you go to the Board's website, there is a searchable database. You can select the city in which you live in and select LCSW-BACS and it will pull a list of all the LCSW-BACS that are in your area.

**Can I practice clinical social work as a LMSW?**

Yes, but only under the supervision of a LCSW. You must be supervised for at least 2 hours per month.

**Do I need to get my LMSW before I can apply for the LCSW?**

Yes. You need to pass the masters exam and hold the LMSW to be eligible to apply for the LCSW UNLESS you can document that you have equivalent credentials from another jurisdiction.

**❖ Supervision:**

**How do I register for supervision?**

You can register for supervision by filling out a registration form. This form can be found on the Board's website under Licensee Info/ Supervision. You can mail or fax the registration to the Board.

**Where can I find additional supervision forms?**

The supervision forms are found on the Board's website under Licensee Info/Supervision.

**Who can supervise me?**

Supervision towards LCSW may only be provided by a LCSW-BACS.

**How often do I have to meet with my supervisor?**

You must meet face-to-face with your supervisor at least 2 hours for every 80 hours worked.

**How many hours of supervision and professional experience are required to qualify for LCSW?**

5,760 hours of professional social work experience, of which 3,840 must be under the supervision of a LCSW-BACS. The face-to-face supervision must total at least 96 hours.

**Help, I work at an agency where there is no one who meets the requirements to provide supervision.**

**I have my LMSW and I want to work towards my LCSW. Can I pay for outside supervision?**

Yes. If there isn't a LCSW-BACS at your agency, you will need to locate a LCSW-BACS to complete your supervision requirements.

**❖ Continuing Education Requirements:**

**How many continuing education (CE) hours am I required to complete?**

20 hours per year. All licensees are required to obtain 3 hours in the area of social work ethics every other year (even years). LCSWs are required to have 10 of the 20 hours in the area of clinical social work. LCSW-BACS are required to have 3 hours every other year (even years) in the area of clinical supervision to maintain BACS.

**When must I have the required number of CE hours completed in order to renew my license?**

The collection period is July 1 – June 30. Hours collected in June can count for either the current collection period or the following collection period, but cannot be used for both.

**How will I know if an educational offering is approved by the Board?**

A list of approved organizations for CEU's is listed on the Board's website under Licensee Info/Continuing Education. Any workshop given or pre-approved by those organizations listed is approved by the board.

**If an educational offering is not pre-approved, can I still attend and count towards my CE hours?**

Yes, as long as it contains enough social work content. There is a Guide for Assessment on the Board's website to rate a workshop that has not been pre-approved. The educational offering must rate at least a 10. The educational offering is not acceptable if any category rates a 0. The Guide for Assessment and the certificate of attendance must be maintained in the event you are selected for a CE audit.

**Am I required to send in evidence of my CE hours at the time I renew?**

No. The Board will randomly select licensees for an audit. If selected, you will be notified by certified mail.

**Who maintains the required documents for verification of CE hours?**

It is the licensee's responsibility to maintain certificates and any other continuing competency forms or records. Do not send any forms or documents to LABSWE unless requested to do so.

**What if I am newly licensed, do I still have to obtain the CE hours before my first renewal?**

It depends on which month you are first licensed. Your approval letter from the Board will inform you of the number of hours required for your first year. If you receive your license in the middle of the fiscal year, your hours may be pro-rated for the first year only. The following list shows how many hours are required if you receive your license in a particular month.

July, August, September 20 hours  
 January, February, March 10 hours

October, November, December 15 hours  
 April, May, June 20 hours (for next renewal)

For additional information regarding social work licensure in Louisiana, visit the Board’s website to obtain the following publications:

- Louisiana Social Work Practice Act
- Rules, Standards and Procedures

### OTHER RESOURCES

AGENCY	CONTACT INFORMATION
Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)	400 South Ridge Parkway · Suite B Culpeper VA 22701 Toll Free (888) 579-3926 Fax (540) 829-0142 Website: <a href="http://www.aswb.org">www.aswb.org</a>
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)	1725 Duke Street · Suite 500 Alexandria VA 22314-3457 Phone (703) 683-8080 Fax (703) 683-8099 Email: <a href="mailto:info@cswe.org">info@cswe.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.cswe.org">www.cswe.org</a>
National Association of Social Workers (NASW-LA) LA Chapter	700 North 10th Street Suite 200 Baton Rouge LA 70802 Phone (225) 346-1234 Fax (225) 346-5035 Email: <a href="mailto:email@naswla.org">email@naswla.org</a> Website: <a href="http://www.naswla.org">www.naswla.org</a>
National Association of Social Workers (NASW)	750 First Street NE · Suite 700 Washington DC 20002-4241 Phone (202) 408-8600 Toll Free (800) 638-8799 Website: <a href="http://www.socialworkers.org">www.socialworkers.org</a>

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*The Board hopes this Handbook for Students provides you with information you need about social work licensure and regulation in Louisiana, as well as information about the licensure requirements and the application and examination process. Please contact the Board office if you have additional questions. Good luck as you complete your social work program and move into the profession!*

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