

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2024 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Third Reader**

House Bill 755

(Delegate Bhandari)

Health and Government Operations

Finance

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**State Board of Social Work Examiners - Board Membership and Certified Social Worker Licenses**

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This bill alters the membership of the State Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE) by authorizing the board to include at least one member who is either a licensed certified social worker (LCSW) or a licensed master social worker (LMSW) who is approved for independent practice. The bill also makes clarifying changes and removes obsolete references to certified social worker licenses. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2024.**

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None. The bill is clarifying in nature and does not directly affect governmental finances.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary/Current Law:** Generally, an individual must be licensed by BSWE to practice social work in the State. In Maryland, there are four social work license categories, distinguished by specific education and/or training requirements, including: licensed bachelor social worker (LBSW), LMSW, LCSW, and licensed certified social worker-clinical (LCSW-C). The board no longer issues new LCSW licenses but does renew those licenses issued prior to December 31, 2023.

Under current law, the Governor must appoint all members of the board, with the advice of the Secretary of Health and the advice and consent of the Senate. The Governor must appoint all social work members from a list of nominees submitted by specified stakeholders. The board comprises 12 members, including 1 LBSW, 1 LMSW, 1 LCSW, 4 LCSWs-C, 1 licensed social worker employed by the Department of Human Services, 1 licensed social worker who is primarily engaged in social work education, and 2 consumer members. The bill clarifies that the board must include at least 1 LCSW *or* 1 LMSW who is approved for independent practice.

The bill specifies that if a *licensee of the specified license category* is not appointed to the board within three months of a vacancy, a licensee of any license category must be appointed immediately if that licensee is otherwise qualified to be a member of the board.

### *Obsolete Provisions*

Chapters 781 and 782 of 2021 required an LCSW to be licensed by BSWE *on or before December 31, 2023*, to practice certified social work in the State. An LCSW must have a master's degree in social work from an accredited social work program and provide documentation of having completed two years of specified supervised experience.

Under current law, to obtain a certified social worker license, an out-of-state applicant must (1) be licensed to practice social work in another state under an equivalent category or licensure; (2) have passed an examination as a condition of licensure in that state; (3) have performed specified compensated social work practice per year for five out of the ten years preceding application; and (4) otherwise meet licensure requirements. Subject to criminal history record information, the board must reissue a license to an individual who passes the respective examination required for initial licensure or holds an active license to practice social work in another state under another category of licensure that is equivalent to a certified social worker.

The bill removes several obsolete provisions related to certified social worker licenses, specifically, requirements for an out-of-state applicant and a licensee on inactive status.

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## **Additional Information**

**Recent Prior Introductions:** Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

**Designated Cross File:** SB 106 (Senator Kelly) - Finance.

**Information Source(s):** Maryland Department of Health; Department of Human Services;  
Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 8, 2024  
js/jc Third Reader - March 1, 2024

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