

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 379
Finance

(Senator M. Washington, *et al.*)

State Board of Social Work Examiners - Membership and Examination
Requirements

This bill repeals the requirement that an applicant for licensure as a bachelor social worker or a master social worker pass an examination as a condition of licensure. An applicant for licensure as a certified social worker or certified social worker-clinical are still required to successfully pass an examination(s) prescribed by the State Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE) pertinent to the license sought. The bill also increases the number of members on BSWE from 12 to 14 by adding 2 additional consumer members.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for the two additional board members are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

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), licensed master social worker (LMSW), licensed certified social worker (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.

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 or 1 LMSW approved for independent practice, 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. 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.

Licensure Requirements

In general, to obtain a license, an applicant must (1) submit a written application on a board-prescribed form; (2) be at least 18 years old; (3) be of good moral character; (4) successfully pass required examinations pertinent to the license sought; (5) pay any applicable fees; (6) complete a criminal history records check; and (7) if required, complete a mental or physical examination by a board-appointed health care practitioner. Each license expires every two years, after which the licensee must pay a renewal fee, submit a renewal application, submit satisfactory evidence of compliance with any continuing education requirements, and otherwise be entitled to be licensed.

The board must ensure that a board-approved examination for each category of license is made available for an applicant to take at least twice a year at the times and places that the board determines. The board uses a national examination administered by the Association of Social Work Boards.

To obtain licensure as a LCSW, by December 31, 2023, an applicant must (1) have received a master's degree from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or an equivalent organization and (2) provide documentation of having completed two years as a licensee with supervised experience of at least 3,000 hours after receiving the master's degree, with a minimum of 100 hours of periodic face-to-face supervision in the practice of social work under the terms and conditions determined by regulation.

To obtain licensure as a LCSW-C, an applicant must (1) have received a master's degree in social work and documentation of completion of 12 academic credits in clinical course work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or an equivalent organization, with a minimum of 6 of the 12 academic credits obtained in a master's degree program and (2) provide documentation of having completed two years as a licensee with

supervised experience of at least 3,000 hours, of which 1,500 hours are in face-to-face contact, after receiving the master's degree with a minimum of 100 hours of period face-to-face supervision in the assessment, formulation of a diagnostic impression, and treatment of behavioral health disorders and other conditions and the provision of psychotherapy under the terms and conditions determined by regulation.

Additional Information

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

Designated Cross File: None.

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

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caw/jc

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