

Louisiana Social Work Practice Act
Louisiana Revised Statutes
Title 37. Professions & Occupations
Chapter 35. Social Workers
La. R.S. 37:2701-2724

§2701. Legislative purpose

The legislature declares that, in order to safeguard the public health, safety, and welfare of the people of this state against unauthorized, unqualified, and improper practice of social work, it is necessary that a proper regulatory authority be established and adequately provided for.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000.

§2702. Short title

This Chapter shall be known and may be cited as the "Louisiana Social Work Practice Act".

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000.

§2703. Definitions

As used in this Chapter, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, and except as otherwise expressly provided:

(1) "Agency" means an organization or facility that delivers social work services and employs social workers. The employer shall provide direct remuneration for the employee for the work performed, and the employer shall withhold from the employee's wages taxes and other employee-paid benefits.

(2) "Board" means the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners.

(3) "Board-approved clinical supervisor (BACS)" means a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) who has met the qualifications established by the board.

(4) "Case management" means a method to plan, provide, evaluate, and monitor services from a variety of resources on behalf of and in collaboration with a client.

(5) "Certified social worker (CSW)" means a temporary certification which entitles the master of social work graduate to perform the duties and responsibilities within the scope of practice of the licensed master social worker for up to three years, while pursuing licensure.

(6) "Clinical social work practice" means a specialty within the practice of master's social work.

(7) "Clinical supervision" means an interactional professional relationship between a licensed clinical social worker and a licensed master's social worker that provides evaluation and direction over the supervisee's practice of clinical social work and promotes continued development of the licensed master's social worker's knowledge, skills, and abilities to engage in the practice of clinical social work in an ethical and competent manner. Supervision for meeting the requirements of licensure, as a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), must be provided by a licensed clinical social worker who is also a board-approved clinical supervisor (BACS).

(8) "Consultation" means a problem-solving process in which expertise is offered to an individual, group, organization, or community.

(9) "Council on Social Work Education" means the national organization which accredits graduate and undergraduate social work programs or its predecessor or successor organization.

(10) "Graduate school of social work" means a program within an institution of higher education which offers a full-time course of study in social work, granting a master's degree in social work or social

welfare, and accredited or under candidacy by the Council on Social Work Education or its predecessor or successor organization.

(11) "Licensed clinical social worker (LCSW)" means a person duly licensed to independently practice clinical social work under the provisions of this Chapter. A licensed clinical social worker may work as an employee in a practice setting or independently in private practice.

(12) "Licensed master's social worker (LMSW)" means a person duly registered to practice master's social work under this Chapter.

(13) "Registered social worker (RSW)" means a person duly registered to practice baccalaureate social work under this Chapter.

(14)(a) "Social work practice" means 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 shall include but not be 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.

(b) A faculty member who has obtained a master's degree or license in a field other than social work and who teaches a course in a social work program other than a clinical course, a clinical practicum, or any other course involving the scope of practice of social work at an accredited Louisiana institution of higher education shall not be construed as practicing social work and shall not be subject to the provisions of this Chapter.

(c) Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to authorize any person licensed, certified, provisionally certified, or registered hereunder to prescribe, either orally or in writing, distribute, dispense, or administer any medications. Nothing in this Chapter shall be construed to authorize any social worker licensed, certified, provisionally certified, or registered under this Chapter to administer or interpret psychological tests, or to engage in the practice of psychology, as defined by the provisions of R.S. 37:2352 or to engage in the practice of medicine, as defined by the provisions of R.S. 37:1262. Notwithstanding any provisions of R.S. 37:2352, persons covered by this Chapter may, based upon scope of practice, administer, use, or interpret tests of language, education and achievement, adaptive behavioral tests, and symptom screening checklists instruments, as well as tests of abilities, interests, and aptitudes.

(15) "Social work student" means a person who is enrolled in a social work educational program that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or its predecessor or successor and is part of an accredited university or college.

(16) "Social worker" means a person who holds a degree in social work, having successfully completed an undergraduate or graduate level academic social work program.

(17) "Supervision" means the professional relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee that provides guidance and evaluation of the services provided by the supervisee.

(18) "Undergraduate social work program" means a program within an institution of higher education which offers a full-time course of study in social work, granting a bachelor's degree in social work or social welfare, and accredited or under candidacy by the Council on Social Work Education or its predecessor or successor.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2007, No. 436, §1 and 2; Acts 2010, No. 880, §§1, 2, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2018, No. 227, §1; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2704. Board of Social Work Examiners

A. There is hereby created a Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners within the Louisiana Department of Health. The board shall be subject to the provisions of R.S. 36:803. It shall consist of seven members to include six social workers and one consumer member. The members shall be appointed by the governor, subject to Senate confirmation. All appointees shall be selected from one list compiled by all statewide social work membership organizations that have written bylaws and meet all state and federal laws, and the Louisiana Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers shall be responsible for the coordination of this process. The consumer member may apply directly to the office of the governor. The governor shall ensure that his appointments demonstrate race, gender, ethnic, and geographical diversity. All appointees shall serve no more than two consecutive full terms. The completion of an unexpired portion of a full term shall not constitute a full term for purposes of this Section. The board shall consist of the following members:

- (1) One registered social worker with at least three years of social work experience.
- (2) One licensed master's social worker with at least three years of social work experience.
- (3) Three licensed clinical social workers each with at least three years of clinical social work experience.
- (4) One member who is either a registered social worker, a licensed master's social worker, or a licensed clinical social worker.
- (5) One consumer member.

B. Each board member, with the exception of the consumer member, shall be a person who holds a current, valid license or registration issued pursuant to this Chapter and shall be a citizen of the United States and resident of the state of Louisiana. At all times the board shall consist of at least three members who are engaged primarily in rendering direct services in social work and at least one member who is engaged primarily in social work education or a practice specialty other than clinical.

C.(1) The consumer member of the board shall be selected from the state at large and shall possess all of the following qualifications:

- (a) Is a citizen of the United States and has been a resident of Louisiana for at least one year immediately prior to appointment.
- (b) Has attained the age of majority.
- (c) Has never been licensed by any of the licensing boards identified in R.S. 36:259(A), nor shall he have a spouse who has ever been licensed by a board identified in R.S. 36:259(A).
- (d) Has never been convicted of a felony.
- (e) Does not have and has never had a material financial interest in the healthcare profession.
- (f) Shall not be an elected official.

(2) The consumer member shall be a full voting member of the board with all rights and privileges conferred on board members, except that the consumer member shall not participate in the grading of individual examinations.

D. Each member shall hold office until the expiration of his appointed term or until a successor is duly appointed. When the term of each member expires, the governor shall appoint his successor for a term of three years. Any vacancy occurring in board membership other than by expiration of term shall be filled by the governor, under the provisions of Subsection A of this Section, by appointment of a member to serve for the unexpired term. A board member may be removed upon one or more of the following grounds:

- (1) The refusal or inability of a board member for any reason to perform the duties as a member of the board in an efficient, responsible, and professional manner.
- (2) The misuse of office by a member of the board to gain pecuniary or material gain personally or for another through such office.

(3) The violation by any member of the board of the laws or rules governing the practice of social work.

(4) For other just and reasonable causes as determined solely by the board pursuant to applicable laws.

E. Each board member shall receive a certificate of appointment from the governor; and before commencing the discharge of his duties and within thirty days from the effective date of his appointment, the board member shall subscribe to the oath for state officials before any officer authorized to administer oaths in this state and shall file the same with the secretary of state.

F. Each board member shall serve without compensation, but shall receive actual traveling, incidental, and clerical expenses necessarily incurred while engaged in the discharge of his official duties. Funds will be allocated for the payment of these expenses as provided for by R.S. 37:2716(B).

G. The board shall notify all social workers of vacancies on the board, the qualifications for service, and that interested social workers may submit a letter of interest and resume' to qualified social work membership organizations.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1. Amended by Acts 1977, No. 684, §28; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2018, No. 515, §2; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2705. Board; meetings; powers

A. The board shall hold meetings at least semiannually. The board shall elect annually from its membership a chair, vice chair, and secretary/treasurer. Meetings may be called by the chair or upon written request of four members of the board or by the governor. The board shall meet as often as necessary and four members shall constitute a quorum.

B. An administrator, who shall not be a member of the board, shall be employed to serve the board and his or her salary shall be provided for under R.S. 37:2716(B). The board may employ such other persons as may be necessary to carry out its duties under this Chapter.

C.(1) The board is authorized to adopt and revise such rules and regulations as may be necessary to enable it to carry into effect the provisions of this Chapter including but not limited to rules and regulations which establish ethical standards of practice, which the board may adopt as a standard of practice.

(2) The board is empowered to examine for, deny, approve, revoke, suspend, and renew the license of licensed clinical social workers and shall review applications at least once a year. The board is further empowered to examine for, deny, approve, revoke, suspend, and renew the license of licensed master's social workers and shall review applications at least once a year. The board is further empowered to examine for, deny, approve, revoke, suspend, and renew the certificate of certified social workers or the license of licensed master's social workers and shall review applications at least once a year. The board is further empowered to deny, approve, revoke, suspend, and renew the registration of registered social workers and shall review applications once a year.

(3) The board shall have the power to conduct hearings on charges calling for revocation or suspension of a registration, certificate, or license. The board may institute disciplinary proceedings as authorized in this Chapter.

(4) The board shall prosecute and enjoin all persons violating this Chapter and shall keep a record of all the proceedings.

(5) The board is empowered to administer funds as provided in R.S. 37:2716(B) for the training and education of social workers so that competency may be assured.

D. The board shall keep a listing of social workers licensed, certified, or registered under this Chapter.

E. The board may enter into such professional service contracts as necessary to carry out its responsibilities under this Chapter in accordance with R.S. 36:803.

F. The board shall adopt standards for supervision to meet the requirements of R.S. 37:2708.

G. The board shall establish requirements to assure continuing education for individuals licensed, certified, or registered under this Chapter as a condition of licensure, certification, or registration renewal. Such requirements may include but are not limited to continuing education which shall be through programs either provided by or approved by the board.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2706. Qualifications; registered social worker

A. No individual shall be eligible for registration by the board as a registered social worker unless the individual:

(1) Is of good moral character and whose screening for criminal history pursuant to R.S. 37:2710 contains no disqualifying information.

(2) Holds either a bachelor's degree or master's degree from an accredited social work program.

B. An individual registered as a registered social worker 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, education, and the implementation and administration of policies, programs, and activities. A social worker at this level shall work as an employee in an agency and shall not engage in advanced practice or in clinical social work.

C, D. Repealed by Acts 2010, No. 880, §2, eff. Jan. 1, 2011.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1. Acts 1983, No. 484, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2001, No. 595, §1; Acts 2004, No. 375, §1; Acts 2010, No. 880, §§1, 2, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2707. Qualifications; licensed master's social worker

A. No individual shall be eligible for licensure by the board as a licensed master's social worker unless the individual:

(1) Is of good moral character and whose screening for criminal history pursuant to R.S. 37:2710 contains no disqualifying information.

(2) Holds a master's degree from an accredited graduate school of social work.

(3) Has passed an examination approved by the board.

B. An individual licensed as a licensed master's social worker 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 licensed master's social worker's 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 licensed at the licensed master's social worker level may practice clinical social work and psychotherapy within an agency under the supervision of a licensed

clinical social worker. A licensed master's social worker may work as an employee only in an agency setting. Notwithstanding the definition of "agency" as defined in R.S. 37:2703(1) or the requirement for employment in an agency setting provided in this Subsection, a licensed master's social worker shall be permitted to provide social work services on behalf of a federal, state, or local governmental agency on a contractual basis.

C - E. Repealed by Acts 2010, No. 880, §2, Jan. 1, 2011.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2001, No. 595, §1; Acts 2004, No. 375, §1; Acts 2007, No. 436, §1; Acts 2010, No. 880, §§1, 2, eff. Jan. 1, 2011.

§2708. Qualification; licensed clinical social worker

A. No individual shall be eligible for licensure by the board as a licensed clinical social worker unless the individual:

(1) Is of good moral character and whose screening for criminal history pursuant to R.S. 37:2710 contains no disqualifying information.

(2) Holds a master's degree from an accredited graduate school of social work.

(3) Has completed at least three thousand hours of postgraduate social work practice over a minimum of two years and a maximum of four years while under the supervision of a board-approved clinical supervisor. The board shall consider circumstances warranting more than four years to complete this experience requirement.

(4) Has passed an examination approved by the board.

B. An individual holding the licensed clinical social worker license 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.

C. Repealed by Acts 2010, No. 880, §2, eff. Jan. 1, 2010.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2001, No. 595, §1; Acts 2004, No. 375, §1; Acts 2007, No. 436, §1; Acts 2010, No. 880, §§1, 2, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2709. License, certification, or registration required

A. No individual shall practice social work in the state unless the individual holds a current, valid license, certificate, or registration issued by the board in accordance with this Chapter. This license, certificate, or registration shall be kept conspicuously posted in the office or place of business at all times.

B. An individual shall complete all components of the application process for licensure, certification, or registration to the board within ninety days of commencement of social work practice.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2018, No. 227, §1; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2710. Application and authorization to obtain criminal history record information

A. As used in this Section, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

(1) "Applicant" means an individual who has made application to the board for the issuance, renewal, or reinstatement of any form of licensure which the board is authorized by law to issue.

(2) "Board" means the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners.

(3) "Bureau" means the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information of the office of state police within the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

(4) "Criminal history record information" means information collected by state and federal criminal justice agencies on individuals consisting of identifiable descriptions and notations of arrests, detentions, indictments, bills of information, or any formal criminal charges, and any disposition arising therefrom, including sentencing, criminal correctional supervision and release, but does not include intelligence for investigatory purposes, nor does it include any identification information which does not indicate involvement of the individual in the criminal justice system.

(5) "FBI" means the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the United States Department of Justice.

(6) "Licensure" means any license, certification, or registration which the board is authorized to issue.

B. In addition to any other requirements established by board rules, the board shall require an applicant, as a condition for eligibility for licensure:

(1) To submit a full set of fingerprints, in a form and manner prescribed by the board.

(2) To permit the board to request and obtain state and national criminal history record information on the applicant.

(3) To pay, in addition to all other applicable fees and costs, such amount as may be incurred by the board in requesting and obtaining state and national criminal history record information on the applicant.

C. In accordance with the provisions and procedure prescribed by this Section, the board shall request and obtain state and national criminal history record information from the Louisiana Bureau of Criminal Identification and Information of the office of state police within the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and the Federal Bureau of Investigation of the United States Department of Justice relative to any applicant for licensure whose fingerprints the board has obtained pursuant to this Section for the purpose of determining the applicant's suitability and eligibility for licensure.

D. Upon request by the board and upon the board's submission of an applicant's fingerprints, and such other identifying information as may be required, the bureau shall conduct a search of its criminal history record information relative to the applicant and report the results of its search to the board within sixty days from receipt of any such request. The bureau may charge the board a reasonable processing fee for conducting and reporting on any such search.

E. If the criminal history record information reported by the bureau to the board does not provide grounds for disqualification of the applicant for licensure under the applicable law administered by the board, the board shall have the authority to forward the applicant's fingerprints and such other identifying information as may be required to the FBI with a request for a search of national criminal history record information relative to the applicant.

F. Any and all state or national criminal history record information obtained by the board from the bureau or FBI which is not already a matter of public record shall be deemed nonpublic and confidential information restricted to the exclusive use of the board, its members, officers, investigators, agents, and attorneys in evaluating the applicant's eligibility or disqualification for licensure. No such information or records related thereto shall, except with the written consent of the applicant or by order of a court of competent jurisdiction, be released or otherwise disclosed by the board to any other person or agency.

G. Upon investigation of the application and other evidence submitted, the board shall notify each applicant that the application and evidence submitted for consideration is satisfactory and accepted, or unsatisfactory and rejected. If an application is rejected, said notice shall state the reasons for such rejection and the applicant's right to a compliance hearing in accordance with the rules and regulations promulgated by the board.

Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011.

§2711. Examination

A. The place of examination shall be designated in advance by the board. The examination shall be given annually at such time and place and under such supervision as the board may determine, and specifically at such other times, as in the opinion of the board, the number of applicants warrants.

B. Applicants for licensure as a licensed clinical social worker and applicants for licensure as a licensed master's social worker shall pass an examination approved by the board. The board shall assign the passing grade point to any examination administered after having promulgated rules and regulations. To ensure impartiality, written examinations shall be by numbers, and no paper examination shall bear the name of the applicant.

C. If an applicant fails the examination, he may retake the examination upon payment of a re-examination fee at the next opportunity given by the board, and in accordance with the rules of the board.

Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011.

§2712. Licensure, certification, or registration by reciprocity or endorsement of credentials

A. Any social worker from another state, territory, commonwealth, or the District of Columbia seeking authority to practice in this state through reciprocity or endorsement of credentials shall comply with the following:

(1) Be credentialed and in good standing with their respective social work regulatory board or agency based on substantially equivalent educational, supervision, and examination requirements for a Louisiana licensed clinical social worker, licensed master's social worker, certified social worker, or registered social worker.

(2) Pass an open-book examination on the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act including all applicable laws and rules, regulations, standards, and procedures adopted by the board.

(3) Pay the fee prescribed by the board.

B. If the board determines that a state, territory, commonwealth, or the District of Columbia does not have credentialing requirements that are substantially equivalent to those required by this state for the issuance of a social work license, certificate, or registration, the board may require the social worker to obtain the requisite educational, supervision, and examination requirements pursuant to the applicable provisions of this Chapter.

Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1983, No. 484, §1; Acts 1990, No. 458, §1; Acts 1996, 1st Ex. Sess., No. 94, §1, eff. May 10, 1996; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2713. License; certificate; registration

The board shall issue a license, certificate, or registration signed by the chair and vice chair of the board whenever an applicant for certification, licensure, or registration successfully qualifies therefor as provided in this Chapter.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2714. Continuing education and license, certificate, and registration renewal

A.(1) The board shall have authority to establish and promulgate continuing education requirements which are to be fulfilled prior to the renewal of any license, certificate, or registration issued under this Chapter.

(2) Twenty clock hours of continuing education in programs approved by the board shall be obtained prior to each renewal date, including three hours of ethics every two years. In addition, for renewal of a licensed clinical social work license, no less than ten clock hours of the continuing education requirement shall be clinical content including diagnosis and treatment of mental disorders. Failure to fulfill these requirements shall cause the license, certificate, or registration to lapse, and any application for renewal will be declined until the continuing education requirements have been met.

(3) Documentation in a form acceptable to the board, demonstrating compliance with the continuing education requirements, shall accompany the application for the renewal of the license, certificate, or registration.

B. In addition to the continuing education requirements set out in Subsection A of this Section, each license, certificate, provisional certificate, or registration issued under the provisions of this Chapter shall be renewed annually except as otherwise provided. On or before July first of each year, the board shall send notice for renewal of a license, certificate, or registration to each person to whom a license, certificate, or registration was issued or renewed during the current year. Such person shall complete the renewal application and pay the renewal fee as is required by the board before August thirty-first of the year in which the notice was received. Upon receipt of any application and fee, the board shall verify the accuracy of the application and update the license, certificate, or registration for the current year, beginning September first and expiring August thirty-first.

C. If any person fails to renew his or her license, certificate, or registration by August thirty-first, such license, certificate, or registration shall lapse. Any application for renewal shall be declined until the continuing education requirements have been met. If a social worker fails to renew by August thirty-first of each year, at the licensed, certified, or registered level, he shall not practice social work. Renewal of a license, certificate, or registration which has lapsed for six months or less may be effected upon submission to the board of a renewal application accompanied by a fee which shall be twice the amount of the normal renewal fee specified by the board. If a license, certificate, or registration is allowed to lapse for six months or longer, the applicant for the license, certificate, or registration shall be considered a new applicant subject to appropriate provisions of this Chapter including the reinstatement provisions of this Section.

D. If any license, certificate, or registration is lapsed for at least six months but not more than sixty months, the applicant for the license, certificate, or registration shall submit proof of completion of twenty hours of approved social work continuing education and pass the board exam on the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act and rules, standards, and procedures prior to reinstatement. Continuing education requirements for LCSW applicants shall include at least ten hours of clinical content and three hours of ethics training. Continuing education requirements for LMSW and RSW applicants shall include at least three hours of ethics training.

E. If any license, certificate, or registration is lapsed for more than sixty months, the applicant for license, certificate, or registration shall submit proof of completion of forty hours of approved social work continuing education and pass the board exam on the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act and the rules, standards, and procedures prior to reinstatement. Continuing education requirements for LCSW applicants shall include at least twenty hours of clinical content and three hours of ethics training. Continuing education requirements for LMSW and RSW applicants shall include at least three hours of ethics training.

F. The board shall have the authority to grant continuing education waivers for declared emergencies. In response to a disaster or emergency declared by the governor of the state of Louisiana, continuing education units required for renewal of a license may be waived by the board.

G. The board shall have the authority to grant continuing education extensions for extenuating circumstances. In response to an extenuating circumstance, the time frame mandated to complete continuing education units required for renewal of a license may be extended by the board.

Acts 1990, No. 785, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2715. Rights and privileges

A. An individual who possesses a current, valid license issued by the board pursuant to this Chapter shall have the right to practice and use the title licensed clinical social worker and the abbreviation LCSW.

B. An individual who possesses a current, valid license issued by the board pursuant to this Chapter shall have the right to practice and use the title licensed master's social worker and the abbreviation LMSW.

C. An individual who possesses a current, valid certificate issued by the board pursuant to this Chapter shall have the right to practice and use the title certified social worker and the abbreviation CSW.

D. An individual who possesses a current, valid registration issued by the board pursuant to this Chapter shall have the right to practice and use the title registered social worker and the abbreviation RSW.

E. No other individual shall assume such title, use such abbreviation or use any word, letter, sign, figure, or device to indicate that he is a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed master's social worker, a certified social worker, or a registered social worker.

F. No individual shall assume the title "social worker" until that person has successfully completed an undergraduate academic social work program or a graduate level academic social work program.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2716. Fees

A.(1) The board shall establish a reasonable fee schedule for examinations, applications, reexaminations, renewal, or reissuance of any license, certificate, or registration, or for any other administrative function provided for in this Chapter; and the receipts from the payment of such fees shall be used to carry out the purposes of this Chapter. Such fee schedule may be modified from time to time as deemed necessary by the board. The fees shall be established and payable by rule adopted in accordance with the Administrative Procedure Act.

(2) The board is authorized to increase the fees in the fee schedule to not more than the following amounts:

(a) One hundred dollars per application for licensure as a licensed clinical social worker; seventy-five dollars per application for licensure as a licensed master's social worker; seventy-five dollars per application for certification as a certified social worker; and fifty dollars per application for registration as a registered social worker.

(b) Fifty dollars per reexamination.

(c) One hundred dollars per renewal of any license, certificate, or registration.

(d) Fifty dollars per reissuance of any license, certificate, or registration.

B. The fees established under the provisions of this Section shall be paid to the board. The board shall retain all fees and other monies received by it. Funds may be expended by the board without appropriation for cost of administration and other expenses. Additionally, funds may be used for the establishment and operation of continuing education programs relating to the practice of social work and supervision of social work practice. Any funds remaining unexpended and unencumbered at the end of each fiscal year shall be retained by the board for expenditure in succeeding years and no part shall revert to the state general fund.

C. Criminal record checks are required prior to issuance of license, certificate, or registration. Costs associated with criminal record checks are the responsibility of the applicant. The results of the criminal history record information search must be obtained, reviewed, and considered acceptable by the board prior to issuance of license, certificate, or registration.

D. No fee shall be refunded.

Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1983, No. 484, §1; Acts 1990, No. 458, §1; Acts 1996, 1st Ex. Sess., No. 94, §1, eff. May 10, 1996; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2717. Disciplinary action; hearing; procedures; appeal

A. The board shall have the power to deny, revoke, or suspend any license, certificate, or registration issued by the board or applied for in accordance with this Chapter, or otherwise discipline a social worker for any of the following causes:

(1) A final conviction of any felony upon a plea or verdict of guilty or following a plea of nolo contendere.

(2) Incapacity or impairment due to the use of drugs or intoxicating beverages that prevents the social worker from engaging in the practice of social work with reasonable skill, competence, and safety to the public.

(3) Obtaining or attempting to obtain a license, certificate, or registration by fraud or deception.

(4) Willfully or repeatedly violating any of the provisions of this Chapter.

(5) Violating any order, rule, or regulation adopted by the board.

(6) Being adjudged a mental incompetent.

(7) Practicing in a manner detrimental or potentially detrimental to the client by act or omission, which act or omission is either the result of deliberate or intentional conduct or negligent conduct.

(8) Failure to report to the board knowledge of a violation or infraction of the social work practice act, rules and regulations promulgated by the board or ethical standards, or both.

(9) Providing false testimony to the board or providing false sworn information to the board.

(10) Deceiving or defrauding the public or making, submitting, or causing to be submitted any false or deceptive claims, reports, charges, assessments, or opinions regarding any client or service provided to any client, insurance company, health care provider, third-party payor, company, individual, or any governmental agency for the purpose of obtaining payment or anything of economic value.

(11) Unprofessional or unethical conduct as defined in the rules and regulations adopted by the board.

(12) Conduct which demonstrates the social worker has failed to maintain the qualification of good moral character as required by R.S. 37:2706(A)(1), 2707(A)(1), and 2708(A)(1) and as may be further defined by the board.

(13) Practicing social work with a lapsed license, certificate, or registration.

B. When the board decides to discipline an individual the board may:

(1) Refuse to issue or renew a license or registration.

(2) Issue a public or private letter of reprimand or concern.

(3) Require restitution to a client or restitution of the board's costs and expenses in connection with the enforcement of this Chapter, or both.

(4) Impose probationary conditions.

(5) Impose a fine for each violation not to exceed one thousand dollars.

(6) Suspend or revoke a license certificate, or registration including the summary suspension of said license, certificate, or registration when the board determines that public health, safety, or welfare imperatively requires emergency action.

(7) Restrict a license, certificate, or registration by limiting or reducing the scope of practice.

(8) Otherwise discipline the holder of a license, certificate, or registration upon proof of violation of any provisions of this Chapter, or the rules and regulations promulgated by the board, or both.

C. Proceedings for disciplinary action or for the denial or withholding of a license under the authority of this Section shall be conducted in compliance with the board's rules, regulations, and procedures and in compliance with the Administrative Procedure Act. The board may require an individual against whom disciplinary action has been taken by the board to pay the reasonable costs incurred by the board for the hearing or proceedings, including its legal fees, stenographer, investigator, or witness fees, and any such costs and fees incurred by the board on any judicial review or appeal. These costs and fees shall be paid no later than thirty days after the decision of the board becomes final. No license, certificate, or registration shall be issued, reinstated, or renewed until such costs have been paid.

D. No license, certificate, or registration shall be suspended or revoked until a hearing is held before the board, after notice of at least thirty days to the social worker. The notice shall be served by registered mail, return receipt requested; shall state the date, time, and place of the hearing; and shall set forth the ground or grounds of the charges against the social worker. The social worker has a right to present his own defense either in proper person or by counsel, to produce testimony, and to testify in his own behalf. A record of the hearing shall be taken and preserved. The record shall contain the notice, documents, and data filed in the proceedings; all statements of the board pertinent thereto; and the testimony, exhibits, and written findings of fact and orders of the board. The hearing may be adjourned from time to time. If the social worker pleads guilty, or if upon hearing the charges the majority of the board finds them true, the board may enter an order suspending or revoking the license, certificate, or registration or imposing probationary conditions.

E. The board may adopt rules for its proceedings that will enable it to completely determine the facts in each matter brought before it without undue delay and to render a decision in writing consistent with the intent of this Chapter. The board shall have the right to issue subpoenas where needed. If the board subpoena is not honored, the board shall petition a court of competent jurisdiction to have its subpoena honored. If the court determines that the demand of the board is lawful, the court shall enter an order compelling compliance therewith. Disobedience of such an order shall be considered contempt of court.

F. Any individual subject to disciplinary action who feels aggrieved by the decision of the board may file a petition for judicial review in the Nineteenth Judicial District Court within thirty days after receiving the board's decision pursuant to R.S. 49:964.

G. The board may in its own name issue a cease and desist order to stop an individual from engaging in an unauthorized practice or violating or threatening to violate a statute, rule, or order which the board has issued or is empowered to enforce. The cease and desist order shall state the reason for its issuance and notice of the individual's right to request a hearing under applicable procedures as set forth in the Administrative Procedure Act. Nothing in this Subsection shall be construed as barring criminal prosecutions for violations of this Chapter.

H. Any individual whose license, certificate, or registration has been revoked or suspended shall return the license, certificate, or notice of registration to the office of the board no later than ten calendar days after receipt of a notice of revocation or suspension.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2718. Privileged communications

A. Testimonial privileges, exceptions, and waiver with respect to communications between a social worker and his client are governed by the Louisiana Code of Evidence.

B. No social worker may disclose any information he may have acquired from persons consulting him in his professional capacity that was necessary to enable him to render services to those persons except:

(1) With the written consent of the client, or in the case of death or disability, with the written consent of his personal representative, other person authorized to sue, or the beneficiary of any insurance policy on his life, health, or physical condition.

(2) When the individual is a minor under the age of eighteen and the information acquired by the social worker indicated that the child was the victim or subject of a crime, then the social worker may be required to testify fully in relation thereto upon any examination, trial, or other proceeding in which the commission of such crime is a subject of inquiry.

(3) When a communication reveals the intended commission of a crime or harmful act and such disclosure is determined to be necessary by the social worker to protect any individual or person from a clear, imminent risk of serious mental or physical harm or injury, or to forestall a serious threat to the public safety.

(4) When the person waives the privilege by bringing any public charge against the social worker.

C. Nothing in this Section shall be construed, however, to prohibit a social worker from voluntarily testifying in a court hearing concerning matters of adoption, child abuse, child neglect, or other matters pertaining to children, elderly, and physically or mentally impaired adults, except as prohibited under the applicable state and federal laws.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1992, No. 376, §6, eff. Jan. 1, 1993; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000.

§2719. Discrimination

No license, certificate, or registration shall be denied any applicant based upon the applicant's race, religion, creed, national origin, sex, or physical impairment so long as the physical impairment does not interfere with the performance of professional duties.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011.

§2720. Violations; penalties

A. It shall be a misdemeanor for any individual or person:

(1) To engage in the practice of social work without being duly licensed, certified, or registered under the provisions of this Chapter.

(2) To imply or state that he is a licensed clinical social worker, certified social worker, licensed master's social worker, or registered social worker, unless he is duly and respectively licensed, certified, or registered under the provisions of this Chapter.

(3) To use in connection with his name any designation tending to imply that he is licensed, certified, or registered under the provisions of this Chapter during the time his license, certificate, or registration shall be suspended, revoked, or shall have lapsed.

(4) To otherwise violate any of the provisions of this Chapter.

B. Such misdemeanor, upon conviction, shall be punishable by a fine of not less than one hundred dollars nor more than five hundred dollars, or by imprisonment for not more than six months, or both.

C. Such misdemeanor shall be prosecuted by the district attorney of the judicial district in which the offense was committed in the name of the people of the state of Louisiana.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011.

§2721. Injunctive proceedings

A. The board may apply for an injunction in any court of competent jurisdiction to enjoin any person from committing any act prohibited by the provisions of this Chapter.

B. If it is established that any person has been or is committing an act prohibited by this Chapter, the court shall enter a decree permanently enjoining said person from further commission of such act.

C. The violation of any injunction issued under the provisions of this Section shall constitute contempt of court.

D. Such injunctive proceedings shall be in addition to and not in lieu of all other remedies and penalties provided in this Chapter.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.

§2722. Exclusions

A. No provision of this Chapter shall be construed to prohibit:

(1) The activities and services of a student pursuing a course of study in a social work educational program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education if these activities and services constitute a part of the supervised course of study.

(2) Subsidiary workers in the agencies and offices of individuals licensed, certified, or registered to practice social work in this state from assisting in the rendering of services to clients under the personal and responsible supervision and direction of such persons.

(3) Qualified members of other professional groups from doing work of a psychosocial nature within their legal scope of practice consistent with the standards and ethics of their respective professions, provided that they shall not hold themselves out to the public by any title or description of services incorporating the term social worker, or that they shall not state or imply that they are licensed, certified, or registered to practice social work.

(4) Non-social work degreed governmental employees from performing their assigned job responsibilities.

B. An individual licensed to practice social work in another jurisdiction may, upon prior written application to the board, practice social work in this jurisdiction within the scope of practice designated by such license no more than thirty days per year without applying for a license. Practice privileges under this Subsection shall apply only if the requirements for a license in such other jurisdictions are substantially similar to the requirements for licensure in this jurisdiction. The thirty-day period shall commence on the date of receipt by the board of the written application. The practitioner who provides services under this Subsection shall be deemed to have submitted to the jurisdiction of the applicable board and be bound by the laws of this state.

C. An individual licensed to practice social work in another jurisdiction who is providing services within the scope of practice designated by such license and in response to a disaster declared by the appropriate authority or governor of the state may, upon prior written notice of the board, provide such services in this jurisdiction for a period of time not to exceed sixty consecutive days per year without applying for a license. The practitioner who provides services under this Subsection shall be deemed to have submitted to the jurisdiction of the board and be bound by the laws of this state.

Added by Acts 1972, No. 706, §1; Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000; Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011.

§2723. Protected action and communication

A. There shall be no liability on the part of and no action for damages against:

(1) Any member of the board, or its agents or employees, or any member of an examining committee appointed or designated by the board, for any action undertaken or performed by such individual within the scope of the duties, powers, and functions of the board or such examining committee as provided for in this Chapter when such individual is acting without malice and in the reasonable belief that the action taken by him is warranted.

(2) Any person, committee, association, organization, firm, or corporation providing information to the board, its agents or employees, or to an examining committee appointed or designated by the board, whether a witness or otherwise. Such a person, committee, association, organization, firm, or corporation providing such information without malice and in the reasonable belief that such information is accurate shall not be held, by reason of having provided such information, to be liable in damages under any law of the state or any political subdivision thereof.

B. In any suit brought against the board, its employees, or agents, any member of an examining committee appointed by the board, or any person or entity providing information to the board, when any such defendant prevails in such suit, the court shall, at the conclusion of the action, award to any such prevailing party defendant against any such claimant the cost of the suit attributable to such claim, including attorney fees if the claim was frivolous, unreasonable, without foundation, or in bad faith.

C. For the purposes of this Section, a defendant shall not be considered to have prevailed when the claimant obtains an award for damages or permanent injunctive or declaratory relief.

Acts 1999, No. 1309, §7, eff. Jan. 1, 2000.

§2724. Qualification; certified social worker

A. No individual shall be eligible for certification by the board as a certified social worker unless the individual:

(1) Is of good moral character and whose screening for criminal history pursuant to R.S. 37:2710 contains no disqualifying information.

(2) Holds a master's degree from an accredited graduate school of social work.

B. The board may issue a social worker certificate to an individual who has completed all requirements for certification as a certified social worker. The individual may hold the certificate for no more than three years from the issuance of the original certificate.

C. An individual certified as a certified social worker 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 certified social worker 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 certified at the certified social worker level may practice clinical social work and psychotherapy within an agency under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker. A certified social worker may work as an employee only in an agency setting, notwithstanding the definition of "agency" as defined in R.S. 37:2703(1) or the requirement for employment in an agency setting provided in this Subsection.

Acts 2010, No. 880, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2011; Acts 2021, No. 215, §1, eff. Jan. 1, 2022.