

## Public Statement regarding the ASWB Licensing Examinations

From: The MD Board of Social Work Examiners

To: Concerned Social Workers and Members of the Public

Date: January 12, 2023

We are writing to acknowledge receipt of suggestions that the MD Board of Social Work Examiners review its practice of using the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) social work licensing exams as a prerequisite for licensure.

ASWB is comprised of government boards that regulate the practice of social work by carrying out the intent of legislation that establishes their regulatory authority. That legislation requires, among other prerequisites, successful completion of both an education program and an examination validated to assess entry-level competence. ASWB adheres to industry standards in the development, administration, scoring, and maintenance of the social work licensing examinations. Many professions, from medicine to accounting, rely upon entry-level competence examinations and adhere to these encompassing industry standards.

To maintain examination validity, ASWB undertakes a rigorous process of surveying the profession and updating the content areas covered by the examinations every five to seven years. ASWB is currently preparing to undertake this process to inform the next iteration of the social work licensing exams. In addition to periodic surveys of the profession, each examination question is continuously statistically analyzed; questions that do not perform within the standards are removed.

Requests that we, as a regulatory board, choose not to rely on the ASWB licensing examinations do not address the larger societal issues that can impact candidates long before they take a social work licensing exam. Prerequisites to licensure are set in law, serve an essential component of public protection, and cannot simply be ignored nor waived. The ASWB examination program, due to its rigorous standards, is a defensible measure of competency and can be relied upon by government as one requirement for licensure as a social worker.

As an ASWB member, the MD BSWE asks that all social work organizations assess and reveal their own relevant data in the spirit of ASWB's recent examination data release. To address the effects of racism on marginalized populations, ASWB looks forward to collaborating with all social work organizations as they assess and understand their respective roles in social work and social work regulation.

ASWB welcomes inquiries about the examination program and the data release and is taking action to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in numerous ways.

Please visit [aswb.org/exam/exams-for-the-future-of-social-work/](https://aswb.org/exam/exams-for-the-future-of-social-work/) for more details.