

Workgroup for Social Work Licensure Requirements

Date: June 25, 2025 **Time:** 10:00 am - 12:00 pm

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/rso-bhjm-uqe>

Or dial: (US) +1 347-762-8966 PIN: 856 535 732#

Agenda

- I. Administrative Updates - 9:00 am**
 - A. Roll Call
 - B. Vote on Meeting Minutes
- II. Discussion - 9:15 am**
 - A. MDH Remarks - Kimberly Hiner, Director, Office of Population Health Improvement
 - B. Board of Social Work Examiner Response to Workgroup Questions - Karen Richards
 - C. NASW Statement on Licensure - Karessa Proctor
- III. Presentation - 9:45 am**
 - A. ASWB Special Accommodations
- IV. Question & Answer ASWB - 10:15 am**
 - A. Workgroup
 - B. Public
- V. Break 10 minutes - 10:35 am**
- VI. Discussion - 10:45 am**
 - A. Senator Washington and Delegate Cullison Remarks (if needed)
 - B. Subgroup Recommendation Summary - Alternative Pathways
 - 1. Policy Subgroup - Philicia Ross
 - 2. Pathways to Licensure - Dr. Christa Gilliam
 - 3. Universities/Schools/Programs of Social Work Subgroup - Dr. Anna McPhatter
 - 4. Testing Accommodations - Dr. Judith L. Mounty
 - C. Individual Member Recommendations
- VII. Public Comment - 11:35 am**
- VIII. Closing - 11:50 am**

Questions from the Workgroup to BSWE for final meeting on 6/25/25:

1. Who has the authority to add or change regulations (COMAR) related to social work licensure?

The **Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE)** holds the authority to propose amendments to the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR)—specifically Title 10, Subtitle 42, which governs social work licensure, practice, ethics, fee schedules, supervision, etc. These proposals are submitted through the Maryland Department of Health and are then published in the Maryland Register for public notice. The Board reviews and adopts changes at public meetings (e.g., the March 9, 2018 session where multiple regulations were amended) as authorized under General Provisions Article § 3-302(c) of the Annotated Code of Maryland.

2. Who sets the fees for applying to take the social work licensure exam?

Fees for taking the exam are set by ASWB and **not** by BSWE.

BSWE does set other fees, including, but not limited to, application, renewal, and licensure-related charges. Please consult **COMAR 10.42.05** for the full fee schedule.

3. Who sets the 90-day waiting period for retaking the ASWB exam in Maryland?

The **Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)** has a 90-day waiting period after a failed exam.

Information regarding the 90-day waiting period and the procedure to obtain a waiver from ASWB to waive the 90-day waiting period after a failed exam can be found on ASWB's site.

4. What is the rationale for displaying how individuals obtained their social work license on the website?

Displaying the **method of licensure**—such as exam, endorsement, or reciprocity—on the BSWE website enhances **transparency** and **public protection**. It helps consumers, employers, other state licensing boards and applicants quickly verify whether a licensee:

- Passed the ASWB exam,
- Was licensed by endorsement from another state,
- Meets Maryland's standards for education, supervised experience, and background checks.

This transparency aligns with the Board's mission to protect the public by maintaining clear, accessible records of how each professional qualified to practice.

News Releases



NASW seeks actions to reduce barriers to enter the profession

Jun 17, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. - As an organization committed to the integrity and advancement of the social work profession, NASW strongly supports licensure, title protection, and professional regulation to protect the public and the profession, and uphold high standards of practice. We recognize the urgent need to enhance the workforce - particularly the availability of clinical social workers - to address growing service demands and critical workforce shortages. We also recognize the critical need to reduce unnecessary barriers to entry into the field and ensure fair, equitable pathways to licensure.

NASW supports elimination of the entry-level licensure exams at both the bachelor's and master's levels, recognizing their role in perpetuating inequities and serving as barriers to a more diverse and representative social work workforce. At the same time, NASW acknowledges the varying political landscapes, timelines, and workforce demands across jurisdictions, and supports individual jurisdictions in determining the most effective and equitable pathways to licensure for their communities. Competency should be assessed by Council of Social Work Education (CSWE) accredited social work programs, ensuring that graduates - who have successfully completed rigorous coursework and supervised practicums - are fully prepared for practice.

NASW advocates for alternative pathways to licensure that uphold professional standards while fostering a more inclusive and accessible workforce. We also support strong supervisor training, meaningful supervised practice requirements, and the development of more flexible clinical exam options that reflect real-world skills. The social work profession cannot ignore the data that continues to highlight the problematic inequities that exist in the pass rates for the currently used Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) exams - across all levels of licensure.

Recognizing that state level changes may take years to implement, NASW also encourages the ASWB to work on more immediate reforms to assist current licensees. Suggestions include:

- Providing examination options in languages other than English
- Allowing for home-based proctoring
- Waiving or significantly reducing all retesting fees
- Immediately making the ASWB practice exam available for free to all social workers
- Removing the requirement that supervised work hours be completed before taking the exam
- Expanding the current passing score
- Moving to module-based testing - requiring retesting in only the areas not passed
- Enhancing exam preparation materials for use at the organization/agency and supervisor level

Additionally, NASW is committed to licensure portability by partnering with federal agencies, state boards, and professional organizations to implement the Interstate Compact for Social Work Licensure, ensuring social workers can practice across jurisdictions without unnecessary financial or administrative burdens. As a part of the Compact process, NASW will continue to advocate for alternative licensure pathways inclusion, aiming to enable participation from as many states as possible.

Licensure should recognize knowledge, skills, and lived experience, not serve as a gatekeeping tool that perpetuates systemic barriers. By advocating for accessible, equitable, and competency-based licensure pathways, NASW is working to expand the workforce, strengthen the profession, and ensure every community has access to ethical, effective social work services.

As the leading advocacy organization for social workers in each state, NASW is committed to working with our members, schools, and coalition partners across the country on reforms wherever and whenever possible.

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW), in Washington, DC, is the largest membership organization of professional social workers. It promotes, develops, and protects the practice of social work and social workers. NASW also seeks to enhance the well-being of individuals, families, and communities through its advocacy.

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Presented to:

Maryland Workgroup
on Requirements for
Social Work
Licensure

June 25, 2025



Social Work Licensing Exams: Accommodations

Agenda

Welcome

Lavina Harless, LCSW
Senior Director of Examination Services

Guest perspective

Marette Monson, MBA, LCSW
Disability advocate

Accommodations and Nonstandard testing arrangements

Felicia Dennison
Director of Examination Administration
and
Katelyn Lacy
Examination Administration Program Manager

The importance of Mobility: Disability, Equity, and Accountability in Social Work Licensing

Personal reflections and collective action for testing equity

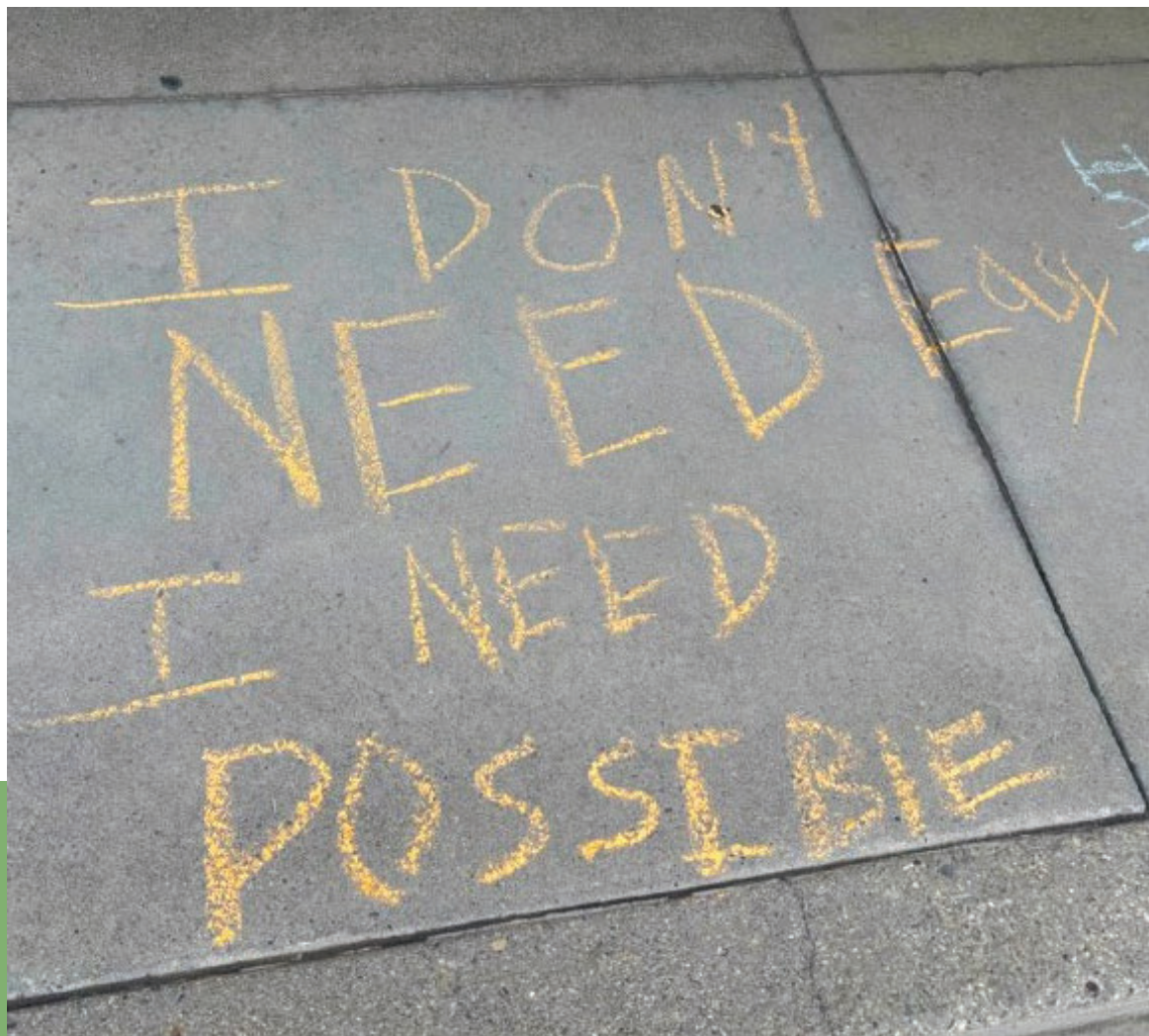
Why Mobility Matters to Me

- Born with Cerebral Palsy
- Spinal cord injury from surgery
- Attended desegregated public school through IDEA
- Got a drivers license at 16.
- Because of the mobility that license provided me, I was able to find a job.



Real Support Means Real Options That We Can Actually Take.

*"It's not a choice for me...
until I had help."*





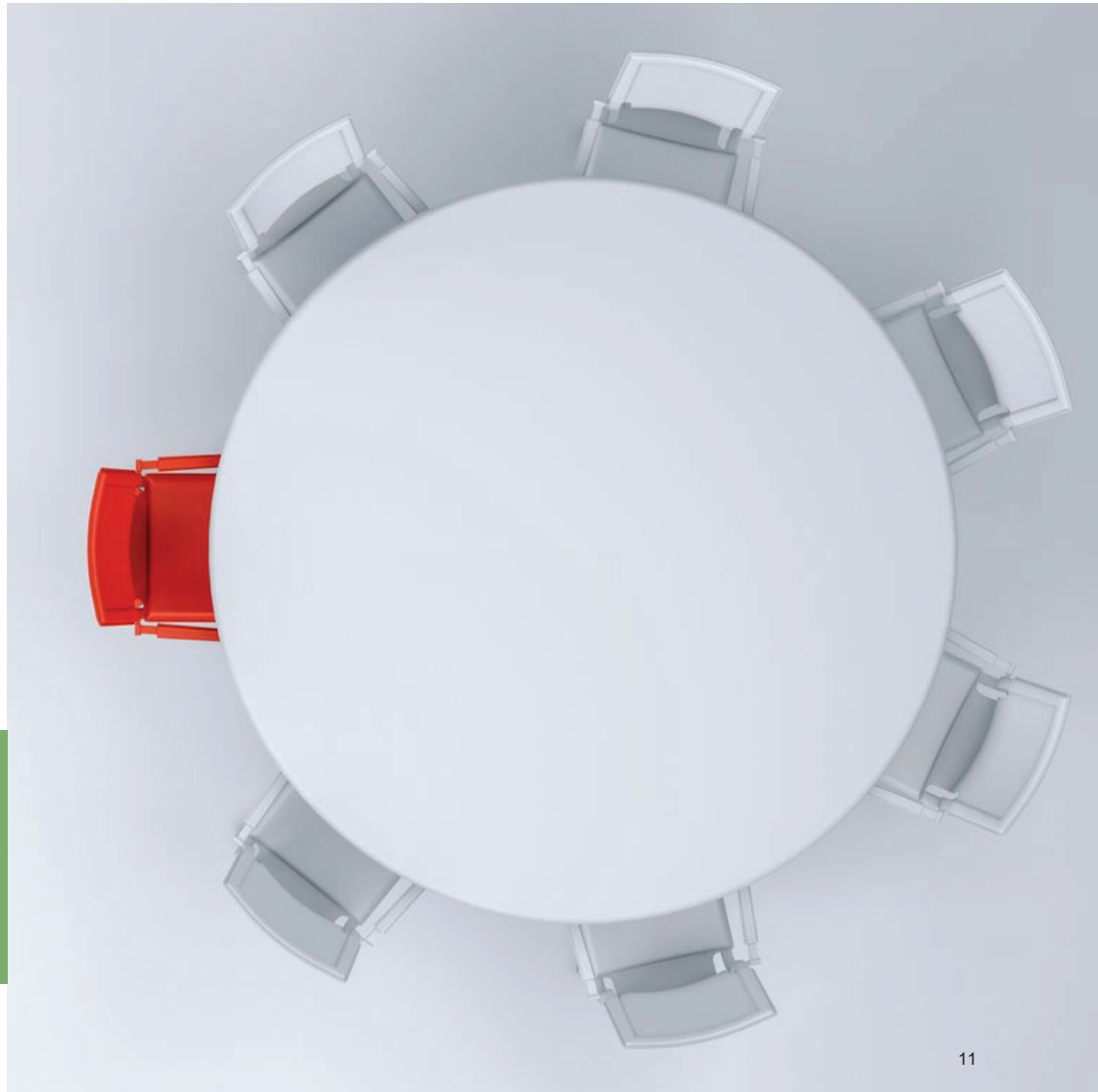
LDA
Learning Disabilities
Association of America



Idac
Learning Disabilities
Association of Canada

**Please do not
eliminate tools we
need to promote
inclusion.**

*Work with us to come up with other solutions to
pass rate disparities.*



ASWBCentral: Our new online dashboard

A one-stop system for test-takers

- Request nonstandard testing arrangements
- Register for a social work licensing exam
- Schedule an exam appointment with Pearson VUE
- Purchase the Online Practice Test
- View and send past exam results to another state or province

Accommodations & Nonstandard testing arrangements

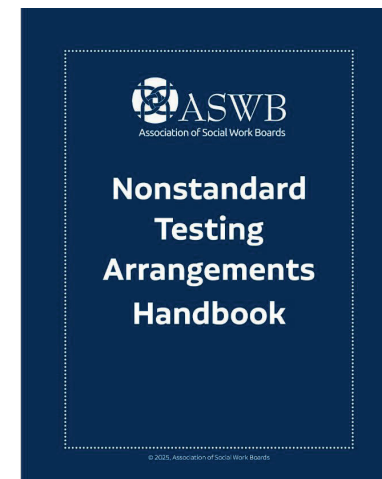
ADA accommodations

- Disability
- Other health conditions

Nonstandard testing arrangements

- English as a second language
- Lactation

[ASWB Nonstandard Testing
Arrangements Handbook](#)



Building understanding of the availability of nonstandard testing arrangements

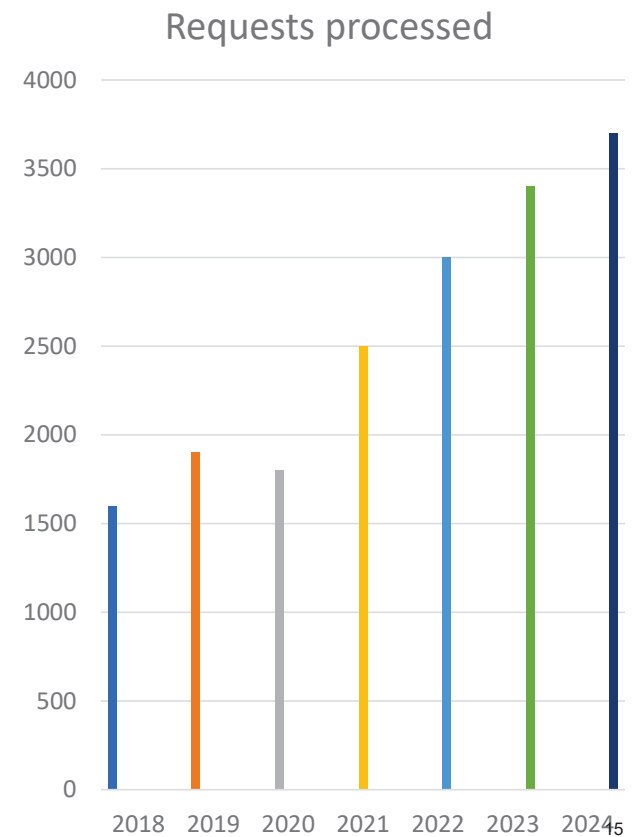
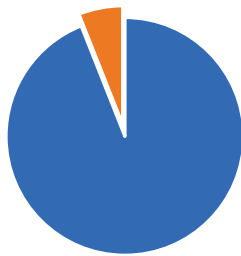
ASWB's resources:

- [Nonstandard testing arrangements pages](#) are on aswb.org.
- The [Nonstandard Testing Arrangements Handbook](#) was launched in 2023.
- Registration process on ASWBCentral includes an invitation to request nonstandard testing arrangements.

Accommodations by the numbers

ASWB provides a variety of arrangements to our candidates and ASWB accommodation numbers generally run much higher than for other similar organizations.

In 2023, about 6 percent of test-takers received approval for nonstandard testing arrangements.



Individualized process

Examples of nonstandard arrangements that may be approved

- Extra time
- Private room
- Lactation arrangements
- Braille/Screen reader
- ASL interpreter
- Reader/Recorder
- ESL arrangements (word-to-word and/or English dictionary)



Accessibility for deaf and hard of hearing candidates

ASWB supports our deaf and hard of hearing candidates with accommodations.



Enhancements to the interpreter process:

- Readers are assigned to ASL interpreters.
- Pearson VUE and UExams assign interpreters according to the interpreter's credentials and following industry standards.
- ASL interpreters are certified by RID.
- When requested, ASWB and Pearson VUE work to secure a CDI with a mental health background.

Questions for the ASWB Special Accommodation Unit from Members of the Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure

- 1) Access Equity & Awareness
 - a) What strategies does ASWB use to ensure that all exam candidates—especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds—are aware of their right to request accommodations?
 - b) How do you address gaps in awareness due to language barriers, digital access limitations, or institutional mistrust?
- 2) Demographic Data on Accommodations
 - a) Does ASWB collect and disaggregate data on who is requesting accommodations (by race, language, disability status, etc.) and who is approved?
 - b) If so, will ASWB share this data to help the Workgroup evaluate if disparities exist in accommodation access or approval rates?
- 3) Cultural Responsiveness in the Accommodations Process
 - a) What training or review protocols are in place to ensure the accommodations team approaches requests with cultural humility and an understanding of racialized, linguistic, or trauma-informed needs?
- 4) Timeliness and Appeals
 - a) What is the average turnaround time for accommodation requests?
 - b) Does ASWB track delays or denials that prevent candidates from testing on their preferred timeline?
 - c) What formal appeals or feedback mechanisms are available, and how are those outcomes tracked?
- 5) Barrier Identification & Reform
 - a) What common barriers has the Special Arrangements Team identified in the documentation or approval process?
 - b) Has the team recommended any policy changes to reduce unnecessary burdens on candidates, especially first-generation test-takers or those without healthcare access to document their needs?
- 6) Use of Accommodations and Exam Outcomes
 - a) Has ASWB conducted any research on how accommodations correlate with pass rates, especially for BIPOC, deaf/hard-of-hearing, and neurodivergent candidates?
 - b) How does the team use this data to inform improvement or outreach efforts?
- 7) Language Access and Interpretation Equity
 - a) Are accommodations consistently granted for test-takers whose first language is not English?
 - b) How does ASWB evaluate and support language-based accommodations beyond what's required under ADA?

Questions for the ASWB Special Accommodation Unit from Members of the Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure

8) Eligibility to get Accommodations

- a) What is the composition of the entity that sets policy and reviews accommodation requests?
- b) Are individuals with a range of disabilities included within this entity or collaborated with on a consultancy basis?
- c) Why are candidates with permanent disabilities required to submit the same information each time they request (the same) accommodations?

9) Equality of the Process for Booking ASWB Exam

- a) Why are deaf candidates required to call to schedule their examination instead of emailing? *This seems counterintuitive. From my personal experience (Dr. Pucci), this takes up to 1 month to have this set up through phone calls and call backs while people without needing accommodations can easily schedule their exam date online on the same day.*
- b) Why are test takers with disabilities given the SAME timeline to take their exam as other test takers without disabilities required to get their doctors' documentation to confirm their disability?
- c) This would take time to get a doctor to fill out the form and send it to ASWB to get approval.

10) Qualifications and Selection of Sign Language Interpreters

- a) How are interpreters selected and hired?
- b) Do you have staff with the requisite expertise to oversee this process?
- c) Are the interpreters you hire experienced with and specifically qualified to interpret standardized tests?
- d) How do you determine if they have the requisite professional and content knowledge to render accurate translations?
- e) Are you familiar with the differences between interpretation and translation?
- f) What knowledge do you have regarding this process with respect to providing access to examinations and with respect to American Sign Language and English?
- g) What preparation materials, including the opportunity to review test questions in advance, are provided for interpreters so that they can render accurate translations?

11) ASWB Research Related to Test Takers with Disabilities

- a) What data is routinely collected from candidates with disabilities to learn about their experiences with ASWB's process for requesting and obtaining accommodations?
- b) What research has ASWB done related to testing people with disabilities? How do you collect and disaggregate test score data on candidates with specific disabilities?

Questions for the ASWB Special Accommodation Unit from Members of the Workgroup on Social Worker Requirements for Licensure

- c) Have you reached out to various populations to learn about their testing experiences with respect to process, format, and content? Surveys? Focus groups?

Questions asked during May Workgroup Meeting-

1. Why are there limited testing dates and sites available for the ASWB exam, particularly in Maryland, leading to long waiting periods and the need for candidates to travel out of state?
2. Who sets the 90-day waiting period to retake the ASWB exam, and what is the reasoning behind this policy? Is there a possibility of waiving this period for candidates within a certain score range of passing?
3. Can ASWB provide information on the recent changes to the exam rules (e.g., division into timed sections) and the notification process for these changes? Why were these changes implemented without advanced documentation, psychometric equivalency studies, and prior notification to the boards of social work?
4. Why does the practice exam (which costs \$85) still reflect the old exam rules (allowing examinees to go back to any question) when the actual exam has changed to timed sections?
5. What is the impact of the switch to Pearson Vue on scheduling?
6. How can the Maryland Board of Social Work better assist social work candidates with questions and concerns regarding the ASWB exam, rather than always referring them directly to ASWB? What mechanisms are in place or could be established for improved liaison and transparency between the state boards and ASWB?

LCSW Licensure Requirements Survey

Background

1. Please select your age category:

- ☐ Under 30
- ☐ 30-39
- ☐ 40-49
- ☐ 50-59
- ☐ 60 and older

2. Please select the category that best describes your sex:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

3. Please select the category that best describes your race/ethnicity

- ☐ White
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Some Other Race
- ☐ Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origins

4. What is the highest social work degree you have earned?

- ☐ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
- ☐ Some Other Race
- ☐ Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish Origins

4. What is the highest social work degree you have earned?

- ☐ Bachelor's degree (BSW)
- ☐ Master's degree (MSW: Micro concentration)
- ☐ Master's degree (MSW: Macro concentration)
- ☐ Doctor of Social Work (DSW)
- ☐ Ph.D. in Social Work

5. What year did you obtain your highest social work degree?

Select your answer

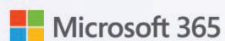


6. Are you a board-approved supervisor?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

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LCSW Licensure Requirements Survey

ASWB and Licensure

7. Should Virginia maintain the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) clinical examination as a requirement for Licensed Clinical Social Work (LCSW) Licensure?

☐ Yes

☐ No

8. Do you think that LCSW applicants should be allowed an alternative licensure pathway regarding the ASWB LSCW examination?

☐ No, under no circumstances should an alternative pathway be allowed

☐ Yes, but without applicants failing the examination first

☐ Yes, after applicants have failed the examination once

☐ Yes, after applicants have failed the examination at least twice

9. Virginia's current licensure law requires that the LCSW examination must be passed within two years. Should this requirement be:

☐ Lengthened

☐ Reduced

☐ Remain unchanged

10. Should MSWs be allowed more than 4 years to complete the supervision requirements toward LCSW licensure?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Remain unchanged

10. Should MSWs be allowed more than 4 years to complete the supervision requirements toward LCSW licensure?

☐ Yes

☐ No

11. Please indicate your feelings on the following sentences:

| | Strongly Disagree | Somewhat Disagree | Neither agree nor disagree | Somewhat agree | Strongly agree |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| The social work licensure exam ensure practitioners meet minimal qualifications | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Requiring the exam builds public trust in social workers' competency | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| Additional hours of supervised practice by a clinical supervisor can be an acceptable substitute for the clinical examination | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| ASWB and its member boards should provide sufficient documentation about the validity, reliability, and psychometric fairness of licensing examinations | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

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