

## Workgroup for Social Work Licensure Requirements

**Date:** April 30, 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 -**
  - A. Roll Call
  - B. Vote on Meeting Minutes
- II. Presentation**
  - A. Senator Mary Washington - SB0379
  - B. Karen Richards - Board of Social Work Examiners Survey Results
- III. Discussion**
  - A. Subgroup Focus
  - B. Changes to the ASWB Exam
    - 1. Dr. Judy Postmus - National Association of Deans and Directors
  - C. ASL Interpreter Requirements for NCLEX
    - 1. Referred to Pearson VUE by the National Council of State Boards of Nursing, MDH is attempting to make contact.
- IV. Public Comment**
- V. Closing and Next Steps**
  - A. ASWB Special Arrangements will present on June 25, 2025
    - 1. Questions for ASWB to be submitted by May 28, 2025
- VI. Upcoming Meeting Schedule**
  - A. May 28, 2025
  - B. June 25, 2025



# MARYLAND

## Department of Health

### MARYLAND BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS

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## Maryland Survey shows overwhelming support for preserving social work national exam and adding a multistate licensure compact

A survey conducted by the MD Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE) reveals overwhelming endorsement for preserving the national licensing exam. This broad support is consistent across all demographics, including age, region, license level, and race and ethnicity.

The social work licensing examination is one part of an overall system that educates, prepares, licenses, and regulates the social work profession. The exam serves as the singular, uniform, objective measure of social work knowledge and skills. Like for other professions, and all Maryland health professions (e.g., doctors, nurses, lawyers and teachers), testing is standard practice to ensure practitioners demonstrate baseline competence and knowledge to deliver professional services.

The survey of 468 social workers licensed in the state of Maryland was conducted between February 7 and February 28, 2025. The margin of error at the 95% confidence level is +/- 3.6%.

The respondents came from a stratified random sample of licensed social workers in Maryland. The survey's response rate was 24.25%, which is consistent with the typical response for online surveys.

### Strong support for national licensing exam

**81.1% Strongly or somewhat agree** that Maryland should keep the licensing exam requirement (59.7% strongly agree)

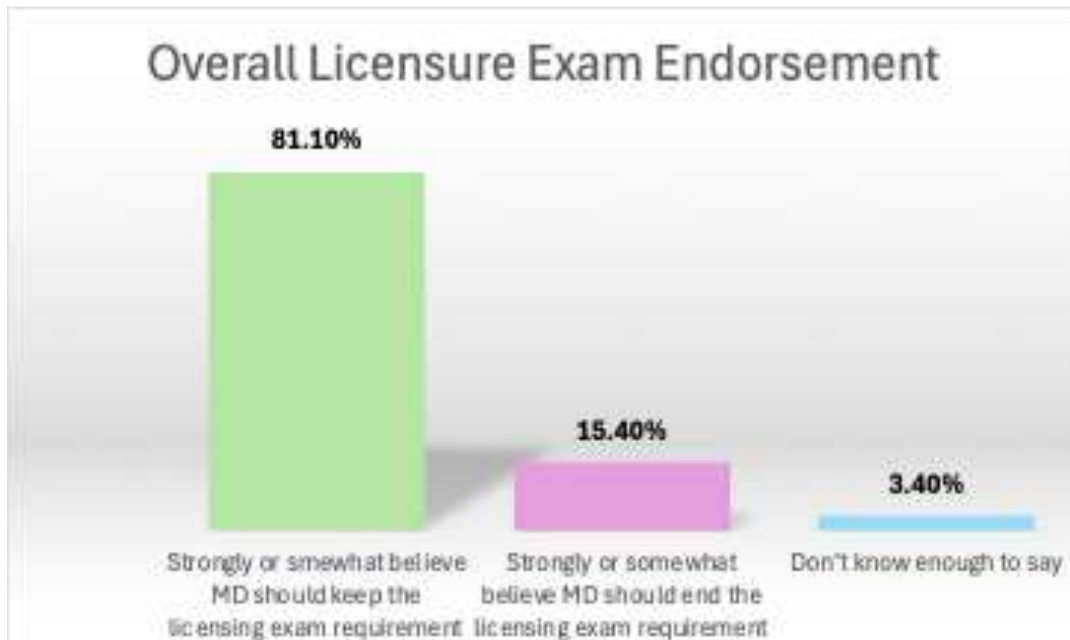
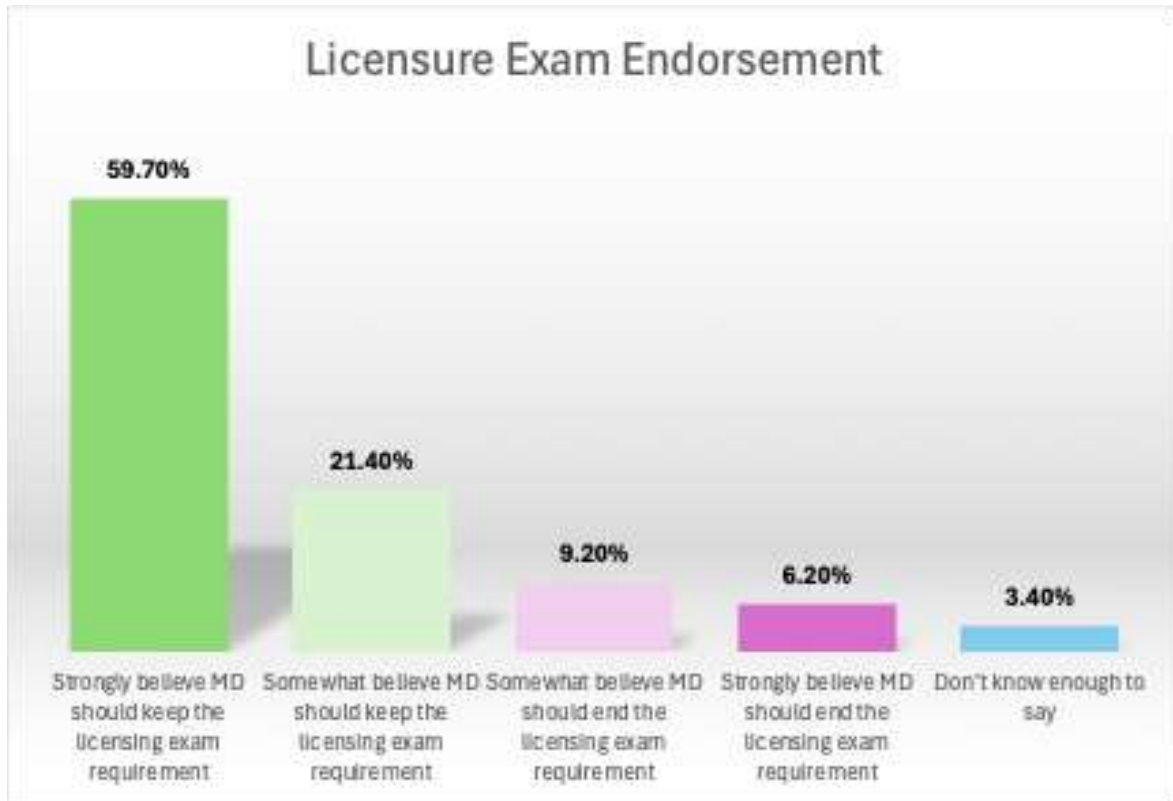
**59.4% Strongly or somewhat agree** that Maryland should keep the **bachelor-level** licensing exam requirement (40.2% strongly agree).

**79.4% Strongly or somewhat agree** that Maryland should keep the **master-level** licensing exam requirement (56.5% strongly agree).

**80.0% Strongly or somewhat agree** that Maryland should keep the **clinical** licensing exam requirement (65.2% strongly agree).

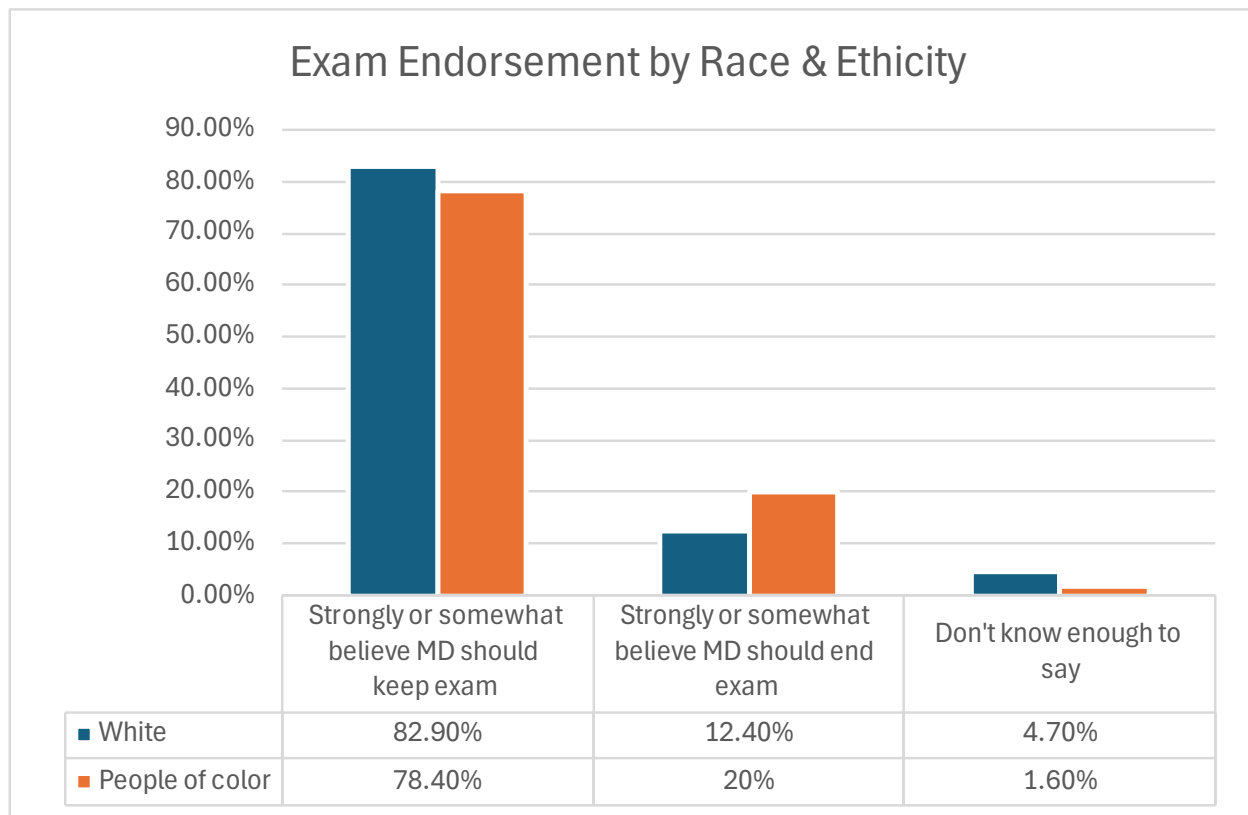
**74.1% Strongly or somewhat agree** that it would be a mistake to remove the social work licensing exam as a requirement for licensure.

Of those whose work entails clinical mental health service provision (325 participants), **80.7% strongly or somewhat believe** that Maryland should keep the national exam as a requirement for licensure.



Statements of support for national exam	Agree or Somewhat Agree
The licensing exam is an important measure of a social worker's competence to serve vulnerable clients.	76.5%
New social workers should be required to take a national exam to become licensed.	81.3%
Requiring the exam to become a licensed practitioner assists in maintaining high professional standards among social workers.	81.9%
Requiring the exam to become a licensed practitioner builds public trust in the competency of social workers as professionals who protect vulnerable populations.	82.0%
The social work licensure exam helps protect the integrity of the social work profession by ensuring practitioners meet minimal qualifications to work with at-risk groups and vulnerable populations.	80.3%
Having a social work degree and a criminal history background check <b>should be sufficient</b> to obtain a social work license in Maryland.	32.0%

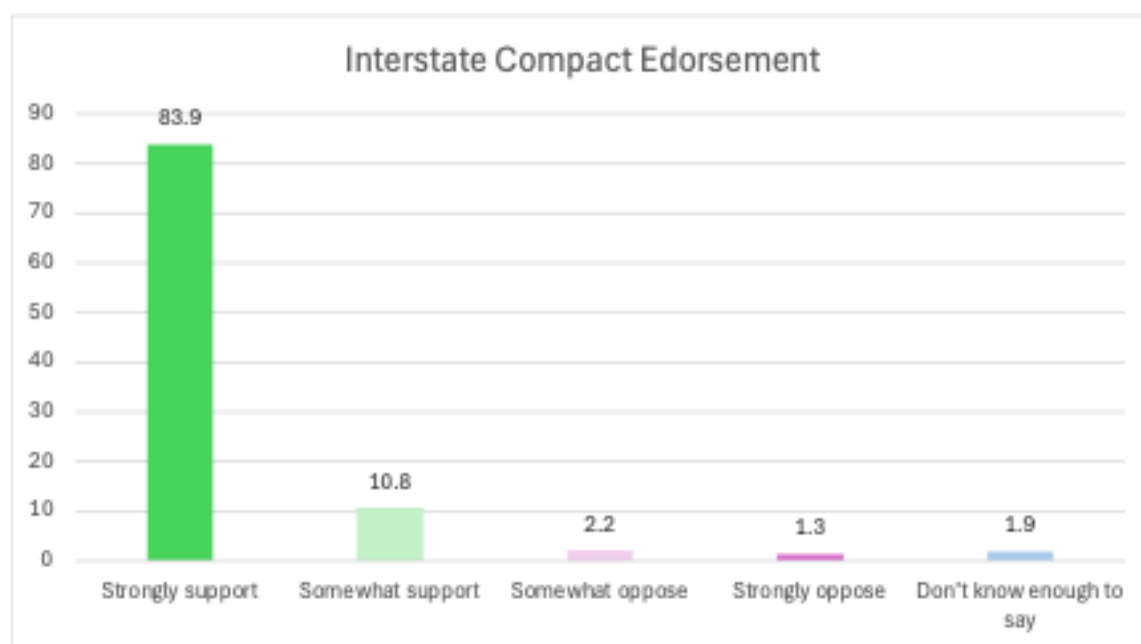
Strong support among people of color	Agree or Somewhat Agree
<p>The majority believe that Maryland should keep the national exam as a requirement for licensure.</p> <p>Percentage of endorsement of national exam within groups:</p>	<p><b>Overall: 78.4%</b></p> <p>Asian: 83.3% Black or African American: 81% Multiracial: 80% Latinx/Hispanic: 68%</p>
<p>The majority believe that new social workers should be required to take a national exam to become licensed.</p> <p>Percentage of endorsement within groups:</p>	<p><b>Overall: 83.2%</b></p> <p>Asian: 83.3% Black or African American: 85.4% Multiracial: 80% Latinx/Hispanic: 76%</p>
<p>The majority believe that it would be a mistake to remove the social work licensing exam as a requirement for licensure.</p> <p>Percentage of endorsement within groups:</p>	<p><b>Overall: 70.6%</b></p> <p>Asian: 83.3% Black or African American: 73% Multiracial: 80% Latinx/Hispanic: 72%</p>

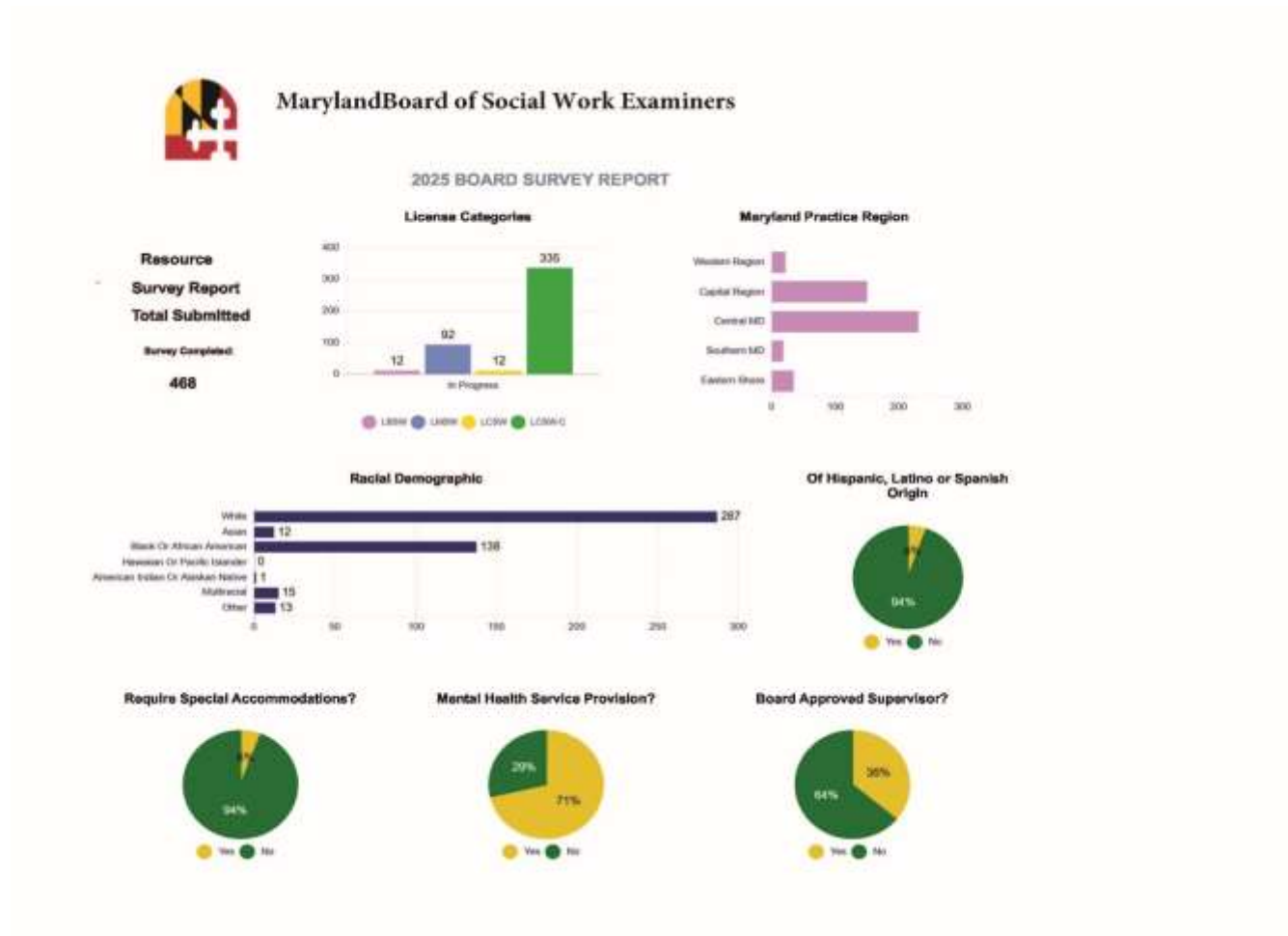


Participants were asked if they supported the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact for Maryland. Under the **Compact**, social workers would have the option to apply for a multi-state license that would allow them to practice in any state that is part of the **Compact**. To qualify for this multi-state license, practitioners **will** need to pass the National Licensing Exam.

### Strong Support for multi-state licensure Compact

Overall support: <b>94.7%</b>	Strongly support the Compact: <b>83.9%</b> Somewhat support the Compact: <b>10.8%</b>
By educational level	Bachelor's license holders (LBSW): <b>83.3%</b> Master's license holders (LMSW): <b>93.5%</b> Master's license holders (LCSW): <b>91.7%</b> Clinical license holders (LCSW-C): <b>95.2%</b>
Support from people of color: <b>93.7%</b>	Strongly support the Compact: <b>83.1%</b> Somewhat support the Compact: <b>10.6%</b>





**Workgroup for Pathways to Licensure Subgroup  
formerly: Social Worker Licensure Requirements Subgroup  
DRAFT 4/28/2025**

**Members:** Present: Christa Gilliam & Simone Bramble, Temeka Bailey, Kristine Garlitz, Robin Harvey, and Dale Atkinson.

**Mandate for Subgroup:**

Focus is requested on recommendations for alternative testing pathways, including additional hours, training/CEUs/modules, and supervision.

**Recommendations for alternative testing pathways:**

1. **Additional hours:** To strengthen clinical competency and supervision standards, an individual pursuing clinical licensure would maintain the minimum of 3,000 hours of supervised clinical social work practice; however, the policy should increase the minimum direct client contact hours from 1,500 to 2,000 ensuring greater depth of hands-on clinical experience. Additionally, the required minimum of face-to-face supervision hours should be increased from 100 to 150 hours to provide more consistent and intensive clinical oversight, thereby enhancing professional development and ensuring a higher standard of client care.
2. **Training/CEUs/modules:** It is recommended that the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners establish a committee to develop a specialized training module for Board-approved supervisors. This module would create a standardized, objective protocol for evaluating a candidate's readiness for clinical licensure, supporting the development of an alternative pathway to licensure. The specialized training would be required in addition to the current three (3) continuing education (CEU) requirements for Board approved supervisors in Maryland. Furthermore, Board approved clinical non-social work professionals, holding an equivalent clinical license (LCPC, Psy D, LCADC, LMFT e.g.), who supervise social work candidates would be required to complete this training module annually to ensure the maintenance of ethical standards specific to social work practice, recognizing that such standards may differ from those of their own professional disciplines. This approach would promote consistency, fairness, and transparency in supervisory evaluations, ensuring that all candidates are assessed based on clearly defined competencies and professional standards.

**and**

3. **Supervision-** The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners should establish a list that identifies agencies and organizations offering board-approved supervision as a way to support workforce development, streamline recruitment, and expand access to affordable or employer-sponsored supervision options. Organizations included would provide



## RECOMMENDATIONS 4/28/25: Subgroup: **Pathway to Licensure Requirements Subgroup**

documented supervision hours under licensed supervisors and meet current licensing board requirements. By participating, these agencies demonstrate a commitment to growing the professional workforce, addressing shortages, and helping applicants access critical pathways to licensure.

### **Original Mandate for Subgroup- Social Worker Licensure Requirements:**

#### **Recommendations on Testing - the mandate for this group is twofold:**

1. First: Recommendations on continuing the use of the ASWB exam for the LBSW and LMSW, whether to establish a temporary license for those who meet the LBSW/ LMSW requirements but have not passed the ASWB exam, how supervision could be provided to LBSWs/LMSWs at no cost to the licensees.
2. Second: Complete Licensure Examinations as stipulated by SB 871 Section 2, Subsection h (found on page 8 of the bill)

### **Recommendations from 11/07/2024**

#### **Recommendation1: Temporary License/LCSW:**

1. 3-year moratorium on exams to allow adequate time for additional inquiry to explore and eliminate disparities in the current exam. This should include getting data independent of ASWB to ensure thorough review of the exam.
2. Explore alternate exam vendors that will allow selection of broader options for test takers.
3. Approved test vendor(s) should make all examination prep materials free.
4. There should be a single fee for the exam (no fee to retest).
5. Approved test vendors should provide an annual report of pass rates based on intersecting identities including race, age, disability, gender etc.
6. Truncate the 90-day limit between testing attempts.
7. Provide specific feedback on incorrect answers and allow test takers to only retake the section of the exam that they did not pass.
8. After one failed attempt, allow the option of selecting an alternative pathway to licensure described above.
9. Adopt point waiver system that allows test takers an established range to receive a pass outcome. The point waiver should be retroactive for review and consideration of test takers who met the established criteria within the past 7 years.
10. Considerations for Deaf and Hard of Hearing colleagues should include:
  - a. Ensure that interpreters are well-versed in social work terminology, testing environments in addition to being bilingual ASL- English translations.
  - b. Higher point waivers to account for potential interpretation challenges
11. Streamlined process to support testing accommodations for disabled test takers.
12. Offer exam versions in multiple languages.
13. Following elimination of racially biased content, exam questions should include a maximum of 3 multiple choice options.
14. Establish an ongoing task force to maintain accountability by monitoring variables contributing to identified disparities in pass rates.

## RECOMMENDATIONS 4/28/25: Subgroup: **Pathway to Licensure Requirements Subgroup**

15. There should be clear communication regarding conditions and results of the required background check PRIOR to test takers sitting for the exam.

Recommendation 2: A provisional/temporary license would counter chronic workforce shortages and lack of representation in various social work settings. It would also increase earning potential and opportunity for underrepresented groups in social work settings. An alternative pathway would include:

- a. Increased supervision hours provided by a board approved, licensed clinical social worker (see recommendation in later section on mitigating financial burden). This would be in addition to meeting the requirement of graduating from a CSWE accredited university.
- b. Completing a specified number of supervised practice hours.
- c. Satisfying the background check.
- d. Provisional licensure without examination could also include ongoing completion of highly regulated CEUs (also need to consider additional financial burden resulting from lower earning potential).

SB 871 (Chapter 228) Interim Report Requirement: iii) How supervision may be provided to Bachelor Social Worker licensees and Master Social Worker licensees at no cost to the licensees.

Recommendation 2.1: Allow board approved licensed clinical supervisors to receive Category II CEU credit in exchange for providing supervision to LBSWs/LMSWs at no cost. This recommendation would mitigate mutual financial burden for the supervisor and supervisee.

Recommendation 2.2: Consider an incentive that could be provided to employers who offer access to board approved supervisors which would eliminate the additional out of cost expense for test takers.

### Recommendation 3: Grandparenting/Grandfathering:

Social workers licensed at the LMSW level who have previously taken the exam LCSW or LCSW-C exam and failed it would be eligible to be grandfathered in at the LCSW/LCSW-C level with

- Current licensed (LMSW) with a least 3 years of experience practicing at as a LMSW
  - Applicants would need to provide evidence of work history

**Workgroup for Social Worker Licensure Requirements  
Pathways to Licensure Subgroup (Previously Recommendations on Testing Subgroup)**

**Virtual Meeting**

**March 31, 2025**

**9-10am**

**Members/Attendees:** Present: Christa Gilliam, Temeka Bailey, Simone Bramble, Kristine Garlitz, Robin Harvey, and Dale Atkinson.

**Revised Mandate for Subgroup:**

Focus is requested on recommendations for alternative testing pathways, including additional hours, training/CEUs/modules, and supervision.

**Meeting Highlights:**

- Acknowledged updated name and new charge for subgroup
- Brief recap of draft previously submitted by subgroup, noting some overlap with the revised focus
- Members of the subgroup were not clear on whether supervision recommendations should focus on the supervisor or supervisee. Either way, members felt it may be beneficial to review existing protocols implemented by other states to inform additional recommendations by this subgroup.
- Need to ensure objective supervision measures/standards to determine a candidate's readiness to move forward in the licensure process.
- Discussed some of the pros and cons of incorporating a portion of supervision hours provided by other mental health disciplines:
  - *Pros:*
    - Increases access to supervision options for supervisees
  - *Cons:*
    - Maintaining social work specific ethical standards and supervision objectives which may be different when contrasted with standards of other disciplines
  - Other Considerations:
    - Non-social work professionals who supervise social workers should be required to complete ongoing, mandatory CEUs in social work supervision. This requirement would ensure consistency in supervisory standards, promote adherence to the values and ethics of the social work profession, and enhance the quality of support and accountability provided to social workers.
- Discussed current requirements for board approved supervisor status in Maryland and how this may need to be further expanded if social work supervisors will be responsible for making recommendations on an applicant's readiness for licensure.
  - Increased bi-annual supervision focused CEUs (currently set at 3 CEUs)

- Additional training should focus on objective framework for determining an applicant's readiness
- Offering Category 2 CEUs to supervisors to incentivize providing additional supervision to supervisees
- Benefit of a public list of agencies/organizations that offer board approved supervision could act as a form of endorsement, streamlining recruitment for organizations facing workforce shortages while also supporting applicants by expanding access to affordable or employer-sponsored supervision options.
- Discussed possible need to increase required supervision hours with alternative pathway to ensure an applicant's readiness for licensure.
- Process must be clearly written and enforced with consideration for what happens if supervision hours are not accepted:
  - This may fall under the policy subgroup
- Members agreed to reconvene before the next large workgroup meeting to discuss any updates/changes to the previous draft that Dr. Gilliam shared with the group.

**Next Steps:**

- Dr. Gilliam will clarify if the subgroup's charge on "supervision" should be focused on the supervisor or supervisee.
- All subgroup members will review and make suggested edits/track changes/comments to the previous document shared by Dr. Gilliam, prior to the next subgroup meeting.
- Members agreed to meet on Monday, April 28, 2025 at 9am to discuss updates or modifications to previous recommendations.

## Workgroup for Social Worker Licensure Requirements Pathways to Licensure Subgroup

**Virtual Meeting**  
**April 28, 2025**  
**9-10am**

**Members/Attendees:** Present: Christa Gilliam, Temeka Bailey, Kristine Garlitz, Robin Harvey.  
*Absent: Simone Bramble and Dale Atkinson.*

### **Revised Mandate for Subgroup:**

Focus is requested on recommendations for alternative testing pathways, including additional hours, training/CEUs/modules, and supervision.

### **Meeting Highlights:**

- In keeping with the subcommittee's refined focus, members in attendance continued the discussion on alternative testing pathways, including increasing direct client contact hours and face-to-face supervision, and the establishment of a specialized committee to develop a standardized training module for board-approved supervisors. We also considered refining the language for non-social work professionals and the possibility of maintaining temporary licensure for candidates going through the alternative process. Below are the proposed recommendations:
  - **Additional hours:** To strengthen clinical competency and supervision standards, an individual pursuing clinical licensure would maintain the minimum of 3,000 hours of supervised clinical social work practice; however, the policy should increase the minimum direct client contact hours from 1,500 to 2,000 ensuring greater depth of hands-on clinical experience. Additionally, the required minimum of face-to-face supervision hours should be increased from 100 to 150 hours to provide more consistent and intensive clinical oversight, thereby enhancing professional development and ensuring a higher standard of client care.
  - **Training/CEUs/modules:** It is recommended that the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners establish a committee to develop a specialized training module for Board-approved supervisors. This module would create a standardized, objective protocol for evaluating a candidate's readiness for clinical licensure, supporting the development of an alternative pathway to licensure. The specialized training would be required in addition to the current continuing education (CEU) requirements for Board approved supervisors in Maryland. Furthermore, Board approved clinical non-social work professionals, holding an equivalent clinical license (LCPC, Psy D, LCADC, LMFT e.g.), who supervise social work candidates would be required to complete this training module annually to ensure the maintenance of ethical standards specific to social work practice, recognizing that such standards may differ from those of their own

professional disciplines. This approach would promote consistency, fairness, and transparency in supervisory evaluations, ensuring that all candidates are assessed based on clearly defined competencies and professional standards.

- **Supervision-** The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners should establish a list that identifies agencies and organizations offering board-approved supervision as a way to support workforce development, streamline recruitment, and expand access to affordable or employer-sponsored supervision options. Organizations included would provide documented supervision hours under licensed supervisors and meet current licensing board requirements. By participating, these agencies demonstrate a commitment to growing the professional workforce, addressing shortages, and helping applicants access critical pathways to licensure.

**Next Steps:**

- Dr. Gilliam will forward updated recommendations to Cynthia Whitehead to be shared with the larger workgroup.

Hello Karla,

I am not sure of my ability to be at the workgroup meeting tomorrow during public comment, so I wanted to share some of my thoughts about the BSWE survey to be entered into the record.

As a Maryland resident, I rely on my government to utilize unbiased resources to obtain accurate information to make the best decisions for Marylanders. The content of this survey revealed its incredibly biased intention. It sought to achieve a result that showed social workers support exams, which it succeeded at very well. However, **this result should not by any means be considered a reliable source for contemplating policy decisions.** I'm horrified that this "survey" was sent out to social workers with the veneer of obtaining opinions of social workers to shape BSWE advocacy. This "survey" confirmed what BSWE has already been advocating for - keeping exams in place for the benefit of ASWB at the expense of Maryland social workers and Marylanders in need of culturally competent services.

I would also add that even an unbiased survey would be mostly a distraction; this workgroup was convened as a group of **experts** to discuss licensing reform in Maryland. Just because a social worker has an opinion does not mean they fully understand the issues and nuances as the members of this workgroup do. The workgroup results should, therefore, be more trusted than this push poll "survey."

Even without looking at the content of the survey itself, there are some troubling statistics behind it:

- Only 456 social workers responded to the survey. This is 2.5% of social workers. For a topic of this level of importance, more if not all social workers deserved the opportunity to respond.
- LCSW-C license holders, meaning license holders who were able to pass both exams, are overrepresented in the survey results. They represent about 65% of all licensed social workers but about 72% of survey respondents.
- White respondents, meaning, social workers not likely to be affected by the bias of ASWB exams, represent about 55% of licensed social workers and 50% of the Maryland population but 61% of respondents.
- Colloquially, the email that sent the "survey" was unclear, with some social workers wondering if it was spam. The email did not appear to come from the BSWE. How this might have affected results cannot be known, but it is a significant barrier to achieving a higher response rate.
- There is no specificity regarding how different demographic groups responded, just "white" and "people of color." Many demographics were too small to analyze on their own, but over 130 Black social workers responded. With this demographic group most negatively affected by ASWB exams, they deserved their own analysis.

If the BSWE and ASWB truly believe that this survey is unbiased, I am genuinely concerned about their judgment, and I hope legislators and DOH staff will pay closer attention to **every** decision they make. I used ChatGPT to analyze both the BSWE

announcement in January and the survey itself. Even ChatGPT detected the incredible bias, suggesting a far more even-handed survey designed to achieve accurate, unbiased results (included as an attachment in this email). Any social worker has passed a research methods class, so we should all be capable of creating a far superior survey than this one.

Thank you for allowing me to comment for this meeting.

Sincerely,  
Rachel Doyle, LICSW



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## **Board of Social Work Examiners BSWE Licensure Survey**

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this online survey research project. The **Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners** is interested in gathering your thoughts regarding licensure in our state.

This study is for research purposes only.

The following questions will help us understand who is responding to the survey. These responses will not identify you as an individual in any way.

### **Questions:**

- What is your racial background?
- Other
- Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
- What is your age?

### **Maryland Regions:**

- **Western Region** (*Garrett County, Allegany County, Washington County*)
- **Capital Region** (*Frederick County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County*)
- **Central Maryland** (*Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Carroll County, Harford County, Howard County*)
- **Southern Maryland** (*Calvert County, Charles County, St. Mary's County*)
- **Eastern Shore Maryland** (*Kent County, Queen Anne's County, Talbot County, Caroline County, Dorchester County, Wicomico County, Somerset County, Worcester County, Cecil County*)

### **Questions:**

- In which of the five Maryland regions do you predominantly practice?
- Do you require any accommodations for testing, such as for the National Social Work Licensure Exam?
- At what level are you licensed?
- Does your job entail any type of clinical mental health service provision?
- Are you a Board-approved supervisor?

### **Section Two:**

In this section, you are going to read a list of statements about social work licensure. For each one, please indicate if you agree or disagree with the statement.

### **Options:**

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neutral/neither agree or disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree

**Statements:**

- The licensing exam is an important measure of a social worker's competence to serve vulnerable clients.
- New social workers should be required to take a national exam to become licensed.
- It would be a mistake to remove the social work licensure exam as a requirement for licensure.
- Having a social work degree and a criminal history background check should be sufficient to obtain a social work license in Maryland.
- Requiring the exam to become a licensed practitioner assists in maintaining high professional standards among social workers.
- Requiring the exam to become a licensed practitioner assists in maintaining high professional standards among social workers.
- Requiring the exam to become a licensed practitioner builds public trust in the competency of social workers as professionals who protect vulnerable populations.
- The social work licensure exam helps protect the integrity of the social work profession by ensuring practitioners meet minimal qualifications to work with at-risk groups and vulnerable populations.

**Section Three:**

The following questions seek your opinion regarding the elimination of the national social work licensure examination in Maryland. Three questions break down licensure by level. Although they may feel repetitive, your responses will help us understand your opinion on the need for the licensure exam at all or some levels of social work practice.

All health occupation professions in Maryland, including social work, require practitioners to take a licensing exam as a minimal qualification to become a licensed practitioner. Do you support the elimination of the national exam requirement for social work licensure in Maryland?

- Should Maryland discontinue requiring passage of a national examination as a license requirement for a bachelor's-level (LBSW) social work license?
- Should Maryland discontinue requiring passage of a national examination as a license requirement for a master's-level (LMSW) social work license?
- Should Maryland discontinue requiring passage of a national examination as a license requirement for a clinical-level (LCSW-C) social work license?

**This question is about the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact.**

NASW-Maryland plans to sponsor a bill for the 2025 legislative session that would allow Maryland to join the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact. Under the Compact, social workers would have the option to apply for a multi-state license that would allow them to practice in any state that is part of the Compact. To qualify for this multi-state license, practitioners will need to pass the National Licensing Exam.

- Do you support the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact for Maryland?
- Do you have any other comments regarding the elimination of the national social work licensure exam in Maryland at any or all practice levels?

## ChatGPT Analysis of BSWE Survey

This survey appears to have a bias toward maintaining the national social work licensure exam requirement. Here's why:

### **Potential Bias in Wording & Structure:**

#### **1. Leading Questions & Framing:**

- Statements like *"It would be a mistake to remove the social work licensing exam as a requirement for licensure."* suggest a negative consequence if the exam is removed.
- The section on maintaining the exam emphasizes its importance in ensuring competence, professionalism, and protecting vulnerable populations, without presenting counterarguments.

#### **2. Lack of Neutral Phrasing & Balance:**

- The survey does not present potential downsides of the exam, such as its possible barriers for marginalized groups or concerns about its effectiveness in measuring competence.
- There are no questions asking whether respondents believe alternative assessment methods could be equally valid.

#### **3. Placement of the Interstate Compact Question:**

- The question about supporting the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact states that *"To qualify for this multi-state license, practitioners will need to pass the National Licensing Exam,"* reinforcing the necessity of the exam. This could prime respondents to view the exam as essential rather than optional.

### **What's Missing?**

- Questions that explore alternative perspectives, such as:
  - *Do you believe the national exam adequately assesses a social worker's ability to serve diverse communities?*
  - *Have you encountered or observed barriers to licensure due to the exam?*
  - *What alternative methods of assessing social work competence do you think could be effective?*
- A more neutral way of presenting the issue, rather than emphasizing only the benefits of the exam.

### **Conclusion:**

This survey subtly encourages respondents to support keeping the licensure exam, rather than objectively assessing a range of perspectives. If the goal is to collect unbiased feedback, the survey should include more balanced phrasing, neutral response options, and a broader range of questions that allow respondents to consider both pros and cons.

Would you like help revising it for neutrality?

## **ChatGPT Survey Revision**

Here's a revised version of the survey with more neutral language and balanced questions to capture a wider range of perspectives.

This revised survey ensures neutrality by:

- ✓ Removing leading language (e.g., "It would be a mistake...")
- ✓ Presenting both the benefits and drawbacks of the exam
- ✓ Including alternative perspectives, such as competency-based assessments
- ✓ Allowing for nuanced responses rather than steering answers toward one viewpoint

### **Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE) Licensure Survey**

Thank you for participating in this research survey. The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners is seeking input regarding social work licensure in our state. Your responses will help inform future decisions about licensure requirements. This study is for research purposes only, and your responses will remain confidential.

#### **Section One: Demographics**

These questions help us understand who is responding to the survey.

1. What is your racial background?
2. Are you of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?
3. What is your age?
4. In which of the five Maryland regions do you predominantly practice?
  - Western Region
  - Capital Region
  - Central Maryland
  - Southern Maryland
  - Eastern Shore Maryland
5. Do you require any accommodations for testing, such as for the National Social Work Licensure Exam?
6. At what level are you licensed?
7. Does your job entail any type of clinical mental health service provision?
8. Are you a Board-approved supervisor?

#### **Section Two: Perspectives on Social Work Licensure**

For each statement, please indicate your level of agreement.

##### **Response Options:**

- Strongly Agree
- Somewhat Agree
- Neutral/Neither Agree Nor Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

### Statements:

1. The national social work licensing exam is an important measure of a social worker's competence to serve clients.
2. New social workers should be required to take a national exam to obtain licensure.
3. The licensing exam is an effective way to assess a social worker's ability to practice ethically and competently.
4. There are alternative methods, such as supervised experience or competency-based evaluations, that could be used in place of a national licensing exam.
5. The licensing exam may present barriers to entry into the social work profession for some individuals.
6. Requiring a national exam is necessary to maintain high professional standards in social work.
7. A combination of education, supervised experience, and background checks should be sufficient for social work licensure.
8. The licensing exam contributes to public trust in the competency of social workers.

### Section Three: Perspectives on Licensure Requirements

1. Should Maryland continue requiring passage of a national licensing exam for the following levels of licensure?
  - **Bachelor's-level (LBSW):** Yes / No / Unsure
  - **Master's-level (LMSW):** Yes / No / Unsure
  - **Clinical-level (LCSW-C):** Yes / No / Unsure
2. Some have proposed eliminating the national exam requirement for social work licensure in Maryland. What is your position on this issue?
  - I support keeping the exam requirement at all licensure levels.
  - I support eliminating the exam requirement at some licensure levels.
  - I support eliminating the exam requirement at all licensure levels.
  - I am unsure or need more information.
3. What concerns, if any, do you have about removing the licensing exam as a requirement?
4. What concerns, if any, do you have about keeping the licensing exam as a requirement?

### Section Four: Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Maryland Chapter plans to propose legislation in 2025 for Maryland to join the **Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact**. Under this Compact, social workers would have the option to apply for a multi-state license, allowing them to practice in any state that is part of the Compact. The Compact would require applicants to pass the National Licensing Exam.

1. Do you support Maryland joining the Interstate Social Work Licensure Compact?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Unsure
2. Do you have any concerns about Maryland joining the Compact?
3. Do you have any additional comments regarding the national social work licensure exam or licensure policies in Maryland?

**Board of Social Work Examiners Newsletter Announcement, January 13, 2025**

The Board of Social Work Examiners would like to hear from licensees! With the possibility of legislation this year seeking to eliminate the licensing exam from licensing requirements. The Board has voted to survey our licensed social workers. The Board wants to be sure when advocating for a position that it is the position shared by the majority of licensees. In order to manage the data, the Board will RANDOMLY select a proportional sample from the four license levels: LBSW, LMSW, LCSW, and LCSW-C. The survey [sic] will collect demographic data as well as answers to questions about licensure and the exam. If you are selected to participate, you will receive the survey via the current email we have on file for you. PLEASE fill it out completely and as soon as possible. THANK YOU

## ChatGPT Analysis of BSWE Announcement

This announcement raises a few red flags in terms of neutrality and methodology. Here's what stands out:

1. **Bias in Framing** – The announcement refers to "the possibility of legislation this year seeking to eliminate the licensing exam." While technically accurate, this framing subtly implies that elimination is a major threat, rather than a reform effort supported by many. A more neutral phrasing would acknowledge both sides of the debate.
2. **Advocacy vs. Inquiry** – The Board states, *"The Board wants to be sure when advocating for a position that it is the position shared by the majority of licensees."* This suggests they are approaching the survey with an advocacy agenda rather than an impartial data-gathering approach. A truly neutral body would frame it as, *"The Board seeks to understand the perspectives of licensees to inform its approach."* The wording suggests they will take a position based on majority rule, which doesn't always equate to what is fair or just.
3. **Random Sampling & Transparency** – While they mention a "randomly selected proportional sample," they don't clarify key details:
  - How large is the sample?
  - How will they ensure diversity in responses?
  - Will the results be made public?
  - Who is designing and analyzing the survey?
4. Without transparency, there's a risk of the sample being skewed in ways that could reinforce the Board's pre-existing stance.
5. **Exclusion of All Licensees** – Not all licensed social workers will get a chance to participate. Given the significance of this issue, why not conduct a full survey open to all licensees? Random sampling is a valid research method, but in a case like this—where every licensee is affected—restricting participation could be problematic.
6. **Typo ("Survry" Instead of "Survey")** – This is minor, but for an official Board announcement, it doesn't inspire confidence in attention to detail.

### Final Thoughts

This announcement suggests the Board may be shaping the survey in a way that supports a pre-determined position rather than genuinely assessing licensee views. If the Board were committed to a fully transparent and neutral process, they would provide clear details on methodology, analysis, and how the results will be used.

If you or others are concerned, it might be worth pushing for:

- ✓ A fully open survey available to all licensees.
- ✓ Transparency on how responses will be analyzed and shared.
- ✓ Clarity on how the Board will weigh the results in their advocacy.

It's good that they're engaging licensees, but the way they're going about it raises concerns about fairness and neutrality. What do you think?



### **ChatGPT Rewrite of Announcement**

#### **Subject: BSWE Licensure Survey – Share Your Input**

The Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners (BSWE) is conducting a survey to gather input from licensed social workers regarding the current licensure process, including the role of the national licensing exam. This survey is part of an effort to better understand the perspectives of licensees, particularly in light of potential legislative discussions on this issue.

To ensure a manageable and representative dataset, the Board will randomly select a proportional sample of licensees across the four license levels: LBSW, LMSW, LCSW, and LCSW-C. The survey will collect demographic data and ask questions about licensure and the licensing exam.

If you are selected to participate, you will receive the survey via the email currently on file with the Board. We encourage you to complete it as soon as possible to ensure your perspective is included.

Thank you for your time and input!