

IN THE MATTER OF * **BEFORE THE MARYLAND**
FAUNDA CROWSON, LMSW * **STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL**
RESPONDENT * **WORK EXAMINERS**
LICENSE NUMBER: 21185 (Expired) * **Case Number: 2020-2768**

* * * * *

FINAL ORDER

On or about March 4, 2022, the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners (the “Board”) formally charged FAUNDA H. CROWSON, LMSW (the “Respondent”), License Number 21185 (Expired) with violating the Maryland Social Workers Practice Act (the “Act”), Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. (“Health Occ.”) §§ 19-101 *et seq.* (2021 Repl. Vol.).

Specifically, the Board charged the Respondent with violating the following provisions of the Act and COMAR 10.44 *et seq.*:

Health Occ. § 19-311. Grounds for license denials, discipline

Subject to the hearing provisions of § 19-312 of this subtitle, the Board may deny a license to any applicant, reprimand any licensee, place any licensee on probation, or suspend or revoke a license if the applicant or licensee:

- (1) **Obtained or attempted to obtain a license for the applicant or licensee or for another through fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation;**

[...]

- (6) Violates any provision of this title or regulations governing the practice of social work adopted and published by the Board[.]

Health Occ. § 19-308. Expiration, renewal of license

Renewals.

- (d) Before the license expires, the licensee periodically may renew it for an additional 2-year term, if the licensee:

[...]

- (3) Submits to the Board:

[...]

(ii) Satisfactory evidence of compliance with any continuing education requirement set under this section for license renewal.

COMAR 10.42.06.06. Reporting, Documenting, and Auditing Compliance with Continuing Education Requirements.

A. A social worker who has completed the continuing education requirements shall attest to that on a form supplied by the Board as part of the application for license renewal, reinstatement, or reactivation.

B. The Board shall audit a percentage of social workers, to be selected by the Board, for each renewal period.

C. On request by the Board, a social worker shall provide full documentation of the continuing education units completed in accordance with the requirements of § D of this regulation.

D. Documentation. A social worker shall provide to the Board:

(1) An official transcript for continuing education units earned in a course taken for credit;

(2) A certificate of completion for approved programs [.]

[...]

F. Responsibility for Conducting the Audits.

(1) The Board staff shall:

(a) Review and evaluate the documentation submitted for purpose of the audits; and

(b) Report the findings to the Board.

(2) The Board may require a social worker to submit a copy of the purpose, objectives, and content areas from the continuing education program.

(3) The Board may require a social worker to obtain additional continuing education units if a program is disapproved as a result of a review and evaluation.

(4) The Board may take disciplinary action under COMAR 10.42.04 against any social worker who fraudulently attests to or does not submit continuing education documentation.

(5) A licensee who fails to complete the continuing education requirements within the time frame specified under Regulation .03 of this chapter may be subject to informal or formal discipline for failure to meet the requirements.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On March 4, 2022, via certified mail, the Board sent the Respondent Notice of Charges Under the Maryland Social Work Act, along with notice of a Case Resolution Conference (CRC) to be held on April 26, 2022. Due to Board member unavailability, the matter was first postponed to June 11, 2022. The Board sent the Respondent proper and timely notice via mail and e-mail, but the Respondent was not present. The Board decided to attempt to contact the Respondent through alternative means and rescheduled the matter to October 12, 2022.

The Respondent was present at the October 12, 2022 Case Resolution Conference and confirmed her contact information with Board staff. The Board did not receive any further communications or response from the Respondent following the October 2022 Case Resolution Conference.

On February 7, 2023, the Assigned Prosecutor for the State attempted to contact the Respondent via the email address which Respondent provided to the Board and Counsel in October. The Respondent did not reply to the Prosecutor's email, and the Prosecutor did not receive a read receipt indicating that the Respondent had opened the email message.

On March 9, 2023, the State sent another email to the Respondent, via the email address which Respondent provided to the Board and to Counsel in October of 2022. The Respondent did not respond to the email, and the Prosecutor did not receive a read receipt indicating that the Respondent had not opened the email message.

On April 18, 2023, via regular and certified mail, the Board sent the Respondent a Notice of Evidentiary hearing, for June 9, 2023 at 1:30 PM. The notice was sent to the address

Respondent provided to the Board in October of 2022. The Respondent did not respond to the Board's notice.

On May 22, 2023, via regular and certified mail, and email, the Board sent the Respondent a second Notice of Evidentiary hearing, with the same information as the prior notice. The Board also requested that the Respondent respond to the Board's notice by May 31, 2023, if the Respondent wished to utilize any exhibits or witnesses for purposes of the evidentiary hearing.

On June 9, 2023, at 1:30 PM, a quorum of the Board held an in-person hearing on this matter. The Respondent did not appear. The State was represented by Administrative Prosecutor, Assistant Attorney General, Karen Malinowski.

SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE

The Board accepted and admitted evidence presented by the State, which included testimony from Gail Wowk, Director of Planning and Continuing Education for the State Board of Social Work Examiners. The Board also accepted and admitted the following documents into evidence:

State's Exhibits:

<u>EXHIBIT</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
1	Respondent's Licensing Verification, obtained and printed out March 3, 2023
2	Respondent's Online Renewal Application, Dated October 30, 2017
3	Board Communications to Respondent Regarding the Continuing Education Audit: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2017 Notice of 2017 Post-Renewal Continuing Education Audit, dated January 4, 2018• 2017 Post Renewal Audit – Second Notice, dated February 5, 2018• Final Notice: 2017 Post Renewal Continuing Education Audit, dated June 6, 2018

- 4 Respondent's Pre & Post Continuing Education Audit Form, dated September 6, 2020
- 5 2017 Post Renewal Continuing Education Audit – Report of Investigation, dated January 30, 2020
- 6 Investigative Report, dated April 1, 2021
- 7 Charges Under the Maryland Social Workers Act, dated March 4, 2022
- 8 Notice of Hearing, dated April 18, 2023

State's Witnesses:

1. Gail Wowk, Director of Planning and Continuing Education, Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent was initially licensed to practice as a licensed master social worker (“LMSW”) in Maryland on August 10, 2015. The Respondent’s license has a status of “non-renewed” with an expiration date of October 31, 2021.
2. Pursuant to the aforementioned Post-Renewal Continuing Education Audit regulations, the Board conducted an audit of licensees whose licenses were renewed by October 31, 2017.
3. As a condition of continued licensure, licensed social workers are required to obtain forty (40) credit hours of Continuing Education Units (“CEUs”) every two years in programs and categories approved by the Board. The CEUs may all be in Category I but may not consist of more than twenty (20) CEUs in Category II.¹ Of the required 40 CEUs, a minimum of three CEUs shall focus on ethics and professional conduct,

¹ “Category I” CEUs are defined as “activities that are formally organized face-to-face learning experiences provided by Board-approved sponsors. “Category II” CEUs are defined as “independent, less structured learning experiences. *See* COMAR 10.42.06.02 Definitions.

including boundary issues.² All licensees are required to sign a statement on the renewal application attesting to have completed this requirement.

4. The Respondent was chosen to be included in the Board's audit for the renewal period from November 1, 2015 to October 31, 2017.
5. On January 4, 2018, the Respondent was sent the first Notice of 2017 Post-Renewal Continuing Education Audit at her address of record by the Association of Social Work Boards ("ASWB").³ The Notice requested that Respondent supply the required continuing education documentation to ASWB by February 5, 2018. The Respondent failed to respond to the audit notice.
6. On February 5, 2018, ASWB sent the Respondent a second letter entitled "Post Renewal Audit – Problem Notice." The Notice informed Respondent that she had failed to respond to the previous notice and requested the Respondent supply the required continuing education documentation to the ASWB within 15 days of the date of the Notice. The Notice also informed the Respondent that failure to comply with the request would result in referral to the Board for investigation and possible disciplinary action. The Respondent failed to respond to this audit notice.
7. On June 6, 2018, via regular and certified mail, the Board sent the Respondent a Final Notice: 2017 Post Renewal Continuing Education Audit. The Notice requested that Respondent forward the required continuing education documentation to the Board within 15 calendar days from the date of the Notice. The Notice also informed Respondent that failure to respond would result in a referral to the Board for possible

² See COMAR 10.42.06.03. Continuing Education Requirements.

³ ASWB is the national association contracted by the Board to perform Continuing Education Audits.

charges and sanctions. Respondent failed to respond to the Final Notice. The regular mail copy of the Notice was not returned. The certified letter copy of the Notice was returned, dated July 2, 2018, "Return to Sender, Unclaimed."

8. Respondent held an active license during the time period outlined above and as a result, was required to submit all continuing education documentation. Additionally, Respondent renewed her license on October 31, 2019 for the period beginning on November 1, 2019 and ending on October 31, 2021. Respondent did not provide an updated address or email address during the renewal process.
9. As an active licensee during the abovementioned time period, Respondent's failure to respond to and/or comply with the audit requests constituted a failure of the audit.
10. On March 6, 2020, the Board sent the Respondent a Pre-Charge Consent Order to the Respondent, requesting her signature to settle case. The Respondent failed to respond.
11. The last confirmed contact that the Board had with Respondent was on October 12, 2022 at the aforementioned virtual Case Resolution Conference. Respondent was present at the Case Resolution Conference and confirmed her contact information, but failed to follow up with the Board regarding the outcome of the Case Resolution Conference and failed to respond to any further communications from the Board.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and substantial evidence, a majority of the Board hereby concludes as a matter of law that the Respondent violated Md. Code Ann., Hlth. Occ. § 19-311(1) (obtaining or attempting to obtain a license through misrepresentation); § 19-311(6) (Violating any provisions of this title or regulations governing the practice of social work); and § 19-308(d) (term and renewal of licenses). Additionally, a majority of the Board hereby

concludes that the Respondent violated COMAR § 10.42.06.06 (Reporting, Documenting, and Auditing Compliance with Continuing Education Requirements).

ORDER

Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, it is this 11th day of **August**, 2023, by a majority of the quorum of the Board considering this case hereby:

ORDERED, that pursuant to COMAR 10.42.09.07, Respondent is to pay a fine of **ONE THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS (\$1,500.00)** to the Maryland Board of Social Work Examiners, within **SIX (6) MONTHS** of the Effective Date of this Final Order; and it is further

ORDERED that Respondent shall not apply for the Reinstatement of her License to Practice Social Work in the State of Maryland for **FIVE (5) YEARS** from the Effective Date of this Final Order; and it is further

ORDERED, that should Respondent apply for the Reissuance of her License, the Respondent shall include documentation of completion of her completion of the Continuing Education requirements for the 2017 to 2019 Renewal Period, as well as the 2019 to 2022 Renewal period, in addition to any and all of the requirements for Reissuance; and it is further

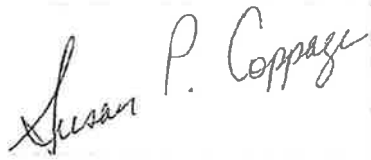
ORDERED that the for the public disclosure, this Final Order is considered a PUBLIC DOCUMENT pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. §§ 4-101 *et seq.* (2014) and is reportable to any entity to who the Board is obligated to report.⁴

⁴ This includes the Board's public website and NPDB.

Final Order

Faunda Crowson, LMSW, Case Number: 2020-2768

8/11/2023



Date

Susan Coppage, LCSW-C, Board Chair
State Board of Social Work Examiners

Notice of Right to Appeal

Pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Health Occ. § 19-313, you have the right to take a direct judicial appeal. Any appeal shall be filed within thirty (30) days from the date of the Final Order and shall be made as provided for judicial review of a final decision in the Maryland Administrative Procedure Act, Md. Code Ann., State Gov't §10-222; and Title 7, Chapter 200 of the Maryland Rules of Procedure. The Board should be served with the court's process at the following address:

Daphne McClellan, Executive Director
Maryland State Board of Social Work Examiners
4201 Patterson Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland 21215-2299
Fax: 410-358-2469