



Virginia Department of
Health Professions
Board of Social Work

LICENSURE PROCESS HANDBOOK

Our mission is to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to health care practitioners and the public.

PERIMETER CENTER
9960 MAYLAND DRIVE, SUITE 300
HENRICO, VA 23233-1463

T E L: (804) 367-4441
E-F A X: (804) 977-9915
EMAIL: socialwork@dhp.virginia.gov

NOTE: The information contained in this handbook is subject to change at any time. The handbook shall not be construed to communicate all requirements, applicable laws and regulations governing the practice of social work. All current information can be found at <http://www.dhp.virginia.gov/social>

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the Department of Health Professions is to ensure safe and competent patient care by licensing health professionals, enforcing standards of practice, and providing information to health care practitioners and the public.

The Department licenses, certifies or registers over 400,000 health care practitioners and facilities, and through its health regulatory boards, enforces the laws and regulations pertaining to the conduct and practices of health care professionals. The Department performs the following functions:

- Issues licenses, registrations, certifications and permits to applicants that meet qualifications established by law;
- Investigates complaints of possible violations of law and regulation;
- Inspects facilities for compliance with laws and regulations;
- Enforces standards to ensure safety and integrity of drugs and medical devices;
- Conducts studies and makes recommendations regarding the regulation of health care professionals and provides this information to the public.

There are 13 health regulatory boards within the Department of Health Professions. There are over 80 different professions and over 6,800 facilities regulated by these boards. The Boards are:

- Audiology & Speech-Language Pathology
- Dentistry
- Funeral Directors & Embalmers
- Long Term Care Administrators
- Medicine
- Nursing (includes the Nurse Aide Registry & Medication Aide Registry)
- Optometry
- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Counseling
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Veterinary Medicine

Professions regulated by the Board of Social Work are:

- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- Licensed Master's Social Worker (LMSW)
- Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker (LBSW)
- Supervisee in Clinical Social Work

The Board of Social Work currently has over 11,600 health care practitioners licensed or registered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LCSW SUPERVISION AND EXAMINATION LICENSURE PROCESS

EDUCATION:.....	1
APPLYING FOR SUPERVISION APPROVAL (REGISTRATION OF SUPERVISION):.....	2
ADDING OR CHANGING REGISTRATION OF SUPERVISION:.....	3
REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPERVISORS:	3
TERMINATION OF SUPERVISION:.....	3
GAINING POST-MSW DEGREE EXPERIENCE TOWARD LICENSURE:.....	3
SUPERVISION LOGS:.....	5
APPLYING FOR LCSW LICENSURE BY EXAMINATION:.....	5
EXAMINATION INFORMATION:.....	6
RECEIVE LCSW LICENSE:.....	6

LBSW, LMSW & LCSW BY ENDORSMENT LICENSURE PROCESS

APPLYING FOR LICENSURE BY ENDORSEMENT:	8
--	---

LMSW BY EXAMINATION LICENSURE PROCESS

EDUCATION:.....	11
APPLYING FOR LMSW LICENSURE WITH A MSW DEGREE:	11
EXAMINATION INFORMATION:.....	12
RECEIVE LMSW LICENSE:.....	12

LBSW BY EXAMINATION LICENSURE PROCESS

EDUCATION:.....	13
APPLYING FOR LBSW LICENSURE WITH A BSW DEGREE:	13
EXAMINATION INFORMATION:.....	14
RECEIVE LBSW LICENSE:	14

Please read and become familiar with the [Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work](#) prior to submitting your application.

The board primarily communicates through email.

Please ensure that you add the board's email address (socialwork@dhp.virginia.gov) to your safe recipient list to ensure that you receive all email communication from board staff.

LCSW SUPERVISION & EXAMINATION LICENSURE PROCESS

The Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) is a clinical license to practice at the autonomous level. This license is applicable to MSW degree applicants with supervised post-master's degree experience. Supervised post-master's degree experience is a prerequisite for clinical licensure.

ANY PERSON PURSUING A CLINICAL SOCIAL WORK LICENSE (LCSW) by EXAMINATION WILL NEED TO:

1. Successfully graduate with a MSW degree with a "[clinical course of study](#)" from a [CSWE accredited program](#)
2. [Apply](#) for Supervision Approval (Registration of Supervision)
3. Gain post-MSW degree supervised experience in the delivery of "[clinical social work services](#)"
4. [Apply](#) for LCSW Licensure by Examination
5. Pass the [ASWB](#) Clinical level examination

A DETAILED LOOK AT HOW TO BECOME LICENSED AS A LCSW by EXAMINATION IN VIRGINIA:

From start to finish, the process of becoming a LCSW in Virginia takes years to complete. There are several forms that you will need to complete and submit for consideration. This information can be a valuable tool to use throughout the process.

EDUCATION:

The Regulations require that you successfully complete a Master of Social Work ("MSW") program which includes a "[clinical course of study](#)" from a [Council on Social Work Education \("CSWE"\) accredited school](#). Please double check that your MSW program is accredited before submitting an application for supervision or licensure as all fees submitted to the Board are nonrefundable. *Graduates of foreign institutions must establish the equivalency of their education through the Foreign Equivalency Determination Service of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) prior to applying.*

An official transcript with conferral date of your degree will be required. Letters of good standing will *not* be accepted.

A **clinical course of study** means graduate course work that includes specialized advanced courses in human behavior and the social environment, social justice and policy, psychopathology, and diversity issues; research; clinical practice with individuals, families, and groups; and a 600 hour clinical practicum that focuses on diagnostic, prevention, and treatment services.

If you have otherwise met the requirements for a clinical course of study but did not have a minimum of 600 hours in a supervised field placement/practicum, you can obtain the deficient amount of hours during your post-MSW supervision experience. For example, if you received 500 hours of practicum experience during your MSW program, you would need to complete 3,100 hours of post-MSW supervision experience (rather than the 3,000 hours that are required for those who completed a 600 hour practicum experience).

If you do not meet all of the requirements for a clinical course of study, you should complete the required coursework prior to submitting an application for approval. The Board is unable to approve an application without the minimum competencies required.

LCSW REGISTRATION OF SUPERVISION PROCESS

APPLYING FOR SUPERVISION APPROVAL (REGISTRATION OF SUPERVISION):

Once you receive your MSW degree, you should apply and gain board-approval of your supervision **prior to counting hours toward licensure**. **Supervised post-master's degree experience in all settings obtained in Virginia without prior written board approval will not be accepted toward licensure.**

FINDING A SUPERVISOR:

You will need to have an established supervisor and location prior to submitting your application for Registration of Supervision. Effective as of March 2021, the Board of Social Work has posted a [registry](#) of supervisors who meet the requirements for supervisors. **Supervisors are not required to register with the Board**; however, it is recommended. Supervisors wishing to be listed on the Approved [supervisory registry](#), must complete and submit to the Board an [Application to be a Board-Approved Supervisor](#). Being listed on the Supervisor Registry prevents the Board from having to review the supervisor's credentials and training in supervision every time a supervisee submits an application for Registration of Supervision. This list should be used as a tool to assist with your search for a supervisor. Please note that the [Supervisor Registry](#) is updated weekly. It is your responsibility to ensure that the supervisor has an active, unrestricted license as a clinical social worker.

We suggest you contact one of the professional social work associations should you need assistance finding a supervisor. You can also check with your employer or other applicants who have been through the registration process.

Please note that supervision can be obtained in a paid or volunteer setting.

You will need to begin the application process [online](#). You will provide demographical information, supervision worksite information including your proposed location and supervisor, education information including graduate degree information and answers to licensure questions. This is considered the first step of the process.

At the end of your online application, you will have an opportunity to print supporting documentation that you will need to send to the board office for consideration. This information includes a registration form to be completed by you and your supervisor detailing your clinical social work services to be provided while under supervision, [supervisory contract](#), official transcript, verification of education/practicum, certificate of your proposed supervisor's training and name change documentation (if applicable).

What is a supervisory contract? The board's definition is an agreement that outlines the expectations and responsibilities of the supervisor and supervisee in accordance with regulations of the board. A template of a [supervisory contract](#) is available on the board's website.

Any addendums to the application must be signed and dated by both the supervisee and supervisor. Prior to submitting your supplemental documentation to the board we strongly encourage you to verify that your packet is complete and includes all required forms. A completed application packet provides the best opportunity to avoid delays in the review and approval processes. You should make every effort to send this information in **one** complete packet to the board office for consideration. Your [online checklist](#) will be updated as documentation is received. This should be your primary source of status.

NOTE: Incomplete applications will be kept as active for one year from the date of payment. If your application is not completed in the one year timeframe, you will be required to re-apply by submitting a new application, [fee](#), and documentation.

Your [online checklist](#) will be updated as documentation is received. This should be your primary source of status. Once **all** documentation has been received, your application will be administratively reviewed for completeness. Board staff will send you an email regarding the status of your application once evaluated. If approved for supervision, you and your supervisor will be emailed an approval letter with an effective date to begin counting hours toward licensure. At this point, you may begin supervision!

OUT-OF-STATE SUPERVISION: Supervision completed in another jurisdiction can possibly count towards licensure if it meets the requirements of that jurisdiction. The board will not approve this supervision until you have completed your supervised experience and apply for licensure. It may be beneficial for you to have your past supervisor(s) complete Virginia's [Verification of Clinical Supervision form](#). This information must be kept in your possession until you are ready to apply for licensure.

ADDING OR CHANGING REGISTRATION OF SUPERVISION:

A new online application, documentation, and [fee](#) must be submitted for approval whenever there is an addition or change of a supervisor. Supervised experience in Virginia not approved by the Board cannot be considered for licensure. Therefore, whenever there is an addition or change of a supervisor, you must register with the Board and gain Board approval prior to counting hours for licensure. Please note that a change to already approved supervision (currently active) does not require that your practicum or education information be re-reviewed.

NOTE: Effective as of March 18, 2021, supervisees no longer need to notify the Board and register whenever there is an addition or change of supervised practice, clinical social work services or location.

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPERVISORS:

Supervisors must hold an active, unrestricted licensed as a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) in Virginia with at least two years of post-licensure clinical social work experience. They must also have received professional training in supervision, consisting of a three credit-hour graduate course in supervision *or* at least 14 hours of continuing education offered by a provider approved under [18VAC140-20-105](#). This training must have been completed within five years prior to the submission of the registration of supervision application.

IMPORTANT SUPERVISION NOTICE! Once supervision is approved, your supervisor is responsible for the social work activities of the supervisee at the approved supervision location.

TERMINATION OF SUPERVISION:

If supervision terminates, the supervisor will be responsible for notifying the board office by completing and submitting the [Request for Termination of Supervision](#) form to the Board. Your supervisor should complete the [Verification of Clinical Supervision](#) form at the end of your experience. The supervisee must keep this form in their records until they are ready to apply for clinical licensure by examination.

GAINING POST-MSW DEGREE EXPERIENCE TOWARD LICENSURE:

Once approved to begin supervision, you will need to meet the following requirements throughout your supervision experience:

- Complete a minimum of 3,000 hours of supervised post-master's degree experience in the delivery of "[clinical social work services](#)" and "[ancillary services](#)" in your supervised experience which is to be obtained while working at your part-time or full-time clinical job;
- Meet with your supervisor for 1-4 hours per week for a total of 100 hours of individual [face-to-face](#) supervision (Note that you may obtain group supervision, but only 50 of the 100 hours can be counted);
- Meet with clients [face-to-face](#) a minimum of 1,380 hours while providing clinical social work services;
- Complete your supervision in 2-4 consecutive years (i.e. 24 months – 48 months).

For example:

- If Mary started her supervision in January 2005 and ended supervision in February 2006, that would total 13 months of supervision. If she began supervision again in June 2007 and ended supervision in May 2008, she would have acquired another 11 months of supervision.
 - January 2005 – February 2006 = 13 months
 - June 2007 – May 2008 = 11 months
 - January 2005 – May 2008 = 40 months which is less than four years of supervision

Another example:

- If John started his supervision in March 2004 and ended supervision in July 2005, that would total 16 months of supervision. If he began supervision again in April 2008 and ended supervision in December 2008, which would total 8 months of supervision; however it would be over the four year timeframe to gain supervision hours and the entirety of the hours accumulated could not count towards licensure.
 - March 2004 – July 2005 = 16 months
 - April 2008 – December 2008 = 8 months
 - March 2004 – December 2008 = 57 months which is over four years of supervision

What are clinical social work services? The board's definition is the application of social work principles and methods in performing assessments and diagnoses based on a recognized manual of mental and emotional disorders or recognized system of problem definition, preventive and early intervention services and treatment services, including but not limited to psychotherapy and counseling for mental disorders, substance abuse, marriage and family dysfunction, and problems caused by social and psychological stress or health impairment.

What are ancillary services? The board's definition is activities such as case management, recordkeeping, referral, and coordination services.

What is face-to-face? The board's definition is the physical presence of the individuals involved in the supervisory relationship during either individual or group supervision or in the delivery of clinical social work services by a supervisee and may include the use of technology that provides real-time, interactive contact among the individuals involved.

NOTE: While under supervision, you may not directly bill for services rendered or in any way represent yourself as an independent, autonomous practitioner, or licensed clinical social worker. During the supervised experience, you should use your name and the initials of your degree, and the title "***Supervisee in Social Work***" in all written communications. Clients should be informed in writing of your supervision status and your supervisor's name, professional address, and phone number. Additionally, Supervisees cannot supervise the provision of clinical social work services provided by another person.

SUPERVISION LOGS:

Throughout your supervision experience, you and your supervisor are required to keep supervision logs of which clients were the subject of supervision. Supervision logs should include the date of individual/group supervision, the duration of the supervision meeting, topic of discussion, clinical social work services provided throughout the week, number of hours obtained in face-to-face client contact, and evaluation of supervisee's knowledge and competency in identified theory base, application of a differential diagnosis, establishing and monitoring a treatment plan, development and appropriate use of the professional relationship, assessing the client for risk of imminent danger, and implementing a professional and ethical relationship with clients. A template [supervision log](#) is available on the board's website.

IMPORTANT! You will not need to submit your logs with your application for licensure; however you will be required to submit these supervision logs *if requested* by the board for verification purposes.

Please note that your supervisor is required to maintain these logs for five years post-supervision.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Virginia law states that a person who has completed the necessary number of supervised hours, but has neither passed the examination nor been issued a license, must ***not*** engage in social work practice except as a Board approved "supervisee," with the exception of providing social work services in an exempt setting. While providing clinical social work services, the supervisee must remain under board-approved supervision until issued a license in Virginia as a licensed clinical social worker.

LCSW LICENSURE PROCESS by EXAMINATION

APPLYING FOR LCSW LICENSURE BY EXAMINATION:

Once you believe that your supervision experience is complete, you will need to complete and submit the online [LCSW by Examination application](#), application [fee](#), [Verification of Clinical Supervision form](#) completed by your supervisor(s), and a current report from the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Practitioners Data Bank](#) (NPDB). In most cases, education documentation is not needed if supervision was previously approved. If you hold a license in another state, regardless if it is active, inactive, expired, etc., you must submit a license verification from that state.

IMPORTANT NOTICE! Please read the [Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work](#) to ensure you have met the requirements for licensure by examination as a clinical social worker prior to submitting an application and fee, as all fees submitted to the Board are nonrefundable.

What is the NPDB report? The NPDB is an electronic information repository created by Congress. The report contains certain adverse actions related to health care practitioners as reported by other organizations. This report will be used to help determine eligibility for licensure. The report is confidential as part of your licensure file.

Any addendums to the application must be signed and dated by both the supervisee and supervisor. Prior to submitting your supplemental documentation to the board we strongly encourage you to verify that your packet is complete and includes all required forms. A completed application packet provides the best opportunity to avoid delays in the review and approval processes. You should make every effort to

send this information in **one** complete packet to the board office for consideration. Your [online checklist](#) will be updated as documentation is received. This should be your primary source of status.

Your [online checklist](#) will be updated as documentation is received. This should be your primary source of status. Once **all** documentation has been received, your application will be administratively reviewed for completeness. Board staff will send you an email regarding the status of your application once evaluated.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Virginia law states that a person who has completed the necessary number of supervised hours, but has neither passed the examination nor been issued a license, must **not** engage in social work practice except as a Board approved “supervisee,” with the exception of providing social work services in an exempt setting. While providing clinical social work services, the supervisee must remain under board-approved supervision until issued a license in Virginia as a licensed clinical social worker.

EXAMINATION INFORMATION:

You will need to contact the [Association of Social Work Boards \(ASWB\)](#) to schedule your examination once board approved. The ASWB candidate handbook is available for downloading as a PDF document at <https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Candidate-handbook-10-2020.pdf>. It outlines the fee schedule, describes the testing system and provides instructions for scheduling your examination with ASWB. Information regarding test sites, reporting time, as well as other pertinent information, will be provided by the ASWB after you have made your reservation.

Your approval letter to take the examination contains an expiration date as a deadline to pass the examination. If you fail the examination, you must wait 90 days before taking the exam again.

A candidate approved by the board to sit for an examination is required to pass the exam within two years of the date of the initial board approval. If you have not passed the examination by the end of the two-year period, you shall re-apply according to the requirements of the regulations in effect at that time. If you do not pass the exam during the second two-year period, you must register for supervision and complete one additional year as a supervisee before a third two-year period approval can be considered.

HELPFUL TIP: Please take into consideration that the ASWB must download your exam approval to their system. You should allow for an appropriate amount of time after your approval is granted to contact the ASWB. This is typically completed the same day once board staff enters your information.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The Virginia Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work **do not** grant the board authority to approve examination extensions.

RECEIVE LCSW LICENSE:

When you pass the exam, the ASWB will automatically transfer your scores to the board office. Score reports are provided on a weekly basis once a week. You will be licensed as soon as possible following the receipt of your passing score. Board staff will email you once you are licensed. The email contains helpful information regarding your license. Staff will also mail your paper license and certificate to you within 30 days to the address on record with the board.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The paper license you will receive will be a **final** copy of your license that contains no expiration date and should be maintained, carried or posted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations for the duration of your practice. The board has gone paperless and no longer provides another

paper license at renewal. State health regulatory boards, employers, insurance providers and citizens seeking verification of current licensure status in the Commonwealth of Virginia may obtain this information via [License Lookup](#). This content resource meets the accreditation standards for primary source verification from the top seven-accreditation organizations for healthcare professionals.

If your address has changed from the time that you submitted your LCSW examination application to when you passed your examination, please notify the board office as soon as possible in writing by submitting the [Name/Address Change Form](#). Also, once you are licensed you are required to inform the Board of any change in contact information. Please complete this form as needed throughout your time as a licensee.

GROUND TO DENY AN APPLICATION:

Grounds to deny a license may be found in Regulation 18VAC140-20-160 of the board's [Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work](#). If grounds exist to deny an application for registration or licensure, your application will not be approved by board staff, and you will be notified and offered an opportunity to meet with a Special Conference Committee of the board to determine if the license should be denied, issued, or issued conditionally. You will not be allowed to take any required examinations if grounds exist to deny the application, until reviewed and approved by the board.

LBSW, LMSW and LCSW LICENSURE PROCESS by ENDORSEMENT

Virginia does not have reciprocity with any state. All applicants are required to complete the application process. You may apply at any time. It is not required that you have a Virginia address in order to apply for licensure.

ANY PERSON APPLYING BY ENDORSEMENT FOR A SOCIAL WORK LICENSE WILL NEED TO:

1. Hold an active, unrestricted social work license in another state at the level comparable to the level in which they are applying in Virginia
2. Submit evidence of a passing score for the [ASWB](#) examination comparable to the level in which they are applying in Virginia
 - If you have not passed the ASWB examination required under [Regulation 18 VAC 140-20-70](#), the Board may approve you to take the exam. You will not be licensed until you have successfully passed the examination required.
3. Provide post-licensure experience verification or submit evidence of supervision (for LCSW Applicant's only)
 - Note: This step is not applicable for LBSW & LMSW applications by endorsement
4. [Apply](#) for Licensure by Endorsement and submit all supporting documentation

APPLYING FOR LICENSURE BY ENDORSEMENT:

You will need to begin the application process [online](#). You will provide demographical information, licensure history, and answers to licensure questions. Your application [fee](#) will be required at this time.

IMPORTANT NOTICE! Please read the [Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work](#) to ensure you have met the requirements for licensure by endorsement prior to submitting an application and fee, as all fees submitted to the Board are nonrefundable.

At the end of your online application, you will have an opportunity to print supporting documentation that you will need to submit to the Board office for consideration. This information includes out-of-state licensure verification, ASWB scores (if applicable), verification of post-licensure active practice/supervision experience and name change documentation (if applicable) and a current report from the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Practitioners Data Bank](#) (NPDB).

What is the NPDB report? The NPDB is an electronic information repository created by Congress. The report contains certain adverse actions related to health care practitioners as reported by other organizations. This report will be used to help determine eligibility for licensure. The report is confidential as part of your licensure file.

What is "active practice"? It means post-licensure practice at the level of licensure for which you are seeking licensure in Virginia and shall include at least 360 hours of practice in a 12-month period. Your "active practice" should be counted from the time that you were licensed in another jurisdiction for a minimum of 24 out of the past 60 months.

What is considered supervision experience? Verification of your supervision experience should document minimum competency of supervision. This should include a copy of your licensure file from the

state originally licensed, completion of Virginia's Verification of Clinical Supervision form from your supervisor, or a copy of the Regulations that were effect at the time that you were originally licensed in another jurisdiction.

Note: Your ASWB test scores should be requested once your online application has been submitted. The ASWB test scores will be sent directly to the Board office.

Helpful Information: License verifications may be printed directly from your issuing State's website. Online license verification will be accepted if they provide the issue and expiration date, type of license held, and any information regarding public disciplinary action.

Prior to submitting your supplemental documentation to the board, we strongly encourage you to verify that your packet is complete and includes all required forms. A completed application packet provides the best opportunity to avoid delays in the review and approval processes. You should make every effort to send this information in **one** complete packet to the board office for consideration.

Your **online checklist** will be updated as documentation is received. This should be your primary source of status. Once **all** documentation has been received, your application will be administratively reviewed for completeness. Board staff will send you an email regarding the status of your application once evaluated.

RECEIVE YOUR LICENSE:

If you are approved for licensure, you will receive an email with helpful information regarding your new license. You should continue to monitor the [Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work](#) for any updates or changes to the laws and regulations. Staff will mail your paper license and certificate to you within 30 days of licensure to the address on record with the board.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The paper license you will receive will be a **final** copy of your license that contains no expiration date and should be maintained, carried or posted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations for the duration of your practice. The board has gone paperless and no longer provides another paper license at renewal. State health regulatory boards, employers, insurance providers and citizens seeking verification of current licensure status in the Commonwealth of Virginia may obtain this information via [License Lookup](#). This content resource meets the accreditation standards for primary source verification from the top seven-accreditation organizations for healthcare professionals.

If your address has changed since submitting your application, please notify the board office as soon as possible in writing by submitting the [Name/Address Change Form](#). Also, once you are licensed you are required to inform the Board of any change in contact information. Please complete this form as needed throughout your time as a licensee.

NOTE: Incomplete applications will be kept as active for one year from the date of payment. If your application is not completed in the one year timeframe, you will be required to re-apply by submitting a new [fee](#) and new documentation.

GROUND TO DENY AN APPLICATION:

Grounds to deny a license may be found in Regulation 18VAC140-20-160 of the Board's [Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work](#). If grounds exist to deny an application for licensure, your application will not be approved by Board staff, and you will be notified and offered an opportunity to meet with the

Special Conference Committee of the Board to determine if the license should be denied, issued, or issued conditionally. You will not be allowed to take any required examinations if grounds exist to deny the application, until reviewed and approved by the Board.

LMSW LICENSURE PROCESS by EXAMINATION

The LMSW is a case management license applicable to Master's of Social Work (MSW) degree applicants. This license is not a prerequisite for clinical licensure.

ANY PERSON PURSUING A LICENSE AS A LICENSED MASTER'S SOCIAL WORKER (LMSW) IN VIRGINIA WILL NEED TO:

1. Successfully graduate with MSW degree from a [CSWE accredited program](#)
NOTE: *Graduates of foreign institutions must establish the equivalency of their education through the Foreign Equivalency Determination Service of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)*
2. [Apply](#) for LMSW by Examination and submit all supporting documentation
3. Pass the [ASWB Master's level examination](#)

EDUCATION:

The Regulations require that you successfully complete a Master's of Social Work (MSW) program from a [Council on Social Work Education \("CSWE"\) accredited school](#). Please double check that your MSW program is accredited before submitting an application for licensure, as all fees submitted to the Board are nonrefundable. *Graduates of foreign institutions must establish the equivalency of their education through the Foreign Equivalency Determination Service of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), prior to applying.*

An official transcript with conferral date of your degree will be required. Letters of good standing will *not* be accepted.

APPLYING FOR LMSW LICENSURE WITH A MSW DEGREE:

You will need to begin the application process [online](#). You will provide demographical information, licensure history, and answers to licensure questions. Your application [fee](#) will be required at this time.

IMPORTANT NOTICE! Please read the [Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work](#) to ensure you have met the requirements for licensure by examination as an LMSW prior to submitting an application and fee, as all fees submitted to the Board are nonrefundable.

At the end of your online application, you will have an opportunity to print supporting documentation that you will need to submit to the Board office for consideration. This information includes your official transcript, out-of-state licensure verification (if applicable), and name change documentation (if applicable) and a current report from the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Practitioners Data Bank](#) (NPDB).

What is the NPDB report? The NPDB is an electronic information repository created by Congress. The report contains certain adverse actions related to health care practitioners as reported by other organizations. This report will be used to help determine eligibility for licensure. The report is confidential as part of your licensure file.

Prior to submitting your supplemental documentation to the [board](#), we strongly encourage you to verify that your packet is complete and includes all required forms. A completed application packet provides the best opportunity to avoid delays in approving your information. You should make every effort to submit this information in **one** complete packet to the board office for consideration.

Your [online checklist](#) will be updated as documentation is received. This should be your primary source of status. Once all documentation has been submitted, your application will be administratively reviewed for completeness. Board staff will send you an email regarding the status of your application once evaluated.

NOTE: Incomplete applications will be kept as active for one year from the date of payment. If your application is not completed in the one year timeframe, you will be required to re-apply by submitting a new [fee](#) and new documentation.

EXAMINATION INFORMATION:

You will need to contact the [Association of Social Work Boards \(ASWB\)](#) to schedule your examination once board approved. The ASWB candidate handbook is available for downloading as a PDF document at <https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Candidate-handbook-10-2020.pdf>. It outlines the fee schedule, describes the testing system and provides instructions for scheduling your examination with ASWB. Information regarding test sites, reporting time, as well as other pertinent information, will be provided by the ASWB after you have made your reservation.

Your approval letter to take the examination contains an expiration date as a deadline to pass the examination. If you fail the examination, you must wait 90 days before taking the exam again.

A candidate approved by the board to sit for an examination is required to pass the exam within two years of the date of the initial board approval. If you have not passed the examination by the end of the two-year period, you will be required to re-apply according to the requirements of the regulations in effect at that time.

HELPFUL TIP: Please take into consideration that the ASWB must download your exam approval to their system. You should allow for an appropriate amount of time after your approval is granted to contact the ASWB. This is typically completed the same day once board staff enters your information.

RECEIVE LMSW LICENSE:

When you pass the exam, the ASWB will automatically transfer your scores to the board office. Score reports are provided on a weekly basis once a week. You will be licensed as soon as possible following the receipt of your passing score. Board staff will email you once you are licensed. The email contains helpful information regarding your license. Staff will also mail your paper license and certificate to you within 30 days to the address on record with the board.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The paper license you will receive will be a **final** copy of your license that contains no expiration date and should be maintained, carried or posted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations for the duration of your practice. The board has gone paperless and no longer provides another paper license at renewal. State health regulatory boards, employers, insurance providers and citizens seeking verification of current licensure status in the Commonwealth of Virginia may obtain this information via [License Lookup](#). This content resource meets the accreditation standards for primary source verification from the top seven-accreditation organizations for healthcare professionals.

If your address has changed from the time that you submitted your LMSW examination application to when you passed your examination, please notify the board office as soon as possible in writing by submitting

the [Name/Address Change Form](#). Also, once you are licensed you are required to inform the Board of any change in contact information. Please complete this form as needed throughout your time as a licensee.

GROUND TO DENY AN APPLICATION:

Grounds to deny a license may be found in Regulation 18VAC140-20-160 of the Board's [Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work](#). If grounds exist to deny an application for registration or licensure, your application will not be approved by Board staff, and you will be so notified and offered an opportunity to meet with an Special Conference Committee of the Board to determine if the license should be denied, issued, or issued conditionally. You will not be allowed to take any required examinations if grounds exist to deny the application, until reviewed and approved by the Board.

LBSW LICENSURE PROCESS by EXAMINATION

The LBSW is a case management license applicable to Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW) degree applicants. This license is not a prerequisite for clinical licensure.

ANY PERSON PURSUING A LICENSE AS A LICENSED BACCALAUREATE SOCIAL WORKER (LBSW) IN VIRGINIA WILL NEED TO:

1. Successfully graduate with a BSW degree from a [CSWE accredited program](#)
NOTE: *Graduates of foreign institutions must establish the equivalency of their education through the Foreign Equivalency Determination Service of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)*
2. [Apply](#) for LBSW by Examination and submit all supporting documentation
3. Pass the [ASWB Bachelors](#) level examination

EDUCATION:

The Regulations require that you successfully complete a Bachelor's of Social Work (BSW) program from a [Council on Social Work Education \("CSWE"\) accredited school](#). Please double check that your BSW program is accredited before submitting an application for licensure, as all fees submitted to the Board are nonrefundable. *Graduates of foreign institutions must establish the equivalency of their education through the Foreign Equivalency Determination Service of the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) prior to applying.*

An official transcript with conferral date of your degree will be required. Letters of good standing will *not* be accepted.

APPLYING FOR LBSW LICENSURE WITH A BSW DEGREE:

You will need to begin the application process [online](#). You will provide demographical information, licensure history, and answers to licensure questions. Your application [fee](#) will be required at this time.

IMPORTANT NOTICE! Please read the [Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work](#) to ensure you have met the requirements for licensure by examination as an LMSW prior to submitting an application and fee, as all fees submitted to the Board are nonrefundable.

At the end of your online application, you will have an opportunity to print supporting documentation that you will need to submit to the Board office for consideration. This information includes your official transcript, out-of-state licensure verification (if applicable), and name change documentation (if applicable) and a current report from the [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Practitioners Data Bank](#) (NPDB).

What is the NPDB report? The NPDB is an electronic information repository created by Congress. The report contains certain adverse actions related to health care practitioners as reported by other organizations. This report will be used to help determine eligibility for licensure. The report is confidential as part of your licensure file.

Prior to submitting your supplemental documentation to the [board](#), we strongly encourage you to verify that your packet is complete and includes all required forms. A completed application packet provides the best opportunity to avoid delays in approving your information. You should make every effort to submit this information in **one** complete packet to the board office for consideration.

Your **[online checklist](#)** will be updated as documentation is received. This should be your primary source of status. Once all documentation has been submitted, your application will be administratively reviewed for completeness. Board staff will send you an email regarding the status of your application once evaluated.

NOTE: Incomplete applications will be kept as active for one year from the date of payment. If your application is not completed in the one year timeframe, you will be required to re-apply by submitting a new [fee](#) and new documentation.

EXAMINATION INFORMATION:

You will need to contact the [Association of Social Work Boards \(ASWB\)](#) to schedule your examination once board approved. The ASWB candidate handbook is available for downloading as a PDF document at <https://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Candidate-handbook-10-2020.pdf>. It outlines the fee schedule, describes the testing system and provides instructions for scheduling your examination with ASWB. Information regarding test sites, reporting time, as well as other pertinent information, will be provided by the ASWB after you have made your reservation.

Your approval letter to take the examination contains an expiration date as a deadline to pass the examination. If you fail the examination, you must wait 90 days before taking the exam again.

A candidate approved by the board to sit for an examination is required to pass the exam within two years of the date of the initial board approval. If you have not passed the examination by the end of the two-year period, you will be required to re-apply according to the requirements of the regulations in effect at that time.

HELPFUL TIP: Please take into consideration that the ASWB must download your exam approval to their system. You should allow for an appropriate amount of time after your approval is granted to contact the ASWB. This is typically completed the same day once board staff enters your information.

RECEIVE LBSW LICENSE:

When you pass the exam, the ASWB will automatically transfer your scores to the board office. Score reports are provided on a weekly basis once a week. You will be licensed as soon as possible following the receipt of your passing score. Board staff will email you once you are licensed. The email contains helpful information regarding your license. Staff will also mail your paper license and certificate to you within 30 days to the address on record with the board.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The paper license you will receive will be a **final** copy of your license that contains no expiration date and should be maintained, carried or posted in accordance with applicable laws and regulations for the duration of your practice. The board has gone paperless and no longer provides another paper license at renewal. State health regulatory boards, employers, insurance providers and citizens seeking verification of current licensure status in the Commonwealth of Virginia may obtain this information via [License Lookup](#). This content resource meets the accreditation standards for primary source verification from the top seven-accreditation organizations for healthcare professionals.

If your address has changed from the time that you submitted your LBSW examination application to when you passed your examination, please notify the board office as soon as possible in writing by submitting the [Name/Address Change Form](#). Also, once you are licensed you are required to inform the Board of any change in contact information. Please complete this form as needed throughout your time as a licensee.

GROUND TO DENY AN APPLICATION:

Grounds to deny a license may be found in Regulation 18VAC140-20-160 of the Board's [Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work](#). If grounds exist to deny an application for registration or licensure, your application will not be approved by Board staff, and you will be so notified and offered an opportunity to meet with an Special Conference Committee of the Board to determine if the license should be denied, issued, or issued conditionally. You will not be allowed to take any required examinations if grounds exist to deny the application, until reviewed and approved by the Board.