

# SWLB - LICENSING INFORMATION & FAQs

The Social Work Licensing Law ([A.C.A. 17-103-101 et seq.](#)) requires individuals who practice social work or represent themselves to the public as social workers to be licensed.

"Social work practice" is defined as a professional service that affects change in social conditions, human behavior, and emotional responses of individuals, couples, families, groups, and organizations. "Social work practice" can only be performed with specialized knowledge and skills related to human development, the potential for human growth, the availability of social resources, and the knowledge of social systems. The disciplined application of social work knowledge and skills includes, but is not restricted to, the following:

- Counseling with individuals, couples, families, and groups for purposes of assessment and enhancement of the problem-solving and coping capacities of people; and
- *The application of social work knowledge and skills in social planning, administration, and research.*

## Levels & Qualifications

The levels of licensure and requirements are as follows:

### Licensed Social Worker (LSW):

A bachelor's degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE); successful completion of a Board-approved examination; and has applied a criminal background check and has not been found guilty of or pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to any of the offenses listed in [A.C.A. 17-103-307](#).

### Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW):

A master's degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education; successful completion of a Board-approved examination; and has applied for a criminal background check and has not been found guilty of or pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to any of the offenses listed in [A.C.A. 17-103-307](#).

### Licensed Certified Social Worker (LCSW):

A master's degree in social work from a program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education; two-years (4000 hours) postmaster's LCSW supervised social work experience; successful completion of a Board-approved examination; and has applied for a criminal background check and has not been found guilty of or pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to any of the offenses listed in [A.C.A. 17-103-307](#).

## Provisional License

First-time applicants for LSW or LMSW licensure will be issued a provisional license upon approval of his or her application. A provisional license will be issued one time per person and will expire exactly one year from the date of issuance. Provisional licensing is prohibited at the LCSW level.

Applicants must apply for a criminal background check prior to being issued a provisional license. The fingerprint cards and instructions for having a background check will be mailed to the applicant upon receipt of his or her application.

## Examination

The Board currently uses the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) examinations. Information about the examination may be found at [www.aswb.org](http://www.aswb.org). The levels of licensure and examinations are as follows:

- Licensed Social Worker - Bachelors
- Licensed Master Social Worker - Masters
- Licensed Certified Social Worker – Clinical

*Note: No one may take the examination without a valid application on file with the Board.*

Q: If I fail the exam, may I retake it?

A: Yes, your application is valid for one year or for up to three attempts to pass the examination. You must wait for 90-days before retaking the examination. If your approval period expires, you must complete a new application.

## **Criminal Background Checks**

All new license applicants for a social work license must apply for state and federal criminal background checks. No person shall be eligible to hold a license if that person has been found guilty of or pleaded guilty or nolo contendere to any of the offenses listed in [A. C. A. 17-103-307](#). The provisions of the requirement may be waived by the Board if the applicant meets the requirements for a waiver as defined in [A.C.A. 17-103-307](#). New license applicants will be sent instruction for completing the background check once their application has been received.

## **Renewal and Continuing Education**

### **How many hours are required to renew a license?**

You are required to have 30 hours of Social Work Continuing Education (SWCE) to renew your license. Of the 30 hours required, 3 hours must be in ethics and no more than 15 hours may be independent hours. Webinars that are both live AND interactive are considered face-to-face. For additional information please click Rules below and go to Rule IX. Continuing Education Guidelines: (Ark. Code Ann. §17-103-203)

### **When will my license expire?**

Your license expiration date and license number are listed on your license card or may be found on the website under License Verification.

### **How do I renew my license?**

A renewal reminder may be sent to the address on file approximately two months prior to the expiration date of your license. To avoid a lapse in your licensure, you must submit renewal prior to your expiration date. You may apply for renewal online or print the renewal application packed and mail your application and fee to the Board.

### **What happens if I have not accrued 30 hours of social work continuing education during the two-year licensure period?**

Your license expires and you may not practice social work. In order to become licensed again you would have to apply and take and pass the exam.

### **What if I need an extension?**

Please see the Rules, Section VIII. Issuance, Renewal, Expiration and Reinstatement, B. Renewal 6. For specific details of requesting an extension prior to your expiration date.

### **Definition of social work continuing education:**

Social work continuing education has been defined as formalized activities that are directed at developing and enhancing an individual's social work knowledge base and service delivery skills in the applicable areas of social planning, administration, education, research or direct service with individuals, couples, families, and groups. These activities may include short academic courses, audit courses in colleges and universities, independent study courses, Internet courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, and lectures oriented toward enhancement of social work practice, values, skills and knowledge.

### **Q. Are social workers required to complete continuing education in professional ethics to be eligible for license renewal?**

A. Yes Social workers are required to complete three (3) hours of continuing education in professional ethics every two years to be eligible for license renewal.

### **Q. How many hours of continuing education will be approved for independent home studies/Internet courses?**

A. A maximum of fifteen independent clock hours will be approved during each two-year licensure period.

### **If I have more hours than I need to renew my license, may I use them during the next licensure period?**

No. You are required to accrue thirty hours of social work continuing education within your specific renewal period.

### **What can I do if my license expires?**

A license that has expired less than three (3) months may be renewed by submitting the renewal application, an \$80 renewal fee, an \$80 late penalty and proof that you completed 30 hours of social work continuing education due during the two-year licensure period. An attestation that you have not practiced social work and that you will not practice social work must also be signed and submitted. You may not practice until the Board has approved your application. A license that has expired over three (3) months is not renewable. This three-month period does not allow for you to practice social work or take additional hours needed for renewal.

### **If I do not meet the requirements for license renewal, what can I do to be licensed?**

Social workers who allow their licenses to expire will be considered new applicants. They are subject to all the current requirements for licensure, including taking and passing the examination prior to licensure.

### **Is there an exception if I failed to receive my renewal notice due to an incorrect address?**

No. It is the licensee's responsibility to keep the Board notified of any address or email changes. The Board cannot be responsible for misdirected mail or email.

## **Endorsement**

The Arkansas Social Work Licensing Board may grant a license without examination to a person meeting all of the other requirements of this chapter and who at the time of application is licensed as a social worker by a similar board of another state, territory, district, or Canadian province whose standards, in the

opinion of the Arkansas Social Work Licensing Board, are substantially equivalent to those required by this chapter. Please see Rule V. Endorsement: (Ark. Code Ann. §17-103-302)

Q: I am moving out of state, can I be licensed in more than one state?

A: Arkansas does not restrict you from holding a license in any other state. You will need to check with the state where you are moving to see what their qualifications and requirements are. Please note, we have a \$20 fee to endorse your license to another state. The fee must be a money order or cashier check.

### **Other FAQs:**

Q: How Do I Change My Name or Address?

A: A Change of Address/Name is found under the FORMS tab on the Board's website. Rule X. E. Duty to provide accurate information: The licensee has the responsibility to provide and update the Board with accurate information of any change in their name or address and must do so within thirty (30) days of the change.

Q: What are the types of Supervision?

A: There are two types of Supervision. Please see Rule VI. Supervision: A. Indicates that all social workers must be supervised. B. Gives information about supervision for obtaining an LCSW license.

Q: Is There an Inactive or Retired License?

A: Arkansas does not have a retired or inactive status. Your license is either active or expired.