

BOARD OF LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS

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Oklahoma Social Work Practice Act

O.S. Title 59 Sections 1251 - 1273

A. In order to safeguard the welfare of the people of the State of Oklahoma, no person shall engage in the practice of social work for compensation or hold himself or herself forth as performing the services of a social worker unless he or she is licensed under the Social Worker's Licensing Act, nor may any person participate in the delivery of social work service unless under the supervision of a person licensed under these provisions, and no person may use any title, abbreviation, sign, card or device incorporating the words "social worker" or a derivative thereof unless such person has been duly licensed under the provisions of this law.

B. Nothing contained herein shall be construed to prevent qualified persons from doing work within the standards and ethics of their respective professions. Provided, that such persons shall not hold themselves out to the public by any title or description of services as being engaged in the practice of social work.

C. Employees of agencies of the state shall be exempt from the requirements of the Social Worker's Licensing Act as to the performance of their duties as state employees or health care facilities or employees of health care facilities licensed by the state. This exemption shall not apply to persons licensed by the Board of Licensed Social Workers, regardless of their employment.

D. 1. As a requirement for licensure, a license obtained pursuant to the Social Worker's Licensing Act shall be posted in a conspicuous place where the services of the social worker obtaining such license are rendered.

2. Information regarding the procedure for reporting any unethical or illegal practices pursuant to the Social Worker's Licensing Act shall be made available to the public by the social worker or employer of such social worker, as applicable, in the location where services of the social worker are rendered.

Added by Laws 1965, c. 140, § 1. Amended by Laws 1980, c. 124, § 3, eff. Oct. 1, 1980; Laws 1988, c. 231, § 2, emerg. eff. June 22, 1988. Amended by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 2, eff. Nov. 1, 2003; Laws 2015, c. 40, § 1, eff. Nov. 1, 2015.

§59-1253. See the following versions:

OS 59-1253v1 (HB 3200, Laws 2014, c. 62, § 1).

OS 59-1253v2 (SB 1699, Laws 2014, c. 95, § 2).

§59-1253v1. State Board of Licensed Social Workers - Membership - Qualifications.

A. There is hereby re-created, to continue until July 1, 2020, in accordance with the provisions of the Oklahoma Sunset Law, the State Board of Licensed Social Workers, consisting of seven (7) members.

B. Three of the members of the Board shall be licensed social workers or licensed clinical social workers licensed pursuant to the provisions of the Social Worker's Licensing Act. Two other members shall be licensed as either social work associates or master's social workers. One member shall be the president of the Oklahoma Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. The remaining member of the Board shall be selected from and shall represent the general public.

C. Responsibility for enforcement of the provisions of this act is hereby vested in the State Board of Social Work. The Board shall have all of the duties, powers and authority specifically granted by, or necessary for, the enforcement of this act as well as other duties, powers and authority it may be granted by applicable law.

D. 1. Each member of the Board appointed as a social worker shall:

- a. be a resident of this state,
- b. be licensed in good standing to engage in the practice of social work in this state,
- c. at the time of appointment, have been actively engaged in the practice of social work for at least one (1) year out of the last five (5) years, and
- d. have at least three (3) years of experience in the practice of social work.

2. Each member of the Board appointed to represent the general public shall be a resident of this state who has attained the age of majority and shall not be, nor shall ever have been, a social work licensee, or the spouse of a social work licensee, or a person who has ever had any material financial interest in the provision of social work services or has engaged in any activity directly related to the practice of social work.

Added by Laws 1965, c. 140, § 3. Amended by Laws 1980, c. 124, § 4, eff. Oct. 1, 1980; Laws 1982, c. 122, § 1, operative July 1, 1982; Laws 1987, c. 108, § 1, eff. July 1, 1987; Laws 1988, c. 225, § 14; Laws 1994, c. 106, § 1, eff. July 1, 1994; Laws 2000, c. 28, § 1; Laws 2003, c. 85, § 3, eff. Nov. 1, 2003; Laws 2006, c. 43, § 1; Laws 2012, c. 68, § 1; Laws 2014, c. 62, § 1.

§59-1253v2. State Board of Licensed Social Workers - Membership - Qualifications.

A. There is hereby re-created, to continue until July 1, 2018, in accordance with the provisions of the Oklahoma Sunset Law, the State Board of Licensed Social Workers, consisting of seven (7) members.

B. Three of the members of the Board shall be licensed social workers or licensed clinical social workers licensed pursuant to the provisions of the Social Worker's Licensing Act. Two other members shall be licensed as either social work associates or master's social workers. One member shall be the president of the Oklahoma Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. The remaining member of the Board shall be selected from and shall represent the general public.

C. Responsibility for enforcement of the provisions of the Social Worker's Licensing Act is hereby vested in the State Board of Social Work. The Board shall have all of the duties, powers and authority specifically granted by, or necessary for, the enforcement of the Social Worker's Licensing Act as well as other duties, powers and authority it may be granted by applicable law.

D. 1. Each member of the Board appointed as a social worker shall:

- a. be a resident of this state,
- b. be licensed in good standing to engage in the practice of social work in this state,
- c. at the time of appointment, have been actively engaged in the practice of social work for at least one (1) year out of the last five (5) years, and
- d. have at least three (3) years of experience in the practice of social work.

2. Each member of the Board appointed to represent the general public shall be a resident of this state who has attained the age of majority and shall not be, nor shall ever have been, a social work licensee, or the spouse of a social work licensee, or a person who has ever had any material financial interest in the provision of social work services or has engaged in any activity directly related to the practice of social work.

Added by Laws 1965, c. 140, § 3. Amended by Laws 1980, c. 124, § 4, eff. Oct. 1, 1980; Laws 1982, c. 122, § 1, operative July 1, 1982; Laws 1987, c. 108, § 1, eff. July 1, 1987; Laws 1988, c. 225, § 14; Laws 1994, c. 106, § 1, eff. July 1, 1994; Laws 2000, c. 28, § 1; Laws 2003, c. 85, § 3, eff. Nov. 1, 2003; Laws 2006, c. 43, § 1; Laws 2012, c. 68, § 1; Laws 2014, c. 95, § 2, eff. Nov. 1, 2014.

§59-1254. Appointment - Term - Vacancies - Removal - Compensation - Staff.

A. The members of the State Board of Licensed Social Workers shall be appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. When a vacancy on the Board occurs or at the expiration of the term of a member, the Governor shall appoint, with the advice and consent of the Senate, the member's successor for a term of five (5) years. Members may serve more than two (2) terms, but shall be limited to serving no more than two (2) consecutive terms. Vacancies on the Board shall be filled in a like manner for the balance of any unexpired term. Each member shall serve until a successor is appointed and qualified.

B. Members of the Board may be removed from office, pursuant to the procedures set forth in the Administrative Procedures Act, upon one or more of the following grounds:

1. The refusal or inability for any reason of a Board member to perform the duties of a Board member in an efficient, responsible and professional manner;

2. The misuse of office by a Board member for pecuniary or material gain or for personal advantage for the Board member or another;

3. Violation by any Board member of the laws governing the practice of social work; or

4. Conviction of a felony shown by a certified copy of the record of the court of conviction.

C. Members of the Board shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed their actual and necessary travel expenses as provided in the State Travel Reimbursement Act.

D. The Board may employ persons in such positions or capacities as it deems necessary to conduct Board business and to fulfill the Board's responsibilities as defined in the Social Worker's Licensing Act.

Added by Laws 1965, c. 140, § 4. Amended by Laws 1980, c. 124, § 5, eff. Oct. 1, 1980; Laws 1982, c. 122, § 2, operative July 1, 1982; Laws 1987, c. 108, § 2, eff. July 1, 1987; Laws 2003, c. 85, § 4, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1255. Officers - Meetings.

A. The State Board of Licensed Social Workers shall biennially elect from its membership a chair and a vice-chair and such other officers as it deems appropriate and necessary to conduct its business. The chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board. Each additional officer elected by the Board shall perform those duties customarily associated with the position and such other duties assigned by the Board. Officers elected by the Board shall serve terms of two (2) years and shall serve no more than two (2) consecutive full terms in each office to which the Board member is elected.

B. 1. The Board shall meet at least once every three (3) months to transact its business and may meet at such additional times as the Board may determine.

2. The Board shall meet in accordance with the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act.

3. A majority of the members of the Board shall constitute a quorum for the conduct of Board business. All actions of the Board shall be by a majority of the quorum present.

Added by Laws 1965, c. 140, § 5. Amended by Laws 1980, c. 124, § 6, eff. Oct. 1, 1980; Laws 1982, c. 122, § 3, operative July 1, 1982; Laws 2003, c. 85, § 5, eff. Nov. 1, 2003; Laws 2011, c. 146, § 2, eff. Nov. 1, 2011.

§59-1256. Repealed by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 22, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1256.1. Powers and duties of Board.

A. The State Board of Licensed Social Workers shall be responsible for the control and regulation of the practice of social work in this state and shall conduct its business in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act. The Board's authority includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. The licensing by examination or by reciprocity of applicants who are qualified to engage in the practice of social work under the provisions of this act;

2. The renewal of licenses to engage in the practice of social work;

3. The establishment and enforcement of compliance with professional standards of practice and rules of conduct of social workers engaged in the practice of social work;

4. The determination and issuance of standards for recognition and approval of degree programs of schools and colleges of social work whose graduates may be eligible for licensure in this state, and the specification and enforcement of requirements for practical training;

5. The investigation of any activities related to the practice or unauthorized practice of social work. In conducting such investigations, the Board shall have the power to subpoena and to bring before it any person and to take testimony either orally or by deposition, or both, in the same manner as prescribed in civil cases in the courts of this state. Any member of the Board, hearing officer, or administrative law judge shall have power to administer oaths to witnesses at any hearing which the Board is authorized to conduct. Following such investigation, the Board may suspend, revoke or restrict licenses to engage in the practice of social work;

6. With probable cause that an applicant or licensee has engaged in conduct prohibited by this act or a rule promulgated by the Board, the issuance of a request that the applicant or licensee submit to a

mental or physical examination or chemical dependency evaluation. If the applicant or licensee refuses to submit to the examination or evaluation, the Board shall issue an order requiring the licensee or applicant to show cause why he or she will not submit to the examination and shall schedule a hearing on the order within thirty (30) days after notice is served on the applicant or licensee by personal service or certified mail. At the hearing, the applicant or licensee and the applicant or licensee's attorney are entitled to present any testimony to show why the applicant or licensee should not be required to submit to the examination. After a complete hearing, the Board shall issue an order either requiring the applicant or licensee to submit to the examination or withdrawing the request for the examination. The license in question may be suspended until the results of the examination are received and reviewed by the Board;

7. The collection of professional demographic data;

8. The issuance of licenses of all persons engaged in the practice of social work;

9. The inspection of any licensed person, at all reasonable hours, for the purpose of determining if any provisions of the laws governing the practice of social work are being violated. The Board, its officers, inspectors, and representatives shall cooperate with all agencies charged with the enforcement of the laws of the United States, of this state, and of all other states relating to the practice of social work;

10. The promulgation of such rules as may be deemed necessary by the Board for the proper administration and enforcement of this act in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act;

11. The administration of examinations for licensure pursuant to the following:

- a. any examination for licensure required under this act shall be given by the Board at least two times during each year. The Board shall determine the content and subject matter of each examination and the place, time, and date of administration of the examination, and
- b. the examination shall be prepared to measure the competence of the applicant to engage in the relevant practice of social work. The Board may employ, cooperate, and contract with any organization or consultant in the preparation, administration and grading of an examination, but shall retain the sole discretion and responsibility for determining which applicants have successfully passed such an examination;

12. The establishment of such requirements for supervised practice or any other experiential program necessary to qualify an applicant for any licensure examination under this act, including

determination of the qualifications of supervisors used in supervision programs;

13. The acquisition of a membership in such professional organizations and associations organized exclusively to promote the improvement of the standards of the practice of social work for the protection of the health and welfare of the public or whose activities assist and facilitate the work of the Board;

14. The establishment of a "Bill of Rights" for clients concerning the services a client may expect in regard to social work services; and

15. In addition to the fees specifically provided for in this act, the establishment of fees including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. issuance of duplicate certificates or identification cards,
- b. copies of any documents,
- c. certification of documents, and
- d. issuance of licenses by reciprocity.

Added by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 6, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1256.2. Reports to Board - Conduct by applicant or license.

A. A social worker shall report to the State Board of Licensed Social Workers information on the following conduct by an applicant or a licensee:

1. Sexual contact or sexual conduct with a client or a former client, only when the client consents to the report;
2. Failure to report information as required by law;
3. Impairment in the ability to practice by reason of illness, use of alcohol, drugs, or other chemicals, or as a result of any mental or physical condition;
4. Improper or fraudulent billing practices;
5. Fraud in the licensure application process or any other false statements made to the Board;
6. Conviction of any felony or crime reasonably related to the practice of social work; or
7. A violation of a Board order.

B. Social Workers shall report to the Board information on any other conduct by an applicant or a licensee that constitutes grounds for disciplinary action under this act or the rules of the Board when the social worker reasonably believes that the client's functioning has been affected negatively by the conduct.

C. An applicant or licensee shall report to the Board any personal action that would otherwise require a report to be made to the Board pursuant to this act.

D. Reports required by this section must be submitted not later than thirty (30) days after the occurrence of the reportable event or knowledge by the person reporting the occurrence. The Board may

adopt such rules as are necessary to assure prompt and accurate reporting.

E. Any person, social worker, business, or organization is immune from civil liability or criminal prosecution for submitting in good faith a report under this section.

Added by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 7, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1261.1. Issuance of licenses - Qualifications - Types of license - Private practice - Definitions.

A. To obtain a license under the Social Worker's Licensing Act, an applicant shall:

1. Submit a written application in a form prescribed by the State Board of Licensed Social Workers;
2. Have attained the age of majority;
3. Have graduated and received a degree in social work from an approved social work program;
4. Have completed any necessary post graduate experience and supervision in the practice of social work;
5. Have passed the necessary examination and paid all fees required by the Board; and
6. Submit to a national criminal history record check, as defined by Section 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes. The costs associated with the national criminal history record check shall be paid by the applicant and submitted to the Board at the time of application. With the required fee, the applicant shall provide to the Board two classifiable sets of fingerprints to be provided to the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation.

B. If the results of the national criminal history record check required by subsection A of this section reveal that the applicant has been convicted of, or pled guilty or nolo contendere to, any felony crime that substantially relates to the occupation of a social worker and poses a reasonable threat to public safety, the individual's application for licensure may be disapproved and no further action shall be taken on the application.

C. Upon certification by the Board, the Board shall authorize the issuance of social work licenses to persons who qualify as follows:

1. As a licensed social work associate (LSWA) who has a baccalaureate degree in social work from an accredited institution or an approved social work program or both and has passed the examination provided for under these provisions or who has a doctoral or master's degree in social work from an institution with a program accredited by an approved social work program and has passed the examination provided for under these provisions;
2. As a licensed master's social worker (LMSW) who has a master's degree in social work from an accredited institution or an

approved social work program or both and has passed the examination provided for under the Social Worker's Licensing Act;

3. As a licensed social worker (LSW) who has a master's degree in social work from an accredited institution or an approved social work program or both and has two (2) years of full-time postgraduate experience in the practice of social work under professional supervision of a person licensed under those provisions, and who has passed the examination provided for under the provisions of the Social Worker's Licensing Act;

4. As a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) who has a master's degree in social work from an accredited institution or an approved social work program or both and has two (2) years of full-time postgraduate experience in the practice of clinical social work under professional supervision of a person licensed by the Social Worker's Licensing Act, and who has passed the examination provided for under the Social Worker's Licensing Act; and

5. As a licensed social worker with administration specialty (LSW-ADM) who has a master's degree in social work from an accredited institution or an approved social work program or both and has two (2) years of full-time postgraduate experience in the practice of administrative social work under professional supervision of a person licensed by the Social Worker's Licensing Act, and who has passed the examination provided for under the Social Worker's Licensing Act.

D. Applicants who have been licensed as an LSWA, LMSW, LSW, LCSW or LSW-ADM in good standing in another state for a minimum of three (3) years continually since the time of initial full licensure post-provisional term and comply with all other state requirements shall be licensed by the Board.

E. No person may engage in the private practice of clinical social work unless that person:

1. Is licensed under the Social Worker's Licensing Act as a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW); and

2. Continues to meet continuing education requirements set by the Board.

F. No person may engage in an independent social work practice unless that person:

1. Is licensed under the Social Worker's Licensing Act as a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), licensed social worker with administration specialty (LSW-ADM) or licensed social worker (LSW). This specifically and intentionally excludes licensed social work associates (LSWA) and licensed masters social workers (LMSW); and

2. Continues to meet continuing education requirements set by the Board.

G. Any qualified person who files by February 1, 2012, a sworn statement with the Board stating that the person has met the definition of a qualified person under this section shall, upon approval of the statement by the Board, be entitled to engage in the

independent practice of social work without having to meet the two-year postgraduate supervision requirement specified in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of subsection C of this section.

H. Any person seeking to pursue postgraduate supervision for the licensed social worker (LSW), licensed social worker with administration specialty (LSW-ADM), or licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) must hold licensure status of licensed social work associate (LSWA) or licensed masters social worker (LMSW) prior to board approval of postgraduate supervision for licensure as specified in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of subsection C of this section.

I. As used in this section, "qualified person" means a person who:

1. Currently holds an active social worker license from the Board; and

2. Has held a social worker license from the Board continuously during the ten-year period immediately prior to November 1, 2011.

J. As used in this section:

1. "Substantially relates" means the nature of criminal conduct for which the person was convicted has a direct bearing on the fitness or ability to perform one or more of the duties or responsibilities necessarily related to the occupation; and

2. "Poses a reasonable threat" means the nature of criminal conduct for which the person was convicted involved an act or threat of harm against another and has a bearing on the fitness or ability to serve the public or work with others in the occupation.

Added by Laws 1980, c. 124, § 8, eff. Oct. 1, 1980. Amended by Laws 1982, c. 122, § 4, operative July 1, 1982; Laws 1987, c. 108, § 3, eff. July 1, 1987; Laws 2003, c. 85, § 8, eff. Nov. 1, 2003; Laws 2011, c. 146, § 3, eff. Nov. 1, 2011; Laws 2014, c. 95, § 3, eff. Nov. 1, 2014; Laws 2018, c. 310, § 2, eff. Nov. 1, 2018; Laws 2019, c. 363, § 43, eff. Nov. 1, 2019.

§59-1261.1a. License renewal - Continuing education - Reapplication.

A. Licensees shall be required to renew their license at such time and in such manner established by the State Board of Licensed Social Workers by rule, including the form of application and payment of the applicable renewal fee. Under no circumstances shall the renewal period exceed two (2) years.

B. As a requirement for license renewal, each licensee shall provide evidence satisfactory to the Board that such licensee has annually completed at least sixteen (16) hours of a program of continuing education as prescribed by the Board.

C. The Board shall also provide procedures by rule to ensure that license renewal candidates maintain the qualifications to practice social work, as set forth in this act.

D. If a social worker fails to make application to the Board for renewal of a license within a period of ninety (90) days after the

expiration of the license, such person must reapply as an initial applicant for licensure and pass the current licensure examination; however, a person who has been licensed under the laws of this state and the license has expired, but who has continually practiced social work in another state under a license issued by the authority of such state, may renew the license upon completion of the continuing education requirements set forth by the Board and payment of the designated fee.

E. Any licensee who allows their license to expire after January 1, 2012, shall, in addition to any other requirements for reinstatement, be required to submit to a national criminal history record check as defined by Section 150.9 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes, and pay the fee for the record check. However, the individual shall be allowed to practice with the expired license pending receipt by the Board of a complete and satisfactory national criminal history record check. If the Board does not receive two classifiable sets of fingerprints taken by a local, state or federal law enforcement agency or a civilian entity approved by the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation and the required fee within thirty (30) days from the date the license was reinstated, the license shall be suspended until receipt by the Board of the sets of fingerprints and the fee for the record check.

Added by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 9, eff. Nov. 1, 2003. Amended by Laws 2011, c. 146, § 4, eff. Nov. 1, 2011.

§59-1261.3. Repealed by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 22, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1261.4. Reciprocity - Qualifications.

A. Any person who becomes a resident of this state and who is or has been, immediately preceding the person's residency in this state, licensed to practice social work by another state which grants a like privilege of reciprocity and who meets the educational and work experience qualifications for licensure in this state may, upon payment of the necessary fee and submission of documentation as required by the Board, be licensed under the provisions of the Social Worker's Licensing Act.

B. In cases where reciprocity does not exist the Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social Workers may endorse the actions of another state licensing board upon receipt of information by that board documenting that the applicant has met the educational and supervisory requirements of the Oklahoma State Board in another state, and has passed the same examination or a more stringent examination than that used by the Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social Workers.

C. 1. For a social worker currently licensed in another jurisdiction to obtain a license as a social worker by reciprocity in this state, an applicant shall:

- a. submit a written application in the form prescribed by the Board,
- b. have attained the age of majority,
- c. have a social work degree at the designation for which the applicant is seeking licensure,
- d. possess, at the time of initial licensure as a social worker, the qualifications necessary to have been eligible for licensure in this state,
- e. present to the Board a passing score on the designated licensure examination,
- f. present to the Board proof that the transferring social work license is current and in good standing,
- g. present to the Board proof that any social work or any other professional license or other credential granted to the applicant by any other state has not been suspended, revoked, or otherwise restricted for any reason except nonrenewal or for the failure to obtain the required continuing education credits in any jurisdiction where the applicant is or has been licensed, and
- h. pay the fees specified by the Board.

2. Applicants for license transfer under this section shall only be eligible for licensure at the equivalent designation recognized in the currently licensed jurisdiction.

Added by Laws 1982, c. 122, § 6, operative July 1, 1982. Amended by Laws 1987, c. 108, § 5, eff. July 1, 1987; Laws 2003, c. 85, § 10, eff. Nov. 1, 2003; Laws 2019, c. 363, § 44, eff. Nov. 1, 2019.

§59-1261.5. Provisional licenses.

Upon certification by the State Board of Licensed Social Workers, the Board shall authorize the issuance of provisional licenses to persons who have met all qualifications for licensure under provisions of the Social Worker's Licensing Act except passage of the required examination. Such persons shall, upon payment of the necessary fee and submission of documentation as required by the Board, be issued a provisional license subject to the following provisions:

1. If a person subsequently fails the examination, upon receipt and recording of the person's examination score by the Board, such person may retake the examination every ninety (90) days until the person passes, or until one (1) year from the date of issuance of the provisional license;

2. Upon receipt and recording of a person's passing score by the Board, the provisional license will be replaced by a permanent license; and

3. Upon a person's failure to pass the examination within one (1) year from the date the provisional license was issued, that

license will be automatically revoked. A new application may be submitted by the individual who fails to pass the exam within one (1) year of their approval date, however, for the licensed clinical social worker (LCSW), licensed social worker with administration specialty (LSWAD), and licensed social worker (LSW), the applicant must be under board approved supervision prior to the submission of a new application requesting license.

- a. Those seeking to re-apply for licensure past their provisional year must remain under supervision until such time the Board office confirms a passing score for the appropriate licensure exam.
- b. If an applicant is unable to pass the appropriate licensure exam during the provisional year or two subsequent approval years, the applicant may not apply for licensure again until they have completed an additional 4000 hours of supervised practice with a Board approved supervisor. If completed by the applicant, the Board may approve up to two additional years of examination testing.
- c. For all licensure levels, any applicant who fails to pass the exam after a total of five approval years permanently loses their application eligibility status.

Added by Laws 1982, c. 122, § 7, operative July 1, 1982. Amended by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 11, eff. Nov. 1, 2003; Laws 2006, c. 100, § 1, eff. Nov. 1, 2006; Laws 2014, c. 95, § 4, eff. Nov. 1, 2014.

§59-1261.6. Information confidential - Disclosure.

No person licensed under the provisions of the Social Worker's Licensing Act or secretary, stenographer or clerk of such a licensed person or anyone who participates in delivery of social work services or anyone working under supervision of a person licensed under these provisions may disclose any information acquired from persons consulting the licensed social worker in his or her professional capacity or be compelled to disclose such information.

The confidential relations and communications between a person licensed under this act and the client are placed on the same basis as provided by law for those between an attorney and client. Nothing in the Social Worker's Licensing Act shall be construed to require such privileged communication to be disclosed except:

1. With the written consent of the client, or in the case of death or disability, of his or her personal representative, other person authorized to sue, or the beneficiary of any insurance policy on his or her life, health or physical condition;

2. That no information shall be treated as privileged and there shall be no privilege created by this act as to any information acquired by a person licensed under this act or a secretary, stenographer or clerk of such a licensed person or anyone who

participates in delivery of social work services or anyone working under the supervision of such a licensed person when such information pertains to criminal acts or violations of any law;

3. When the person is a child under the age of eighteen (18) years and the information acquired by the licensed person indicated that the child was the victim or subject of a crime, the licensed person may be required to testify fully in relation thereto upon any examination, trial or other proceeding in which the commission of such a crime is a subject of inquiry; or

4. When the person waives the privilege by bringing charges against the licensed person.

Nothing in this act shall be construed to prohibit any licensed person from testifying in court hearings concerning matters of adoption, child abuse, child neglect, or matters pertaining to the welfare of children or from seeking collaboration or consultation with professional colleagues or administrative superiors on behalf of the client.

Added by Laws 1982, c. 122, § 8, operative July 1, 1982. Amended by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 12, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1262. Licensure and identification as licensed social worker or licensed social worker associate.

The applicant shall receive a license when the State Board of Licensed Social Workers has determined that the applicant meets the requirements for licensure, and the Board shall provide the applicant with a license or other suitable device to identify the person to the public as a person licensed under this act.

Added by Laws 1965, c. 140, § 12. Amended by Laws 1980, c. 124, § 10, eff. Oct. 1, 1980; Laws 2003, c. 85, § 13, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1263. Fees - Licensed Social Workers' Revolving Fund.

A. The State Board of Licensed Social Workers may assess such fees as it deems necessary to accomplish the purposes of the Social Worker's Licensing Act. Fees shall be assessed according to the fee schedule in the rules promulgated by the Board.

B. There is hereby created in the State Treasury a revolving fund for the State Board of Licensed Social Workers, to be designated the "Licensed Social Workers' Revolving Fund". The fund shall consist of monies received by the Board under statutory authority and such monies accruing to the credit of the fund may be expended by the Board for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the Social Worker's Licensing Act. The fund shall be administered in accordance with standard revolving fund procedures. The Board shall pay into the General Revenue Fund of the state ten percent (10%) of the gross fees so collected and received as provided for in Section 211 of Title 62 of the Oklahoma Statutes.

Added by Laws 1965, c. 140, § 13. Amended by Laws 1980, c. 124, § 11, eff. Oct. 1, 1980; Laws 1987, c. 108, § 4, eff. July 1, 1987; Laws 1990, c. 86, § 1, emerg. eff. April 18, 1990; Laws 2003, c. 85, § 14, eff. Nov. 1, 2003; Laws 2011, c. 146, § 5, eff. Nov. 1, 2011.

§59-1264. Title and abbreviation as licensed social worker.

Any person who has received a license as a licensed social worker shall have the right to use the title, Licensed Social Worker, and the abbreviation, LSW. No other person shall assume such title, use such abbreviation, or any word or letters, signs, figures or devices to indicate that the person using the same is a licensed social worker.

Laws 1965, c. 140, § 14; Laws 1980, c. 124, § 12, eff. Oct. 1, 1980.

§59-1264.1. Licensed Clinical Social Worker - Use of Title.

Any person who has received a license as a licensed clinical social worker shall have the right to use the title, Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and the abbreviation, LCSW. No other person shall assume such title, use such abbreviation, or any word or letters, signs, figures or devices to indicate that the person using the same is a licensed social worker.

Added by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 15, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1264.2. Licensed Master's Social Worker - Use of Title.

Any person who has received a license as a licensed master's social worker shall have the right to use the title, Licensed Master's Social Worker, and the abbreviation, LMSW. No other person shall assume such title, use such abbreviation, or any word or letters, signs, figures or devices to indicate that the person using the same is a licensed social worker.

Added by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 16, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1264.3. Use of LSW-ADM title.

Any person who has received a license as a licensed social worker with administration specialty shall have the right to use the title licensed social worker with administration specialty, and the abbreviation LSW-ADM. No other person shall assume such title, use such abbreviation, or any word or letters, signs, figures or devices to indicate that the person using the same is a licensed social worker.

Added by Laws 2011, c. 146, § 6, eff. Nov. 1, 2011.

§59-1265. Title and abbreviation as Licensed Social Worker Associate.

Any person who has received a license as a licensed social work associate shall have the right to use the title Licensed Social Work Associate, and the abbreviation, LSWA. No other person shall assume

such title, use such abbreviation, or any word or letters, signs, figures or devices to indicate that the person using the same is a licensed social work associate.

Laws 1965, c. 140, § 15; Laws 1980, c. 124, § 13, eff. Oct. 1, 1980.

§59-1266. Repealed by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 22, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1266.1. Refusal to issue or renew, suspend, revoke, censure, reprimand, restrict or limit license - Fines - Judicial review - Definitions.

A. The State Board of Licensed Social Workers may refuse to issue or renew the license of, or may suspend, revoke, censure, reprimand, restrict or limit the license of, or fine, any person pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act or the procedures set forth in the Social Worker's Licensing Act upon one or more of the following grounds as determined by the Board:

1. Unprofessional conduct as determined by the Board;
2. Practicing outside the scope of practice authorized by the Social Worker's Licensing Act;
3. Conduct which violates any of the provisions of the Social Worker's Licensing Act or rules adopted pursuant to the Social Worker's Licensing Act;
4. Incapacity or impairment that prevents a licensee from engaging in the practice of social work with reasonable skill, competence, and safety to the public;
5. Conviction of or a plea of guilty or nolo contendere to a felony crime that substantially relates to the occupation of a social worker and poses a reasonable threat to public safety;
6. Violations of the laws of this state, or rules pertaining thereto, or of laws, rules and regulations of any other state, or of the federal government pertaining to any aspect of the practice of social work;
7. Misrepresentation of a material fact by an applicant or licensee in securing or attempting to secure the issuance or renewal of a license, or in statements regarding the applicant or licensee's skills or the efficiency or value of any treatment provided or to be provided, or using any false, fraudulent, or deceptive statement connected with the practice or social work including, but not limited to, false or misleading advertising;
8. Fraud by a licensee in connection with the practice of social work including engaging in improper or fraudulent billing practices or violating Medicare and Medicaid laws or state medical assistance laws;
9. Engaging or aiding and abetting an individual to engage in the practice of social work without a license, or falsely using the title of social worker;

10. Failing to comply with any stipulation or agreement involving probation or settlement of any disciplinary matter with the Board or with any order entered by the Board;

11. Being found by the Board to be in violation of any of the provisions of the Social Worker's Licensing Act or rules adopted pursuant to the Social Worker's Licensing Act;

12. Conduct which violates the security of any licensure examination materials;

13. Being the subject of the revocation, suspension, surrender or other disciplinary sanction of a social worker or related license or of other adverse action related to a social worker or related license issued by this state, in another jurisdiction or country including the failure to report such adverse action to the Board; or

14. Being adjudicated by a court of competent jurisdiction, within or without this state, as incapacitated, mentally incompetent, chemically dependent, mentally ill and dangerous to the public, or a psychopathic personality.

B. 1. The Board may defer action with regard to an impaired licensee who voluntarily signs an agreement, in a form satisfactory to the Board, agreeing not to practice social work and to enter an approved treatment and monitoring program in accordance with this section; provided, however, that this section shall not apply to a licensee who has been convicted of, pleads guilty to, or enters a plea of nolo contendere to a felonious act prohibited by Oklahoma law or a conviction relating to a controlled substance in a court of law of the United States or any other jurisdiction or a conviction related to sexual misconduct.

2. A licensee who is physically or mentally impaired due to mental illness or addiction to drugs or alcohol may qualify as an impaired social worker and have disciplinary action deferred and ultimately waived subject to the following conditions:

- a. the Board is satisfied that such action will not endanger the public,
- b. the licensee enters into an agreement with the Board for a treatment and monitoring plan approved by the Board,
- c. the licensee progresses satisfactorily in such treatment and monitoring program, and
- d. the licensee complies with all terms of the agreement and all other applicable terms of this section.

3. Failure to enter such agreement or to comply with the terms and make satisfactory progress in the treatment and monitoring program shall disqualify the licensee from the provisions of this section and the Board may activate an immediate investigation and disciplinary proceeding. Upon completion of the rehabilitation program in accordance with the agreement signed by the Board, the

licensee may apply for permission to resume the practice of social work upon such conditions as the Board determines necessary.

4. The Board may require a licensee to enter into an agreement, pursuant to this subsection, which includes, but is not limited to, the following provisions:

- a. the licensee agrees that the license shall be suspended or revoked indefinitely under this section,
- b. the licensee agrees to enroll in a treatment and monitoring program approved by the Board,
- c. the licensee agrees that failure to satisfactorily progress in such treatment and monitoring program shall be reported to the Board by the treating professional who shall be immune from any liability for such reporting made in good faith, and
- d. the licensee consents to the reports of the treating physician or professional of the approved treatment and monitoring program to the Board on the progress of licensee at such intervals as the Board deems necessary.

5. The ability of an impaired social worker to practice shall only be restored and charges dismissed when the Board is satisfied by the reports it has received from the approved treatment program that the licensee can resume practice without danger to the public.

6. The impaired licensee shall consent, in accordance with applicable law, to the release of any treatment information to the Board from anyone within the approved treatment program.

7. The impaired licensee who has enrolled in an approved treatment and monitoring program and entered into an agreement with the Board in accordance with this subsection shall have his or her license suspended or revoked but enforcement of this suspension or revocation shall be stayed by the length of time the licensee remains in the program and makes satisfactory progress, complies with the terms of the agreement, and adheres to any limitations on the practice imposed by the Board to protect the public. The licensee may petition the Board for reinstatement pursuant to subsection D of this section. Failure to enter into such agreement or to comply with the terms and make satisfactory progress in the treatment and monitoring program shall disqualify the licensee from the provisions of this section and the Board shall activate an immediate investigation and disciplinary proceedings.

C. Any social worker who has substantial evidence that a licensee has an active addiction for which the licensee is not receiving treatment under a program approved by the Board pursuant to an agreement entered into under this section, is diverting a controlled substance, or is mentally or physically incompetent to carry out the duties of the license, shall make or cause to be made a report to the Board. Any person who makes a report pursuant to this

section in good faith and without malice shall be immune from any civil or criminal liability arising from such reports. Failure to provide such a report within a reasonable time from receipt of knowledge may be considered grounds for disciplinary action against the licensee.

D. Any person whose license to practice social work in this state has been suspended or restricted pursuant to the Social Worker's Licensing Act, whether voluntarily or by action of the Board, shall have the right to petition the Board for reinstatement of such license. Such a petition shall be made in writing and in the form prescribed by the Board. Upon investigation and hearing, the Board may grant or deny such petition, or it may modify its original finding to reflect any circumstances which have changed sufficiently to warrant such modifications. The Board may also require such person to pass an examination or examinations for reentry into the practice of social work.

E. The Board may issue a cease and desist order to stop an individual from engaging in an unauthorized practice or violating or threatening to violate a statute, rule, or order which the Board has issued or is empowered to enforce. The cease and desist order must state the reason for its issuance and give notice of the individual's right to request a hearing under the Administrative Procedures Act. Nothing herein shall be construed as barring criminal prosecutions for violations of the Social Worker's Licensing Act.

F. All final decisions by the Board shall be subject to judicial review pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act.

G. Any individual whose license to practice social work is revoked, suspended, or not renewed shall return such license to the offices of the Board within ten (10) days after notice of such action.

H. As used in this section:

1. "Substantially relates" means the nature of criminal conduct for which the person was convicted has a direct bearing on the fitness or ability to perform one or more of the duties or responsibilities necessarily related to the occupation; and

2. "Poses a reasonable threat" means the nature of criminal conduct for which the person was convicted involved an act or threat of harm against another and has a bearing on the fitness or ability to serve the public or work with others in the occupation.

Added by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 17, eff. Nov. 1, 2003. Amended by Laws 2011, c. 146, § 7, eff. Nov. 1, 2011; Laws 2015, c. 40, § 2, eff. Nov. 1, 2015; Laws 2019, c. 363, § 45, eff. Nov. 1, 2019.

§59-1267. Notice and hearing.

No license or specialty certification shall be suspended or revoked until notice is served upon the person licensed under the Social Worker's Licensing Act and a hearing is held before the State

Board of Licensed Social Workers. The notice shall be served by registered mail and shall state the time and place of the hearing and shall set forth the ground or grounds constituting the charges against the person licensed under this act. The licensed person is entitled to be heard in his or her defense either in person or by counsel and may produce testimony and may testify in his or her own behalf. A record of the hearing shall be taken and preserved. The record shall contain the notice; all papers, documents and data filed in the proceedings and all statements of the Board pertinent thereto; the testimony and exhibits; and the findings of fact and orders of the Board in writing. The State of Oklahoma shall be a party in the prosecution of all such actions and hearings before the Board pertaining to the suspension or revocation of a license or specialty certification, and the Attorney General, or one of the Attorney General's assistants, is authorized and directed to appear in behalf thereof. The hearing may be adjourned from time to time. If the licensed person fails or refuses to appear, the Board may proceed to hear and determine the charges in his or her absence. If the licensed person pleads guilty, or if upon hearing of the charges a majority of the Board finds them true, the Board may enter an order suspending or revoking the license or specialty certification. Added by Laws 1965, c. 140, § 17. Amended by Laws 1980, c. 124, § 15, eff. Oct. 1, 1980; Laws 2003, c. 85, § 18, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1268. Rules for proceedings - Subpoenas.

The Board shall adopt rules for its proceedings that will enable it, without undue delay, to competently determine the facts in each matter brought before it, and to render a decision in writing consistent with the intent of this law. The Board shall have the right to issue subpoenas where required. If the Board's subpoena is not honored, the Board shall petition a court of competent jurisdiction to have its subpoena honored. If, upon a hearing in the court, the demand of the Board is lawful, the court shall enter an order compelling compliance therewith. Disobedience of such an order shall be punished as contempt of court. Laws 1965, c. 140, § 18.

§59-1269. Repealed by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 22, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1270. Unlawful acts - Penalties.

A. It shall be a misdemeanor for any person to:

1. Use in connection with his or her name any designation tending to imply that he or she is licensed under the Social Worker's Licensing Act unless he or she is duly and respectively licensed under the provisions of this act;

2. Use in connection with his or her name any designation tending to imply that he or she is licensed under the provisions of

this act during the time his or her license shall be suspended or revoked; or

3. Otherwise violate any of the provisions of this act.

B. 1. Except as otherwise provided, it shall be unlawful for any individual to engage in the practice of social work unless duly licensed under this act.

2. Except as otherwise provided, it shall be unlawful for any individual to engage in the practice of Clinical Social Work unless duly licensed as a Clinical Social Worker under this act.

3. No individual shall offer social work services or use the designation social worker, licensed social work associate, licensed master's social worker, licensed social worker, licensed clinical social worker or the initials LSWA, LMSW, LSW, or LCSW or any other designation indicating licensure status or hold themselves out as licensed to practice social work unless duly licensed.

4. The provision of social work services to an individual in this state, through telephonic, electronic or other means, regardless of the location of the social worker, shall constitute the practice of social work and shall be subject to regulation.

5. Any individual who, after hearing, is found by the State Board of Licensed Social Workers to have unlawfully engaged in the practice of social work or to have violated other provisions of this act shall be subject to a fine to be imposed by the Board not to exceed Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) for each offense. Each violation of this act or Board rules pertaining to unlawful practice of social work shall also constitute a misdemeanor.

6. Nothing in this act shall be construed to prevent members of other professions from performing functions for which they are duly licensed; provided, however, such professionals shall not hold themselves out or refer to themselves by any title or description stating or implying that they are engaged in the practice of social work or that they are licensed to engage in the practice of social work.

7. Students currently participating in an approved social work program are exempt from licensure under this act when enrolled in or participating in an internship, externship, or other social work experience requirements for such programs.

Added by Laws 1965, c. 140, § 20. Amended by Laws 1980, c. 124, § 17, eff. Oct. 1, 1980; Laws 2003, c. 85, § 19, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1271. Repealed by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 22, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1271.1. Temporary suspension of license.

Notwithstanding any provisions of the Administrative Procedures Act, the State Board of Licensed Social Workers may, without a hearing, temporarily suspend a license for not more than sixty (60) days if the Board finds that a person licensed under the Social

Worker's Licensing Act has violated a law or rule that the Board is empowered to enforce, and if continued practice by the licensed person would create an imminent risk of harm to the public. The suspension shall take effect upon written notice to the licensed person specifying the statute or rule violated. At the time it issues the suspension notice, the Board shall schedule a disciplinary hearing to be held pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act within thirty (30) days and shall provide the licensed person with notice of the date of hearing.

Added by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 20, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1272. Use of title.

A. No provision of the Social Worker's Licensing Act shall be construed as prohibiting any person, whether or not that person may be licensed under the provisions of this act, and who is in fact a member of the Academy of Certified Social Workers, from continuing to use the title, Member, Academy of Certified Social Workers, and the abbreviation, ACSW.

B. No provision of this act shall be construed as prohibiting any person, whether or not that person may be licensed under the provisions of this act, and who is in fact credentialed as a Qualified Clinical Social Worker, from continuing to use the title, Qualified Clinical Social Worker, and the abbreviation, QCSW.

C. No provision of this act shall be construed as prohibiting any person, whether or not that person may be licensed under the provisions of this act, and who is in fact credentialed as a Diplomat in Clinical Social Work, from continuing to use the title, Diplomat in Clinical Social Work, and the abbreviation, DCSW.

Added by Laws 1965, c. 140, § 22. Amended by Laws 1980, c. 124, § 18, eff. Oct. 1, 1980; Laws 2003, c. 85, § 21, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1272.1. Repealed by Laws 2003, c. 85, § 22, eff. Nov. 1, 2003.

§59-1273. Enforcement of act - Surety for costs.

The Board shall enforce the provisions of this law and they shall be exempt from providing surety for the costs in connection with the commencement of any legal proceedings under this law.

Laws 1965, c. 140, § 23.