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THE SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE (LCSW) LAW

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE LICENSE: To be eligible to sit for the licensing exam the applicant must have attained a MSW from a social work program that is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education, have 3000 hours of post-graduate clinical social work experience, including 100 hours of one-to-one supervision by a LCSW (see supervision section of this fact sheet for specifics). The 100 hours of supervision are counted toward the 3000 hours of experience. Once the applicant has met these requirements they must pass the Clinical Exam of the Association of Social Work Boards. As of May 1, 2015 all qualifying post-graduate hours of clinical experience must be done as a Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW).

An applicant may substitute three (3) years of licensed work experience in the practice of clinical social work in lieu of the work experience and supervision requirements as outlined above. Please arrange for a letter to be submitted directly to the Department of Public Health, Social Work Licensing Unit from the appropriate authority at the organization where the work experience occurred. The letter must indicate that the applicant was employed as a clinical social worker and provide dates of employment

REQUIREMENTS FOR SUPERVISION: There are two kinds of supervision that you need to be aware of to qualify for the LCSW. The first is “professional supervision” which newly graduated MSW’s practicing clinical social work are required to be under while working toward the 3000 hours of post-graduate clinical social work experience. This supervision does not have to be a LCSW but professional supervision is required while the social worker gains the necessary experience to apply for the LCSW. Qualifying supervisors are Licensed Clinical Social Workers, Licensed Psychologists, Licensed Marital and Family Therapists, Licensed Professional Counselors, licensed APRN’s and licensed physicians. The second kind of supervision under the law is “LCSW supervision” this being the required 100 hours of supervision. LCSW supervision must be one-on-one with a LCSW if the practice is taking place in Connecticut. This means that if the supervisor has an out-of-state license and the LCSW applicant is practicing in Connecticut that supervisor cannot provide the supervision for the required 100 hours of LCSW supervision. If the applicant’s practice hours are in another state it is acceptable for the supervisor to be licensed in the state where the practice is taking place as long as the supervisor meets the requirements of Connecticut’s statute. It is expected that MSW’s working toward the LCSW are receiving LCSW supervision as they are practicing, so that you should reach the 100 hours of LCSW supervision about the same time that the 3000 hours of experience is attained.

Supervision means face-to-face consultation between one supervisor and one supervisee consisting of review, periodic written evaluation, and assessment of the supervisee’s practice of social work. It may include, but not be limited to, the review of work reports, case presentations, audiotapes, video tapes, and direct observation in order to promote the development of the supervisee’s social work skills. The supervisor is expected to keep written evaluation reports of the supervision sessions.

EXPERIENCE THAT COUNTS TOWARD LICENSURE (SCOPE OF PRACTICE): The license is a clinical license, which means that only clinical practice counts toward licensing and only clinical social work requires licensing. Clinical practice is defined in the statute as follows: ... *the application, by persons trained in social work, of established principles of psychosocial development, behavior, psychopathology, unconscious motivation, interpersonal relationships and environmental stress to the evaluation, assessment, diagnosis and treatment of biopsychosocial dysfunction, disability and impairment, including mental, emotional, behavioral, developmental and addictive disorders, of individuals, couples, families or groups. Clinical social work includes, but is not limited to, counseling, psychotherapy, behavior modification and mental health consultation.* Any practice hours that fall within this definition counts toward licensure. If you have a position where part of your job meets the above description and part does not (for example you are both an administrator and a clinician) the clinical portion of your work counts toward licensing.

THE EXAMINATION: The required examination is the Clinical Exam of the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB). There are other levels of examination promulgated through ASWB however only the Clinical Exam is accepted for the license in Connecticut. You arrange to take the exam after your LCSW application with the Department of Public Health (DPH) has been completed and approved. The application is good for one year from the last contact you made with DPH about the application and if you fail the exam you may take it again within the one-year period. If the application is one-year old since the last contact with DPH you must reapply, thus if your application is close to a year old since you last contacted DPH make sure to contact DPH to avoid having the application expire. If your application expires you will need to file a new application.

If English is not your first language you may request to have two extra hours during the examination and a translation dictionary to be used during the examination. To apply for the English as a Second Language (ESL) accommodation you must complete a request form that is available from the Department of Public Health, Social Work Licensing Program.

If you fail the exam you may take it again after a 90 day waiting period. The 90 days can be waived if you failed the exam by **5 points or less and if a license must be obtained for the purpose of maintaining a job, securing a promotion, or receiving a pay raise.** The Department of Public Health must give permission for the waiver and the Association of Social Work Boards requires extensive written documentation that establishes need based on employment factors.

Effective January 1, 2010 the fee for taking the Clinical Exam is \$260.00.

WHO MUST BE LICENSED: Licensure is MANDATORY for all social workers that are practicing clinical social work in Connecticut. This means you must have either the LMSW or LCSW to practice clinical social work in Connecticut. You can continue to practice as long as you want with the LMSW, however the LCSW is the independent level of license so it may prove more valuable to you. You cannot practice in Connecticut under an out-of-state license, thus even if you hold an out-of-state license you need to attain a Connecticut license. Only exempted groups can practice clinical social work without a license in Connecticut (see Exemptions below).

PERSONS EXEMPT FROM LICENSURE: To be exempt from licensure a person must meet one or more of the following categories:

1. A school social worker certified by the Department of Education performing duties as a School Social Worker. The licensing statute does however apply to a school social worker that is practicing clinical social work outside of their duties as a school social worker. For example a school social

worker that has a clinical private practice on their own time would need the LCSW for the private practice hours.

2. State employees hired before October 1, 1996, who are working in the social worker series classification are exempt as long as they are employed by the state within the social work series. State employees who were hired on or after October 1, 1996, who perform clinical social work functions come under the LCSW law. Unlike many states, Connecticut has rightfully not exempted the public sector from the LCSW statute. The reason for the date of October 1, 1996 is that the state was given one year from the time that the law took effect to come into compliance with the statute.
3. A student in a master's degree program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education from performing such tasks as are required for an internship, provided such person has a title that clearly indicates their status as a student.
4. A person who is employed or retained as a social work designee, social worker, or social work consultant by a nursing home or rest home licensed by the state, and meets the qualifications prescribed by the Department of Public Health in its regulations for performing nursing home social work in accordance with state and federal laws governing such practice.
5. A person licensed or certified by the State of Connecticut in another field of practice and who is practicing under the scope of practice of that license or certification.

APPLYING FOR THE LICENSE: The application is available through the Department of Public Health. Applications are available online at www.ct.gov/dph and click on Licensing & Certification – Health Care Practitioners – Social Worker or to reach the exact page go to www.ct.gov/dph/cwp/view.asp?a=3121&q=389604 where you will find the links for various information and forms. The application forms are in the Licensure Requirement link and you will need to print out the Application form, Employment Verification Form and Supervisor Verification Form (links are in separate locations within the requirements explanation). Or you can call the Department of Public Health at (860) 509-7603 or write to Department of Public Health, Clinical Social Worker Licensure, 410 Capitol Avenue, MS# 12APP, P.O. Box 340308, Hartford, CT 06134-0308

The application fee is \$315.00 and the application is good for one year from the date of last contact with DPH regarding your application. All required documentation must be received by DPH before they will review the application. The fee is for reviewing and processing the application and is not refundable even if the applicant is found ineligible for the LCSW.

RENEWAL OF LICENSE: The license is renewed annually, with the renewal date being the last day of the month of the licensee's birth month. For example if you were born in March your renewal date is March 31st. When you first receive the license the renewal may be less than one year from the time of becoming licensed because of the birth month. For example, if you become licensed in January the first renewal is March and thereafter it is annually in March. The renewal fee is \$190.00 prior to October 1, 2015 and \$195.00 as of October 1, 2015.

REINSTATEMENT OF LICENSE: If your license lapses and you want to have it reinstated you need to reapply through the Department of Public Health. You will need to document your professional activities since last being licensed. No license will be issued to a person when a complaint against them is pending in any jurisdiction or if the person's license has been suspended or revoked by any jurisdiction. For more detail on reinstatement of the license contact the Department of Public Health, Social Work License Program.

ENDORSEMENT: Connecticut has endorsement, which means that a social worker who holds a license in good standing in another state may be licensed in Connecticut if the other state's license requirements are substantially the same or greater than those of Connecticut. Endorsement generally requires that the applicant

has passed the Clinical Examination with a passing score of at least 70, though the Department of Public Health has the discretion to recognize a different examination. The applicant must still apply to DPH and pay the application fee.

USE OF TITLE: Only those persons licensed by the state as a clinical social worker may use the title licensed clinical social worker or any initials associated with such title. Only licensed clinical social workers may advertise services under the description of licensed clinical social worker.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION: The Department of Public Health may take disciplinary action, including revocation of the license and levying of fines to any licensee who fails to conform to the accepted standards of the social work profession, included but not limited to the following: conviction of a felony, fraud or deceit in obtaining the license or in the practice of social work; negligent, incompetent or wrongful conduct in professional activities, emotional disorder or mental illness, abuse or excessive use of drugs, willful falsification of entries in any patient social work record, and violation of any part of the LCSW statute.

DPH uses the NASW Code of Ethics as one of their primary guides when reviewing complaints against a licensed clinical social worker.

CONTINUING EDUCATION: To renew the license each licensee must attain 15 hours of social work continuing education credits (CEC). The licensee must begin acquiring these credits when the license is renewed for the first time. When you are first licensed you do not have to attain continuing education credits until you renew your license for the first time, at which point you need to begin attaining the annual continuing education credits.

Eligible credits are those programs that are approved by NASW (any chapter or national NASW), the Association of Social Work Boards, or a BSW or MSW program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The continuing education program must be related to social work practice. A professional presentation to a professional meeting and/or publishing of an article in a professional journal can count for 5 CEC's. Certified school social workers in CT who hold the **professional educator certificate** can use their Department of Education approved CEU's toward the LCSW CEC requirement. Up to **6 hours** per license year may be home study including online courses. At least one hour per year must be on cultural competence and starting January 1, 2016 at least two hours every six years must be related to veterans and/or veteran's families (for licensees who renew their license for the **first time** you need to get the 2 hours on veterans within that license year). For full details on the Continuing Education Requirement see the NASW/CT Continuing Education Fact Sheet, available on the NASW/CT web page, www.naswct.org or contact the chapter office at (860) 257-8066 for a copy.

This fact sheet provides general information on social work licensing in Connecticut. The Department of Public Health has the final determining authority on all clinical social work licensing questions and matters.