

Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners



Consumers' Guide to Social Work Licensing

Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners
Texas Department of State Health Services
Mail Code 1982
P. O. Box 149347
Austin, Texas 78714-9347

Telephone: (512) 719-3521
Fax: (512) 834-6677
E-mail: lsw@dshs.state.tx.us
Web: www.dshs.state.tx.us/socialwork

What You Should Know About Licensed Social Workers and Their Services

What is social work?

Social work is a profession that helps individuals, families, groups and communities modify their behaviors, emotions, attitudes, relationships and social conditions to restore and/or enhance their capacity to meet their personal and social needs.

Social workers have broad education and training, and may provide such varied services as conducting social studies, providing supportive counseling and case management, providing psychotherapy, developing social policies and administering health, welfare and community service programs. Social workers

are experts in understanding human development and behavior, including the social, economic, and cultural systems in which people function.

What are the titles used by licensed social workers?

In Texas, there are three levels of professional licensure for social workers and three specialty recognitions. Texas licensure titles include: **Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker (LBSW)**, **Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW)** and **Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)**.

Professional social workers licensed as LMSWs, with additional social work supervision, may achieve the licensure recognition of **Licensed Master Social Worker – Advanced Practitioner (LMSW-AP)**, practicing in administrative roles, rather than providing clinical services.

Professional social workers licensed at the LBSW and LMSW categories, with additional social work supervision, may achieve the licensure recognition of **Independent Non-Clinical Practice Recognition (IPR)**. Licensing notations for these social work professionals are **LBSW-IPR** or **LMSW-IPR**. These professional social workers perform many important functions independently, excluding psychotherapy.

The **Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)** may provide all social work services, including clinical services such as diagnosing mental, emotional, behavioral, developmental, and addictive disorders, developing treatment plans, and providing psychotherapy. The Licensed Master Social Worker may provide these clinical services only under supervision of an LCSW, licensed psychologist, psychiatrist, LMFT, LPC or a physician in an agency setting.

Only professionals licensed by the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners may legally use the title "social worker" in any of its various forms. The two exceptions related to using the title "social worker" include: social work students in accredited social work programs in institutions of higher education and social work instructors whose practice is limited to teaching.

What are the credentials for Texas Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker, Licensed Master Social Worker and Licensed Clinical Social Worker?

Presently, Texas Licensed Baccalaureate Social Workers have earned a Baccalaureate of Social Work (BSW or BASW) degree from a school of social work accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and have passed a national licensing exam.

Texas Licensed Master Social Workers have earned a Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) degree from a graduate school of social work accredited by the Council on Social Work Education or a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in social work and have passed a national licensing exam.

The Licensed Clinical Social Worker has earned an (M.S.W.) degree or a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), has completed 3,000 hours of supervision in clinical social work, and has passed a national clinical licensing examination.

Verifying a Texas license:

Social workers practicing in Texas must display a current Texas license, which includes the licensee's name, category of licensure, any specialty recognition, and card indicating effective dates.

How to file a complaint against a licensee:

Contact the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners or call (800) 942-5540 to report violations of ethics or professional standards.

What conditions can be helped by social workers?

Social workers deal with a wide variety of long and short-term mental, emotional, behavioral and environmental conditions, including:

- mental illnesses and emotional disturbances
- marital and family difficulties
- adjustment problems related to acute and chronic illnesses

- alcohol and substance abuse
- behavioral and learning disorders of children and adolescents
- community problems and social issues

How do social workers help people with such conditions?

Social workers assist people with problems while helping them identify and use their strengths to deal with situations. They also help their clients negotiate situations in the environment that can contribute to stress. For example, social workers:

- assess and evaluate clients
- develop a treatment plan in conjunction with the client or client group
- identify resources and services, and provide direct services such as counseling, psychotherapy and case management
- evaluate client progress, modifying treatment plans or terminating services when appropriate
- advocate for the client's rights and access to benefits and services
- engage in research, analysis and community organization to improve societal conditions

How do I locate a licensed social worker?

Licensed social workers work in many different settings, including (but not limited to) hospitals, businesses, schools, nursing homes, government agencies, community mental health centers, family service agencies, prisons, social and recreation centers, and private practice. To locate a licensed social worker, check with:

- Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners' website
- people you know
- professional social work organizations,
- your local library, for directories published by national social work organizations
- on-line or telephone yellow pages directories under "Social Workers" or "Social Service Agencies or Organizations"