

1 **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - FLOOR VERSION**

2 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

3 2nd Session of the 60th Legislature (2026)

4 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE
5 FOR
6 HOUSE BILL NO. 1818

By: Newton of the House

and

Jech of the Senate

7
8
9
10 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE

11 An Act relating to professions and occupations;
12 amending 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1250.1, which relates
13 to definitions; modifying certain terms; amending 59
14 O.S. 2021, Section 1253, as amended by Section 1,
15 Chapter 65, O.S.L. 2023 (59 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section
16 1253), which relates to qualifications and membership
17 for the Oklahoma State Board of Licensed Social
18 Workers; modifying certain terms; amending 59 O.S.
19 2021, Section 1261.1, as amended by Section 1,
20 Chapter 109, O.S.L. 2024 (59 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section
21 1261.1), which relates to issuing various types of
22 social worker licenses; modifying certain terms;
23 amending 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1265, which relates to
24 titles and abbreviations of social workers; modifying
 terms; amending 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1270, which
 relates to licensed social worker titles; amending
 certain terms; and providing an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1250.1, is
amended to read as follows:

1 Section 1250.1. As used in the Social Worker's Licensing Act:

2 1. "Approved provider of continuing education" means an
3 individual, group, professional association, school, institution,
4 organization, or agency approved by the Board to conduct educational
5 programs;

6 2. "Approved social work program" means a school of social work
7 or a social work educational program that has been approved by the
8 Board;

9 3. "Assessment" means the gathering of data about emotional,
10 behavioral, mental, environmental, biopsychosocial, and
11 interactional processes gathered in an effort to identify the
12 client's past and current level of functioning. Assessment may also
13 include the use of standardized psychometric testing instruments
14 upon successful completion of appropriate, specialized courses or
15 training;

16 4. "Board" means the State Board of Licensed Social Workers,
17 which shall also be known as the State Board of Social Work;

18 5. "Board-approved clinical supervisor" means a licensed
19 clinical social worker who has met the qualifications determined by
20 the Board for supervision in a clinical setting;

21 6. "Board-approved supervisor" means a licensed clinical social
22 worker (LCSW) who has met the qualifications determined by the Board
23 for licensure as a supervisor;

1 7. "Case management" means a method to plan, provide, evaluate,
2 and monitor services from a variety of resources on behalf of and in
3 collaboration with a client;

4 8. "Client" means the individual, couple, family, group,
5 organization, or community that seeks or receives social work
6 services;

7 9. "Clinical social work practice" means the practice of social
8 work by a social worker including assessment and diagnosis of
9 behavioral disorders, treatment planning, planning intervention,
10 case management, information and referrals, including referrals to
11 an appropriate allopathic or osteopathic physician when the
12 diagnosis or treatment is in question or psychiatric or medical
13 treatment is indicated. Treatment methods include the provision of
14 individual, marital, couple, family and group counseling and
15 psychotherapy based on the education and training of the social
16 worker. Treatment shall not include biological or medical
17 treatments. The practice of clinical social work may include
18 private or independent practice;

19 10. "Clinical supervision" means an interactional professional
20 relationship between a supervisor and a social worker that provides
21 evaluation and direction over the supervisee's practice of clinical
22 social work and promotes continued development of the social
23 worker's knowledge, skills, and abilities to engage in the practice
24 of clinical social work in an ethical and competent manner;

1 11. "Consultation" means a problem-solving process in which
2 expertise is offered to an individual, couple, family, group,
3 organization or community;

4 12. "Continuing education" means education and training which
5 are oriented to maintain, improve or enhance the practice of social
6 work;

7 13. "Continuing education contact hour" means a sixty-minute
8 clock hour of instruction, not including breaks or meals;

9 14. "Conviction" means conviction of a crime by a court of
10 competent jurisdiction including a finding or verdict of guilt,
11 whether or not the adjudication of guilt is withheld or not entered
12 on admission of guilt, a plea of nolo contendere, or a guilty plea;

13 15. "Counseling" means a method used by social workers to
14 assist individuals, couples, families and groups in learning how to
15 solve problems and make decisions about personal, health, social,
16 educational, vocational, financial, and other interpersonal
17 concerns;

18 16. "Diagnosis" means the use of assessment tools such as the
19 Diagnostic and Statistical Manual or the International
20 Classification of Diseases;

21 17. "Employment supervision" means the professional
22 relationship between a worksite supervisor and social worker in an
23 employment setting which provides evaluation and direction as it
24

1 pertains to job-related duties. This type of supervision shall not
2 be accepted towards licensure supervision requirements;

3 18. "Examination" means a standardized test or examination of
4 social work knowledge, skills and abilities which have been approved
5 by the Board;

6 19. "Implementation and evaluation" means continuing to
7 evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the treatment plan;

8 20. "Independent social work practice" means the practice of
9 nonclinical social work by a licensed social worker (LSW), licensed
10 clinical social worker (LCSW) or licensed social worker with
11 administration specialty (LSW-ADM) outside of an organized setting,
12 such as a social, medical, or governmental agency, after completion
13 of all applicable supervision requirements, in which the social
14 worker assumes responsibility and accountability for services
15 provided;

16 21. "Intervention" means application of techniques utilized to
17 implement the treatment plan appropriate to an assessment;

18 22. "Licensed clinical social worker" (LCSW) means a person
19 duly licensed to practice clinical social work under the Social
20 Worker's Licensing Act;

21 23. "Licensed masters social worker" (LMSW) means a person duly
22 licensed to practice social work under the Social Worker's Licensing
23 Act and who holds a master's degree in social work;

1 24. ~~"Licensed social work associate" (LSWA)~~ "Licensed bachelors
2 social worker (LBSW)" means a person duly licensed to practice
3 social work under the Social Worker's Licensing Act;

4 25. "Licensed social worker with administration specialty"
5 (LSW-ADM) means a person duly licensed to practice administrative
6 social work under the Social Worker's Licensing Act;

7 26. "Licensed social worker" (LSW) means a person duly licensed
8 to practice social work under the Social Worker's Licensing Act;

9 27. "Licensee" means a person duly licensed under the Social
10 Worker's Licensing Act;

11 28. "Licensure supervisor" means a licensed social worker who
12 has met the qualifications determined by the Board for a licensure
13 supervisor;

14 29. "Nonclinical social work" means the practice of social work
15 by a social worker to include but not be limited to case management,
16 consultation, education, advocacy and community organization, but
17 excluding counseling in independent practice, psychotherapy,
18 treatment and diagnosis;

19 30. "Nonclinical supervision" means the supervision of social
20 work practice by a social worker to include but not be limited to
21 case management, consultation, education, advocacy and community
22 organization;

23 31. "Practice of social work" means the professional activity
24 of helping individuals, groups or communities enhance or restore

1 their capacity for physical, social and economic functioning and the
2 professional application of social work values, principles and
3 techniques in areas such as clinical social work, social service
4 administration, social planning, social work consultation and social
5 work research to one or more of the following ends: Helping people
6 obtain tangible services; counseling with individuals, families and
7 groups; helping communities or groups provide or improve social and
8 health services; and participating in relevant social action. The
9 practice of social work requires knowledge of human development and
10 behavior; of social economic and cultural institutions and forces;
11 and of the interaction of all of these factors. Social work
12 practice includes the teaching of relevant subject matter and of
13 conducting research into problems of human behavior and conflict.
14 Except as otherwise provided in the Social Worker's Licensing Act,
15 reference to the "practice of social work" shall be the practice of
16 a person licensed under the Social Worker's Licensing Act;

17 32. "Private practice of clinical social work" means the
18 practice of social work performed by a licensed clinical social
19 worker (LCSW) who is wholly or in part self-employed and who assumes
20 responsibility for the nature and quality of the services provided
21 to the client in exchange for direct payment or third-party
22 reimbursement, rather than a salaried employee of an organization or
23 institution;

1 33. "Psychotherapy" means the use of treatment methods
2 utilizing a specialized, formal interaction between a clinical
3 social worker and an individual, couple, family, or group in which a
4 therapeutic relationship is established, maintained and sustained to
5 understand unconscious processes, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and
6 psychosocial dynamics, and the diagnosis and treatment of mental,
7 emotional, and behavioral disorders, conditions and addictions;

8 34. "Supervision" means the professional relationship between
9 an approved supervisor and a social worker that provides evaluation
10 and direction over the services provided by the social worker and
11 promotes continued development of the social worker's knowledge,
12 skills and abilities to provide social work services in an ethical
13 and competent manner; and

14 35. "Treatment planning" or "treatment plan" means the
15 organized approach of an assessment to guide the course of
16 behavioral health treatment based upon identified needs, problems
17 and issues.

18 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1253, as
19 amended by Section 1, Chapter 65, O.S.L. 2023 (59 O.S. Supp. 2025,
20 Section 1253), is amended to read as follows:

21 Section 1253. A. There is hereby re-created, to continue until
22 July 1, ~~2025~~ 2028, in accordance with the provisions of the Oklahoma
23 Sunset Law, the State Board of Licensed Social Workers, consisting
24 of seven (7) members.

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

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

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

- 16 a. be a resident of this state,
- 17 b. be licensed in good standing to engage in the practice
18 of social work in this state,
- 19 c. at the time of appointment, have been actively engaged
20 in the practice of social work for at least one (1)
21 year out of the last five (5) years, and
- 22 d. have at least three (3) years of experience in the
23 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.

SECTION 3. AMENDATORY 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1261.1, as amended by Section 1, Chapter 109, O.S.L. 2024 (59 O.S. Supp. 2025, Section 1261.1), is amended to read as follows:

Section 1261.1. 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

1 shall be paid by the applicant and submitted to the Board at the
2 time of application. With the required fee, the applicant shall
3 provide to the Board two classifiable sets of fingerprints to be
4 provided to the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation.

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

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

15 1. As a licensed ~~social work associate (LSWA)~~ bachelor's social
16 worker (LBSW) who has a baccalaureate degree in social work from an
17 accredited institution or an approved social work program or both
18 and has passed the examination provided for under these provisions
19 or who has a doctoral or master's degree in social work from an
20 institution with a program accredited by an approved social work
21 program and has passed the examination provided for under these
22 provisions;

23 2. As a licensed master's social worker (LMSW) who has a
24 master's degree in social work from an accredited institution or an

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

3 3. As a licensed social worker (LSW) who has a master's degree
4 in social work from an accredited institution or an approved social
5 work program or both and has three thousand (3,000) hours of
6 postgraduate experience in the practice of social work under
7 professional supervision of a person licensed under those
8 provisions, and who has passed the examination provided for under
9 the provisions of the Social Worker's Licensing Act;

10 4. As a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) who has a
11 master's degree in social work from an accredited institution or an
12 approved social work program or both and has three thousand (3,000)
13 hours of postgraduate experience in the practice of clinical social
14 work under professional supervision of a person licensed by the
15 Social Worker's Licensing Act, and who has passed the examination
16 provided for under the Social Worker's Licensing Act; and

17 5. As a licensed social worker with administration specialty
18 (LSW-ADM) who has a master's degree in social work from an
19 accredited institution or an approved social work program or both
20 and has three thousand (3,000) hours of postgraduate experience in
21 the practice of administrative social work under professional
22 supervision of a person licensed by the Social Worker's Licensing
23 Act, and who has passed the examination provided for under the
24 Social Worker's Licensing Act.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

22 G. Any person seeking to pursue postgraduate supervision for
23 the licensed social worker (LSW), licensed social worker with
24 administration specialty (LSW-ADM), or licensed clinical social

1 worker (LCSW) must hold licensure status of licensed ~~social work~~
2 ~~associate (LSWA)~~ bachelor's social worker (LBSW) or licensed masters
3 social worker (LMSW) prior to board approval of postgraduate
4 supervision for licensure as specified in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of
5 subsection C of this section.

6 H. As used in this section:

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

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

15 SECTION 4. AMENDATORY 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1265, is
16 amended to read as follows:

17 Section 1265. Any person who has received a license as a
18 licensed ~~social work associate~~ bachelor's social worker shall have
19 the right to use the title Licensed ~~Social Work Associate~~ Bachelor's
20 Social Worker, and the abbreviation, ~~LSWA~~ LBSW. No other person
21 shall assume such title, use such abbreviation, or any word or
22 letters, signs, figures or devices to indicate that the person using
23 the same is a licensed ~~social work associate~~ bachelor's social
24 worker.

SECTION 5. AMENDATORY 59 O.S. 2021, Section 1270, is amended to read as follows:

Section 1270. 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~~ bachelor's social worker, licensed master's social worker, licensed social worker, licensed clinical social worker or the initials ~~LCSWA~~ LBSW, LMSW, LSW, or LCSW or any other designation indicating licensure

1 status or hold themselves out as licensed to practice social work
2 unless duly licensed.

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

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

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

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

SECTION 6. This act shall become effective November 1, 2026.

COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
OVERSIGHT, dated 02/26/2026 - DO PASS, As Amended and Coauthored.