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H.P. 1387

House of Representatives, December 17, 2025

An Act to Update the Requirements for Social Worker Licensure

Submitted by the Department of Professional and Financial Regulation pursuant to Joint Rule 203.

Received by the Clerk of the House on December 15, 2025. Referred to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services pursuant to Joint Rule 308.2 and ordered printed pursuant to Joint Rule 401.

R. B. Hunt

ROBERT B. HUNT
Clerk

Presented by Representative MASTRACCIO of Sanford.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 32 MRSA §7001-A, sub-§7-A** is enacted to read:

3 **7-A. Licensed master social worker - conditional clinical.** "Licensed master social
4 worker - conditional clinical" means a person who has met the educational requirements as
5 a licensed clinical social worker and is working to meet the consultation and the social
6 work experience requirements of this chapter.

7 **Sec. 2. 32 MRSA §7001-A, sub-§8-A** is enacted to read:

8 **8-A. Licensed social worker - conditional.** "Licensed social worker - conditional"
9 means a person who has met the educational requirements as a licensed social worker and
10 is working to meet the consultation and the social work experience requirements of this
11 chapter.

12 **Sec. 3. 32 MRSA §7051**, as amended by PL 1985, c. 736, §9, is further amended to
13 read:

14 **§7051. License required**

15 In order to safeguard the life, health and welfare of the people of this State, any person
16 practicing or offering to practice as a certified social worker independent practice or
17 licensed clinical, licensed master or licensed social worker shall be social work under this
18 chapter is required to submit evidence to the board that he the person is qualified to so
19 practice and shall must be licensed as provided in this subchapter.

20 The board may grant a conditional license to any person eligible to take the
21 examination for licensure while waiting to sit for the examination or to any person who is
22 waiting to retake the examination according to rules issued by the board.

23 **Sec. 4. 32 MRSA §7053, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 402, Pt. V, §7, is
24 further amended to read:

25 To be eligible for a license to practice social work at any level, an applicant must be at
26 least 18 years of age and must satisfactorily pass any examination as the board may
27 prescribe by its rules. Each applicant must demonstrate trustworthiness and competence to
28 engage in the practice of social work in such a manner as to safeguard the interests of the
29 public and must have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the board adherence to the ethics
30 of the social work profession. Applications for licensure must be submitted to the board
31 together with the fee as set under section 7056.

32 **Sec. 5. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2013, c. 262, §3, is further
33 amended by repealing the 3rd blocked paragraph.

34 **Sec. 6. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2013, c. 262, §3, is further
35 amended by enacting at the end a new last blocked paragraph to read:

36 For purposes of meeting the requirements of this subsection, an applicant is not required to
37 be licensed as a licensed master social worker - conditional clinical under this chapter in
38 order to qualify as a licensed clinical social worker. The board shall consider consultation
39 and social work experience previously obtained in this State or another jurisdiction as long
40 as that experience is substantially equivalent to the requirements of this chapter.

Sec. 7. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§2-A, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 211, §2, is amended to read:

2-A. Licensed master social worker. As To be qualified as a licensed master social worker, an applicant must have received either a masters master's or doctoral degree in social work or social welfare from an accredited educational institution, must have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the board adherence to the ethics of the social work profession and must have successfully completed the examination prescribed by the board. After meeting these qualifications, the applicant must receive a "licensed master social worker" license. In addition, any person wishing to practice social work in a clinical setting must receive a "licensed master social worker, conditional" license.

This subsection takes effect July 1, 2005.

Sec. 8. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§2-B is enacted to read:

2-B. Licensed master social worker - conditional clinical. To be qualified as a licensed master social worker - conditional clinical, an applicant must have received either a master's or doctoral degree in social work or social welfare from an accredited educational institution, must have successfully completed the examination prescribed by the board and must attest to obtaining the consultation and the social work experience requirements of this chapter. The consultation arrangement must be with a licensed clinical social worker, certified social worker - independent practice, licensed clinical professional counselor, licensed marriage and family therapist, licensed psychologist, licensed psychiatrist or other qualified consultant as determined by the board.

Sec. 9. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§3, as amended by PL 2009, c. 112, Pt. A, §13, is further amended to read:

3. Requirements to be a licensed social worker. To be qualified to be licensed as a licensed social worker, an applicant must attest to obtaining the consultation and social work experience requirements of this chapter and meet one of the following requirements:

A. The applicant must have received a bachelor's degree or higher in social work or social welfare from an accredited educational institution; ~~demonstrated to the satisfaction of the board adherence to the ethics of the social worker profession; and successfully completed the examination prescribed by the board; or~~

B. The applicant must have received a conditional license as a licensed social worker in accordance with subsection 3-B; completed the requirements for consultation and social work experience while licensed as a licensed social worker - conditional under this chapter, must have completed contact hours in accordance with subsection 3-C, paragraph B and subsection 3-D; and must have successfully completed the examination prescribed by the board. For purposes of meeting the requirements of this subsection, an applicant is not required to be actively licensed as a licensed social worker - conditional under this chapter in order to qualify as a licensed social worker.

Sec. 10. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§3-B, as amended by PL 2013, c. 217, Pt. J, §4, is further amended to read:

1 **3-B. Conditional license as a licensed Licensed social worker - conditional.** The
2 board may issue a conditional license To be qualified as a licensed social worker to an
3 applicant who provides to the board - conditional, an applicant must provide:

4 A. Documented proof of a bachelor's degree or higher in a field that is sufficiently
5 related to social work or social welfare, as determined by the board; and attestation to
6 obtaining the consultation and social work experience requirements of this chapter. For
7 purposes of this paragraph, "field that is sufficiently related to social work or social
8 welfare" includes, but is not limited to, behavioral science, social and behavioral
9 sciences, childhood development, counseling, criminal justice, education, human
10 development, mental health and human services, nursing, psychology, educational
11 psychology, rehabilitation services, sociology and other sufficiently related fields as
12 determined by the board.

13 B. Any documentation as required by the board, which may include, but is not limited
14 to:

15 (1) Evidence of employment in a social service delivery field; and
16 (2) Evidence of an arrangement of consultation to be provided in accordance with
17 subsection 3-C, paragraph B.

18 A licensed social worker - conditional license may be held for no more than 6 years.

19 **Sec. 11. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§3-C,** as amended by PL 2005, c. 173, §1, is further
20 amended to read:

21 **3-C. Consultation requirements for licensed social workers and conditionally**
22 **licensed social workers - conditional.** A licensed social worker or conditionally licensed
23 social worker - conditional must complete the following requirements for consultation.

24 A. A licensed social worker and a licensed social worker - conditional must complete
25 a minimum of 96 hours of consultation as determined by the board. This consultation
26 must be concurrent with the first 3,200 hours of social work employment occurring in
27 a period of not less than 2 years but not more than 4 6 years from initial licensure. The
28 consultation arrangement must be with a consultant who is a licensed social worker
29 licensed under this chapter who has at least 2 years of work experience as a licensed
30 social worker. A licensed social worker - conditional is not eligible to be a consultant
31 under this chapter.

32 B. A person who receives a conditional license as a licensed social worker on or after
33 January 1, 2004 must complete the following requirements for consultation who
34 practiced social work and obtained social work consultation hours in a long-term care
35 setting and who held a valid license as of September 13, 2003 may count consultation
36 hours that were obtained prior to August 3, 2004, regardless of whether the consultation
37 hours were obtained in individual or group settings, if the consultation was provided
38 by a licensed social worker, regardless of the group size and the eligibility requirements
39 of the consulting licensed social worker.

40 (1) A person who is not an employee of the Department of Health and Human
41 Services must complete a minimum of 96 hours of consultation as determined by
42 the board. This consultation must be concurrent with the first 3,200 hours of social
43 work employment occurring in a period of not less than 2 years but not more than
44 4 years. For purposes of fulfilling the requirement of 96 hours of consultation

during the first 3,200 hours of social work employment, a licensed social worker who practiced social work and obtained social work consultation hours in a long-term care setting and who held a valid license as of September 13, 2003 may count consultation hours that were obtained prior to August 3, 2004, whether the consultation hours were obtained in individual or group settings, if the consultation was provided by a licensed social worker, regardless of the group size and the eligibility requirements of the consulting licensed social worker.

(2) A person who is an employee of the Department of Health and Human Services must complete a minimum of 96 hours of consultation with a licensed social worker who has been licensed for at least 4 years or a licensed master social worker. This consultation must be concurrent with the first 3,200 hours of social work employment occurring in a period of not less than 2 years but not more than 4 years.

Sec. 12. 32 MRSA §7053-A, sub-§4, as amended by PL 2007, c. 402, Pt. V, §8, is further amended to read:

4. Licensed social worker; licensed social worker - conditional. A licensed social worker or a licensed social worker - conditional may:

- A. Engage in psychosocial evaluation, excluding the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness, and conduct basic data gathering of records and specific life issues of individuals, groups and families, assess this data and formulate and implement a plan to achieve specific goals related to specific life issues;
- B. Serve as an advocate for clients or groups of clients for the purpose of achieving specific goals relating to specific life issues;
- C. Refer clients to other professional services;
- D. Plan, manage, direct or coordinate social services; and
- E. Participate in training and education of social work students from an accredited institution or an educational institution in candidacy for accreditation with the Council on Social Work Education or a successor or other organization approved by the board and supervise other licensed social workers.

A licensed social worker or a licensed social worker - conditional may not engage in the private practice of social work, diagnose mental illness and emotional disorders or provide psychotherapy. ~~A licensed social worker with less than 2 years' experience must receive consultation from either a licensed master social worker, a licensed clinical social worker or a certified social worker - independent practice in a manner to be prescribed by the board on a group or individual basis 4 hours a month. Licensed social workers in health care facilities licensed by the Department of Health and Human Services must receive consultation on a quarterly basis in a manner prescribed by the department. The department staff giving consultation to intermediate care facilities must be on the master or clinical level by January 1, 1993.~~

State agencies employing social workers are responsible for providing supervision necessary for those social workers to maintain their licenses.

Sec. 13. 32 MRSA §7060, as amended by PL 2013, c. 262, §4, is further amended to read:

1 **§7060. Expiration and renewals**

2 A license renewal fee as set under section 7056 must be paid by the licensee. Licenses
3 expire biennially on December 31st or at such other times as the Commissioner of
4 Professional and Financial Regulation may designate. Each renewal is contingent upon
5 evidence of participation in a continuing professional education course or program as
6 approved by the board. A license may be renewed up to 90 days after the date of expiration
7 upon payment of a late fee in addition to the renewal fee as set under section 7056. Any
8 person who submits an application for renewal more than 90 days after the renewal date is
9 subject to all requirements governing new applicants under this chapter, except that the
10 board may in its discretion, giving due consideration to the protection of the public, waive
11 examination if the renewal application is received, together with the late fee and renewal
12 fee, within 2 years from the date of the expiration.

13 Beginning January 1, 2020, an applicant for license renewal shall demonstrate to the
14 satisfaction of the board a one-time successful completion of a minimum of 12 hours of
15 course work in family or intimate partner violence, including course work in spousal or
16 partner abuse that addresses screening, referral and intervention strategies, including
17 knowledge of community resources, cultural factors, evidence-based risk assessment and
18 same-gender abuse dynamics. An applicant may fulfill this requirement through course
19 work provided through contact hours, Internet hours or distance learning programs, as
20 evidenced by certification from an accredited educational institution or equivalent teaching
21 or practice experience. The board may accept equivalent courses in family or intimate
22 partner violence screening and referral and intervention strategies or equivalent teaching
23 or practice experience completed prior to January 1, 2020 in satisfaction of this
24 requirement. Continuing education courses taken pursuant to this paragraph may be used
25 to satisfy the licensee's required hours of continuing education.

26 A licensee who is no longer actively practicing social work may apply for an inactive
27 status license pursuant to Title 10, section 8003, subsection 5-A, paragraph D,
28 subparagraph (5). The holder of an inactive status license may not practice social work in
29 the State. The fee for inactive status licensure is set under section 7056. The holder of an
30 inactive status license is required to renew the license annually and pay the renewal fee as
31 set under section 7056, but is not required to meet the continuing education requirement of
32 this chapter and the rules adopted under it.

33 In addition to the other requirements of this section, a licensed social worker must:

34 **1. Not employee of Department of Health and Human Services.** If not employed
35 by the Department of Health and Human Services, provide documentation of 96 hours of
36 consultation as determined by the board during the first 3,200 hours of social work
37 employment in a period of not less than 2 years but not more than 4 years. For purposes of
38 fulfilling the requirement of 96 hours of consultation during the first 3,200 hours of social
39 work employment, a licensed social worker who practiced social work and obtained social
40 work consultation hours in a long-term care setting and who held a valid license as of
41 September 13, 2003 may count consultation hours that were obtained prior to August 3,
42 2004, whether the consultation hours were obtained in individual or group settings, if the
43 consultation was provided by a licensed social worker, regardless of the group size and the
44 eligibility requirements of the consulting licensed social worker; or

2. Employee of Department of Health and Human Services. If employed by the Department of Health and Human Services, provide documentation of either:

A. A minimum of 96 hours of consultation with a licensed social worker who has been licensed for at least 4 years or a licensed master social worker. This consultation must be concurrent with the first 3,200 hours of social work employment occurring in a period of not less than 2 years but not more than 4 years; or

B. A minimum of 96 hours of consultation concurrent with the person's first 3,200 hours of social work employment occurring in a period of not less than 2 years but not more than 4 years with a licensed social worker who has been licensed for at least 2 years, has been designated by the department as a supervisor trainee and is concurrently receiving 48 hours of consultation with a licensed master social worker.

A person who submits an application for license renewal more than 2 years from the date of expiration of the license is subject to all requirements governing new applicants under this chapter, except that the board may in its discretion, giving due consideration to the protection of the public, waive examination, consider consultation and work experience obtained under this chapter and require evidence of completing continuing professional education.

SUMMARY

This bill changes the licensure requirements for social workers. The bill enacts definitions of conditional licensure categories, identifies qualifying degrees for licensure, streamlines the qualifications for licensure specific to consultation and social work experience requirements, removes requirements for initial licensure that have created barriers to entering or re-entering the social work profession, clarifies the consultant eligibility, removes the 2-tiered system for eligibility for Department of Health and Human Services social workers and social workers who are not employees of the department and expands the State Board of Social Worker Licensure's authority to consider consultation and social work experience gained in this State or another jurisdiction when seeking initial licensure, late renewal or reinstatement of licensure.