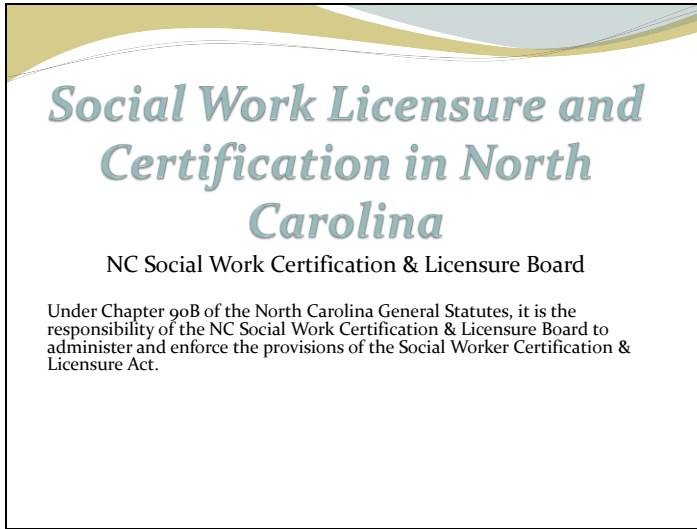


Social Work Certification and Licensure in North Carolina

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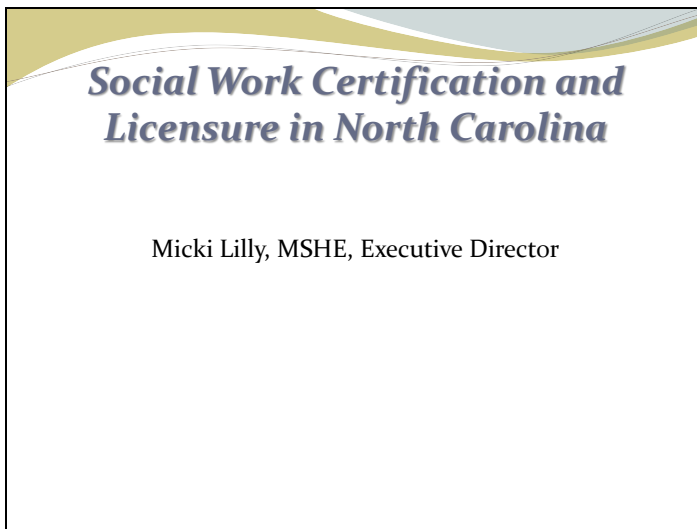


Social Work Licensure and Certification in North Carolina

NC Social Work Certification & Licensure Board

Under Chapter 90B of the North Carolina General Statutes, it is the responsibility of the NC Social Work Certification & Licensure Board to administer and enforce the provisions of the Social Worker Certification & Licensure Act.

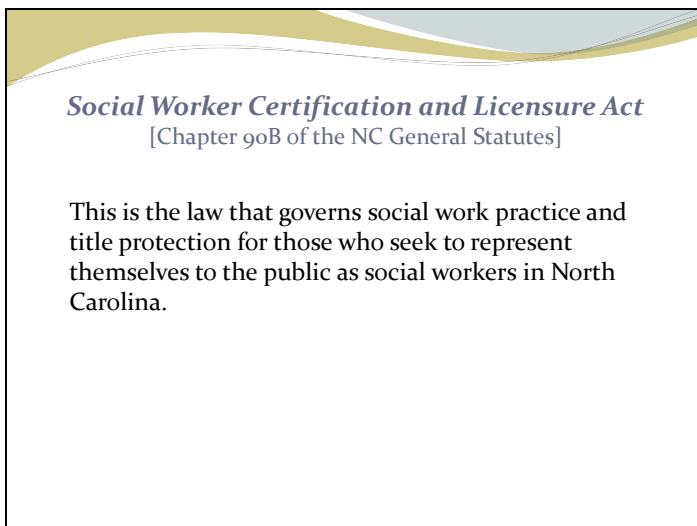
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Social Work Certification and Licensure in North Carolina

Micki Lilly, MSHE, Executive Director

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Social Worker Certification and Licensure Act
[Chapter 90B of the NC General Statutes]

This is the law that governs social work practice and title protection for those who seek to represent themselves to the public as social workers in North Carolina.

Social Work Certification and Licensure in North Carolina

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The NCSWCLB is comprised of 7 members:

- 5 professional social workers in public and private practice
- 2 public members
- Members serve by gubernatorial appointment in a non-salaried capacity.
- Members must be residents of North Carolina and, with the exception of the two public members, must be certified by the board.
- Professional members must have three years of social work experience prior to the appointment.
- The term of office shall be three years with no member serving more than two consecutive terms.

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How to contact the Board

- North Carolina Social Work Certification and Licensure Board
- Post Office Box 1043
- Asheboro, North Carolina 27204

- Email: swboard@asheboro.com
- Web address www.ncswboard.org
- Phone (336) 625-1679 Fax (336) 625-4246
Administrative Toll Free (800) 550-7009
- Ethics Toll Free (866) 397-5263

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Current Board Members

- Deana F. Morrow, Ph.D., LPC, LCSW, ACSW, Chair, Professional Member (Educator)
- Emily B. Simmons, MSW, CSWM, Vice-Chair, Professional Member (Public Sector)
- Mary A. Brogden, MPA, Secretary-Treasurer, Public Member
- Alfred Bryant, Jr., Ph.D., LPC, Public Member
- Janet Urman, MSW, LCSW, Professional Member (Private Sector)
- Joanne Sobolewski, MSW, ACSW, LCSW, DCSM, CSWM, Professional Member (Public Sector)
- Nancy J. Mercer, MSW, LCSW, LCAS, Professional Member (Private Sector)

Social Work Certification and Licensure in North Carolina

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What is the difference between certification and licensure?

- 1983 - Social Work Certification was enacted by the NC Legislature to establish a standard of practice for the social work profession.
- Initially, all credential levels were certifications and were voluntary, designed to set a standard for the profession through credential review and examination as well as ongoing professional development.
- 1992 - Certification for clinical social work practice became mandatory.
- 1999 - the Certified Clinical Social Worker (CCSW) became Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW).
- 2001 - All exemptions from licensure for clinical social work practice were removed.
- 2009 - Implementation of title protection for "social worker."

Through credential review, examination, professional reference and continuing education requirements, professional competency is affirmed. Certification provides protection for the public and sets a standard of practice for the social work profession.

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What is the difference between certification and licensure?

- **Certifications remain voluntary** and are not required for engaging in social work practice.
- **Licensure is required** by law to engage in or offer to engage in clinical social work practice.

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Levels of Certification/Licensure

- Level A- Certified Social Worker (CSW)
- Level B- Certified Master Social Worker (CMSW)
- Level C- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
[Mandatory License for anyone doing clinical social work]
- Level C- Provisionally Licensed Clinical Social Worker (P-LCSW)
[Requires appropriate supervision from a LCSW]
- Level H- Certified Social Work Manager (CSWM)

Social Work Certification and Licensure in North Carolina

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Eligibility Requirements

- Level A- Certified Social Worker (CSW)
 - Education
 - BSW from CSWE accredited undergraduate school
 - Examination
 - ASWB Bachelor level examination
 - Voluntary certification indicating professional commitment

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Eligibility Requirements

- Level B-Certified Master Social Worker (CMSW)
 - Education
 - MSW, DSW or Ph.D in social work from CSWE accredited graduate school
 - Examination
 - ASWB Master level exam

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Eligibility Requirements

- Level H- Certified Social Work Manager (CSWM)
 - Education
 - BSW, MSW, DSW or Ph.D in social work from CSWE accredited graduate school
 - Examination
 - ASWB Advanced Generalist level exam
 - Experience
 - Two years (3,000 hours of paid employment) in an administrative setting
 - Supervision
 - All hours in administrative setting must be under supervision by a Board certified individual with at least 5 years of administrative social work experience.

Social Work Certification and Licensure in North Carolina

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Eligibility Requirements

- **Level C-Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)**
 - **Education**
 - MSW, DSW or Ph.D in social work from CSWE accredited graduate school
 - **Examination**
 - ASWB Clinical level exam
 - **Experience**
 - Minimum of 3,000 hours of post MSW clinical paid employment performed in no less than two full years nor more than six years.
 - Practicum/Internship cannot be included.
 - **Supervision**
 - 100 hours of supervision (25 hours may be group) from an LCSW/MSW with at least 2 years of experience post LCSW.

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Eligibility Requirements

- **Level C-Provisionally Licensed Clinical Social Worker (P-LCSW)**
 - **Education**
 - MSW, DSW or Ph.D in social work from CSWE accredited graduate school
 - **Examination**
 - ASWB Clinical level exam (taken within the first 2 years following the issuance of the provisional license)
 - **Experience**
 - No experience required upon application. Holders of this license must submit reports every 6 months documenting progress in supervision and clinical hours accumulated.

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Eligibility Requirements

- **The Board may refuse to grant or renew a certificate or license on the following grounds:**
 - Conviction of a misdemeanor under NCGS 90B, or conviction of a felony under US or any state law.
 - Gross unprofessional conduct, dishonest or incompetent practice.
 - If the applicant lies or misrepresents themselves or their credentials.
 - Impairment or inability of the social worker to perform their functions safely or competently.

(North Carolina General Statute 90B-11)

Social Work Certification and Licensure in North Carolina

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Steps in applying for certification/licensure

- 1. Download the **application packet** from the Board's website at www.ncswboard.org.
- 2. Students in their last semester of course work may apply for exam eligibility. [Certification/licensure will not be granted until an official transcript noting the degree and date awarded is received by the Board.]
- 3. Ask your advisor/Dean to write you a letter on University letterhead verifying that you are a student in good standing and that you are a candidate for graduation in May/June.

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Steps in applying for certification/licensure

- 4. Request a copy of your transcript to be sent to you in a sealed envelope. Those applying for exam eligibility before graduation will have to request another "final" transcript be sent to the Board office after graduation.
- 5. Request three professional references from field supervisors, field liaison or teachers (at least one reference must come from a supervisor). All references must be completed on the official form. Ask each reference to place the form in a sealed envelope and sign over the envelope closure. Have your references mail the form back to you but do not open it

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Steps in applying for licensure/certification

- 6. Complete the application form. Your signature must be notarized.
- 7. Submit to the Board, the completed application enclosing the sealed transcript (and, if appropriate, a letter of good standing from your advisor or Dean) and the three sealed professional references, along with a certified cashier's check or money order for the appropriate application fee.

Social Work Certification and Licensure in North Carolina

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Certification/Licensure Renewal

- Credentials are issued for a period not to exceed two years and are renewable through demonstration of appropriate continuing education (40 clock hours over 2 years).
- Provisional licenses are issued for two years but have a maximum time frame in which requirements for full licensure must be satisfied. P-LCSW licensees must pass the clinical exam during their first two years of licensure in order to be eligible for renewal.
- Renewal notices are sent in advanced. Please remember that regulation makes it mandatory that certified/licensed social workers report changes in contact information to the Board. (failure to do so constitutes a violation of the Ethical Guidelines).

Of the required 40 clock hours of continuing education during the two year certification/licensure cycle, at least 4 clock hours of CE must be focused on ethics related to social work practice and ethical decision making.

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When can I sit for the exam?

- In North Carolina you may sit for the appropriate exam during the final semester of your graduation year or upon graduation.
- In North Carolina (and most other jurisdictions), you must apply for exam eligibility through the licensing Board – through the regular application process.
- Upon review and approval of your application, you will be notified of exam candidacy approval and given information on cost and instruction on how to register to sit for the exam.
- Except for Provisional Licensure (P-LCSW) your credential will not be issued until you have passed the required examination. [P-LCSW does not require an exam; however, the P-LCSW will not be issued until the Board receives the final transcript AND the P-LCSW must pass the clinical exam during the initial 2 years of licensure].

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What happens if I fail the exam?

- Your application is good for two years . You may submit another exam fee to the Board to request to sit for the exam again.
- N.C. does not pose a limit on the number of times you may take the exam so you may try again if you fail; however, there is a 90-day waiting period before re-examination required by ASWB for reasons of maintaining exam security.
- P-LCSW: Failure to pass the exam during the initial 2 years of licensure will make you ineligible for LCSW licensure or renewal of the P-LCSW license. You will have to apply for a new P-LCSW license which will not be issued until the clinical exam is passed.

P-LCSW licensees who fail the exam and must re-apply for a new P-LCSW license will ***not*** be able to carry forward any of the supervision or practice hours accrued under the expired license. The two years of supervised practice will start again with the issuance of the new provisional license.

Social Work Certification and Licensure in North Carolina

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Professional and Ethical Responsibilities

- Be familiar with the statute and rules governing social work practice in North Carolina [NCGS § 90B, 21 NCAC 63], including Ethical Guidelines.
- Know when your certificate/license expires and when you are due to renew.
- Thoroughly read mailing you receive from the Board. Ask for clarification if needed, and keep the Board informed of your current contact information.
- Maintain professional competencies through ongoing participation in continuing education activities as required.
- Submit all material in a timely manner and maintain a copy that you can readily access if needed.
- Take precautions to protect client confidentiality.
- Remain alert to the real and potential conflicts of engaging in dual relationships and maintain appropriate boundaries.

NC General Statute 90B is the Social Worker Certification and Licensure Act. It differs from the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics. 21 NCAC 63 is Title 21, Chapter 63 of the North Carolina Administrative Code.