CA LCSW Licensure Info

Following the successful completion of a master’s in social work degree, many of our graduates choose to seek a license, thus becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). Although the licensing requirements differ by state, in California, this process is guided by the requirements outlined by the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS).

Licensing is appealing for many reasons

- More job opportunities
- Higher salaries
- Promotional opportunities
- Provides opportunity to participate in post-graduate training and education

An overview of the process

Be sure to check carefully with the Board of Behavioral Sciences – they are the final authority on all things related to licensure.

- Earn a Master of Social Work from an accredited school
- Complete an application to register as an Associate Clinical Social Worker (ASW), including taking a DOJ and FBI live scan and passing a criminal background check
- Pass the California Law & Ethics exam
- Complete an additional 3000 hours of supervised clinical experience in a work setting with a qualified supervisor
- Complete the ASWB License Application packet
• Pass ASWB clinical exam
• You're an LCSW!!
• **BBS ASW FAQ**

**Obtaining an ASW Number**

• Complete [ASW application](#) on the BBS website (caution, you do not want to register until you’re ready to start collecting hours because there is a 6 year rule to complete your hours once you start)
• Submit Transcripts – degree must be posted
• Live Scan finger printing (*no more than 60 days prior to application submission*)
• Photo (*no more than 60 days prior to application submission*)
• Conviction/Disciplinary Action Documentation
• Application Fee - $75

Here is a handy YouTube video about how to do this: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ya37hZChbFs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ya37hZChbFs)

**About the Exams**

• **California Law & Ethics Exam**
  o CA Law & Ethics exam must be taken PRIOR to the first ASW renewal.
  o If you pass it, then you will continue to renew ASW annually until hours are complete.
  o If you do not pass, you will need to take a 12-hr CA Law & Ethics course in order to renew your ASW #.
  o Can take test every 90 days but at least annually until passed.
  o [BBS Law & Ethics FAQ](#)
  o [Law & Ethics Exam Outline](#)
• **The National Clinical ASWB Exam**
  o It is designed to assess an applicant’s knowledge of psychosocial principles and methods in treatment, as well as techniques & methods applicable to practice.
  o Test is 150 item multiple choice over 4 hours.
  o [ASWB Exam Candidate Handbook](#)

**Pre-Licensure Coursework**

• While the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) lists CSUF with "[No Additional Courses Required](#)," potential licensees are responsible for the pre-licensure content either by taking MSW courses that meet these requirements, or through continuing education courses.

• Additional coursework required
  o Child Abuse Assessment/ Reporting -7 hours
  o Human Sexuality -10 hours
  o Substance Abuse -15 hours
  o Spousal/Partner Abuse -15 hours
  o Aging & Long Term Care -10 hours
  o Suicide Risk Assessment and Intervention – 6 hours (If applying on or after January 1, 2021).

• [CSUF courses that fulfill BBS pre-licensure requirements](#)

**Accruing Hours**

• 3,000 hours for LCSW
• Minimum of 2 years (24 months) after registration, Max. 40 hrs./week
• 104 weeks of supervision required, 52 weeks of it must be individual supervision; the other 52 weeks can be group supervision
• A minimum of 1700 of supervision must be with LCSW
• You cannot begin accruing hours until you have the ASW #
• Hours can be paid work (W-2 employee, not 1099 independent contractor) and/or volunteer
• If your ASW registration lapses or expires, you will not be able to count those hours for the period in which your registration was invalid.

Categories of Hours

• 2000 hours minimum - Clinical Psychosocial Diagnosis, Assessment and Treatment - includes individual or group
  o F2F Individual or Group Psychotherapy (min. 750 hours out of 2000 hrs.)*
• 1000 hours - Client-centered advocacy, consultation, evaluation, research, direct supervisor time, trainings (approved by supervisor), count towards 3000
• LCSW Breakdown of Required Experience (PDF)

Six Year Rule

• BBS cannot accept hours of experience older than six (6) years from the time a person applies for the LCSW license. The law does not allow the board to make exceptions.
• Registrations issued by the Board are valid for a 6-year period (five renewals). Registrants who have not completed all hours of supervised experience within the 6-year life span must apply for a subsequent registration number to continue the path toward licensure.
• Many registrants apply for a second (or third, etc.) registration number to gain additional supervised work experience or for employment purposes.