

Hello,

My Name is Holly Hammarsten, I am licensed baccalaureate social worker in the State of North Dakota. I am speaking to you today as the president of the North Dakota Board of Social Work Board of examiners. In my jay job I am a child protection worker for Three Rivers Human Service Zone. I have been a licensed social worker since June of 2014 and have been doing child welfare worker since March of 2015.

The North Dakota Board of Social Work Examiners Board was formed in 1983 by the legislative assembly. It is a seven-member board appointed by the governor. Members serve three-year terms. No member may serve more than two consecutive terms. The Board is responsible for licensing qualified applicants to practice social work and to ensure that licensees comply with the laws and regulations governing that practice. There are many ways Board members appointed by the Governor can receive training that will assist them in their role of being on the board of social work. The ASWB provides yearly training as well as the State of North Dakota on specific topics, for example they provided a training titled "rulemaking explanation". The Board requires competency and ethical behavior in all areas of social work practice. The board of social work examiners is responsible for licensing qualified applicants to practice social work and to ensure that licensees comply with the laws and regulations governing that practice.

The importance of the social work board to ensure that our public and community partners maintain high standards of professional conduct and professional education and training. Licensure declares that social work is a learned profession that affects public health, safety, and welfare, and, therefore, the state must ensure that only qualified persons are permitted to practice as defined in state law. Regulation and licensure promote the maintenance of core professional standards and their operation. This is important for public protection and has implications for how the actions of social work professionals impact their community and clients. Public protection is the social justice mandate of social work regulation. When state governments recognize the importance of the profession through regulating its practice, they recognize the fundamental role of social justice in safe, competent, and ethical practice. Social work has earned its place as one of the most important helping professions; this is a statement to the power and value of the professional and social work practitioners.

Licensed Social workers must pass the ASWB exam before receiving their licensure in North Dakota. The ASWB examinations are offered in four professional categories—Bachelors, Masters, Advanced Generalist, and Clinical. Within the last year 445 licensure applications were received. No denials of licensure were issued. The total reciprocity applications received were 194; 51 were issued for LCSW reciprocity and 94 were issued for LBSW and LMSW reciprocity.

There are many services provided by Social Work Licensees, including child protection workers, therapists, addiction counselors, hospital social workers, and jobs within the department of human services.

The Board reviews its rules almost every meeting. In doing so, it ensures applications to licensees, and reviews result in numerous concerns or systematic issues, formal rulemaking is undertaken. The last

time we brought revisions forward was before the Legislative Administrative Rules Committee last year in 2021. Those rules took effect on April 1, 2021.

Licensing requirements are different for each license that can be obtained for a social worker. For a licensed Baccalaureate social worker or LBSW, you must obtain a bachelor's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited college or university, or a Canadian college or university accredited by Canadian Association for Social Work Education. The degree must be in social work and is required by ND State Law 43-41-04, you must also have a passing score on the ASWB Bachelor's level exam.

For Licensed Masters Social worker or LMSW, you must obtain a master's degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited college or university, or a Canadian college or university accredited by Canadian Association for Social Work Education. The degree must be in social work; no other degree will be accepted. As well as obtain a passing score on the ASWB Master's level exam.

For a Licensed Clinical Social Worker or LCSW, you must obtain master's or higher degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited college or university, or a Canadian college or university accredited by Canadian Association for Social Work Education, the degree must be in social work. You must also have a passing score on the ASWB clinical level exam, and 3000 hours of supervised clinical social work practice completed within a 4-year, post-master's degree period.

We can license foreign practitioners (those with licenses from other states, in two ways under our reciprocity law. That law allows us to put in an easier path to licensure for applicants who have a license from another state. It is NDCC 43-41-07(1). It has two parts:

First, we can grant them a license if the laws of the other state and the laws of North Dakota were substantially the same at the time the applicant got that license. Since 2021, we have granted 71 reciprocity licenses issued under NDCC 43-41-07(1)(a).

Second, even if the laws of the two states aren't substantially similar, we can still grant a license by reciprocity if we determine that the applicant has experience and qualifications substantially like North Dakota's regular licensing standards. Since this law took effect in 2017, we have granted 23 licenses issued under it (NDCC 43-41-07(1)(b)).

Currently the Board does not have any reciprocity agreements with surrounding states. But that's because, like every state agency, we can only act within the limits of our authority. And we don't have the authority to enter into agreements with other states. But we do have the reciprocity laws I've mentioned above.

The Board does not have an Executive Director. As for Board members, the Board encourages its members to attend the annual seminar for Boards that is provided by the Office of the Attorney General. The Board does not have an Executive Director. It instead contracts with a company called APT. APT staff assist the Board by answering calls, responding to emails, setting up Board meetings, helping the Board process applications, complaints, etc.

Currently no board member has served longer than 3.5 years our 7 board members have been on the board an average time of 2.4 years.