

Legislative Analysis



SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE

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House Bill 5184 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Felicia Brabec

Analysis available at
<http://www.legislature.mi.gov>

House Bill 5185 as introduced
Sponsor: Rep. Kimberly Edwards

Committee: Health Policy
Complete to 11-14-24

SUMMARY:

House Bills 5184 and 5185, described together below, would amend the Public Health Code to do all of the following:

- Provide for the licensure of licensed clinical social workers, define the scope of practice and licensure requirements, provide for title preemption, and prescribe license fees.
- Provide that an individual is not required to pass an examination to be licensed to engage in the practice of social work at any level.
- No longer require the postdegree experience now required for a bachelor's or master's level license and eliminate limited licenses to get that postdegree experience.
- Grant full licensure to certain individuals who hold certain limited licenses or practice designations under the code on January 1, 2025.
- Require certain master's social worker practices to be performed under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker.

Licensed clinical social workers

Under the bills, an individual could not engage in the *practice of social work at the clinical level* without being licensed or otherwise allowed under Part 185 (Social Work) of the code. A license would be for three years. The fee would be \$25. Beginning January 1, 2025, generally speaking, only a licensed clinical social worker could use the title "licensed clinical social worker" or "social worker" or the initials "l.c.s.w." (Licensed bachelor's social workers and licensed master's social workers could continue to use the title "social worker" through December 31, 2024.)

Practice of social work at the clinical level would mean all of the following applied within the scope of social work values, ethics, principles, and advanced skills:

- The advanced application of the knowledge of human development and behavior and social, economic, and cultural institutions.
- The advanced application of macro social work processes and systems to improve the social or health services of communities, groups, or organizations through planned interventions.
- The independent application of specialized clinical knowledge and advanced clinical skills in the areas of assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders, conditions, and addictions. Treatment methods would include providing advanced social work case management and

casework and individual, couple, family, or group counseling and psychotherapy, whether in private practice or other settings.¹

Except as described below, a licensed clinical social worker would have to meet both of the following:

- Have been awarded a master's or doctoral degree in the field of social work from a college or university social work program approved by the Michigan Board of Social Work.
- Have completed at least two years of full-time post-master's or postdoctoral degree experience, or the equivalent in part-time hours, in the practice of social work at the master's level under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker.

An individual would not have to pass an examination to be licensed as a licensed clinical social worker.

The Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA) would have to develop and issue rules regarding the minimum training requirements for the practice of social work at the clinical level. The rules would have to include at least all of the following for the applications in the third bulleted item in the definition of *practice of social work at the clinical level*, above:

- Possession of a master's degree in social work.
- Completion of coursework in normal human development and diagnosis, assessment, and treatment of individuals, couples, families, and groups, using a variety of psychotherapeutic methods or techniques.
- Completion of at least 4,000 hours of supervised post-master's degree clinical experience under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker.

Postdegree experience, examinations, and limited licenses

In addition to the namesake educational requirements, the act also currently requires bachelor's and master's social workers to have two years of supervised postdegree experience in the practice of social work at their respective level in order to be eligible for full licensure.²

The bills would eliminate this postdegree experience requirement beginning January 1, 2025, and would further provide that an individual is not required to pass an examination to be granted a license to engage at the practice of social work at the bachelor's or master's level.

In addition, the act now allows an individual to be granted a limited license, renewable for up to six years, to a person who has completed the educational requirements for licensure at the bachelor's or master's level, so they can obtain the now-required postdegree experience. The bill would eliminate these limited licenses beginning January 1, 2025.

Supervision of master's social workers

Currently, one level of the practice of social work at the master's level includes the application of specialized clinical knowledge and advanced clinical skills in the areas of assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders, conditions, and

¹ See "Rules," below, for requirements concerning the social work applications described in this paragraph.

² For descriptions of the scope of practice of social work at the bachelor's and master's levels, see:

<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=MCL-333-18501&highlight=practice%20of%20social%20work&QueryID=163905940>

addictions. Beginning January 1, 2025, those elements of that scope of practice would have to be performed under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker.

Grants of licensure

The bill would require the Michigan Board of Social Work to grant licensure to individuals who meet the following requirements on January 1, 2025:

- The board would have to grant a full license as a licensed bachelor’s social worker to an individual who, on January 1, 2025, holds a limited license as described above, regardless of whether they have completed the postdegree experience required when the limited license was granted.
- The board would have to grant a full license as a licensed master’s social worker to an individual who, on January 1, 2025, holds a limited license as described above, regardless of whether they have completed the postdegree experience required when the limited license was granted.
- The board would have to grant a full license as a licensed master’s social worker to an individual who, on January 1, 2025, meets both of the following:
 - Holds a full license to engage in the practice of social work at the master’s level.
 - Holds a macro practice designation granted to an individual whose practice includes the advanced application of the knowledge of human development and behavior and social, economic, and cultural institutions as described in the scope of practice for licensed master’s social workers and the rules for licensed master’s social workers.³
- The board would have to grant a license as a licensed clinical social worker to an individual who, on January 1, 2025, meets both of the following:
 - Holds a full license to engage in the practice of social work at the master’s level.
 - Holds a clinical practice designation granted to an individual who possesses the specialized clinical knowledge and advanced clinical skills in the areas of assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of mental, emotional, and behavioral disorders, conditions, and addictions as described in the scope of practice for licensed master’s social workers and the rules for licensed master’s social workers.⁴

Neither bill can take effect unless both bills are enacted.

MCL 333.18503 et seq. and proposed MCL 333.18515a (HB 5184)
MCL 333.16177 et seq. (HB 5185)

FISCAL IMPACT:

House Bills 5184 and 5185 would have an indeterminate fiscal impact on the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs (LARA). House Bill 5184 would, in effect, eliminate the limited license for social workers and would create a new license classification for clinical

³ <https://ars.apps.lara.state.mi.us/AdminCode/DownloadAdminCodeFile?FileName=R%20338.2921%20to%20R%20338.2965.pdf&ReturnHTML=True> (See R 338.2951 for the macro designation rules)

⁴ <https://ars.apps.lara.state.mi.us/AdminCode/DownloadAdminCodeFile?FileName=R%20338.2921%20to%20R%20338.2965.pdf&ReturnHTML=True> (See R 338.2953 for the clinical designation rules)

social workers. House Bill 5185 would require LARA to assess a \$15 application processing fee and a \$25 annual license fee for licensed clinical social workers; these fees are in line with fees currently assessed for other social worker licenses. The effect that the bills may have on the total volume of social worker licenses is indeterminate, and thus the potential impact on revenue is unknown. LARA would likely need to update processes and documentation to reflect the changes made under the bills, and the department would also need to promulgate administrative rules. The cost of these activities would likely be modest.

The bills would have no fiscal impact on any other units of state or local government.

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■ This analysis was prepared by nonpartisan House Fiscal Agency staff for use by House members in their deliberations and does not constitute an official statement of legislative intent.