



National Association of Social Workers  
California Chapter

## Ten Basic Steps to a California LCSW

### CA State Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) Publications

The following publication, which details the requirements for becoming a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW), can be found on the BBS web site at [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov).

*Laws and Regulations Relating to the Practice of Marriage, Family, and Child Counseling, Licensed Clinical Social Work, and Licensed Educational Psychology*

1. **Obtain a MSW degree from an accredited School of Social Work.**
2. **Register as an Associate Social Worker (ASW) with the Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS).**
  - Download application at [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov).
  - The applicant must be registered as an ASW for any experience to count as supervised hours.
  - From the date the applicant receives her ASW, she has six years to complete the 3200 hours.
  - Licensed in another state? See the document "Information for LCSW from other States."
3. **Obtain Required Classes.** These courses may be obtained during a MSW program as well as before or after registering as an ASW. They may be taken through an educational institution; professional association; state, county or local department of health or mental health services; licensed health facility; or obtained from a continuing education provider approved by the BBS.
  - (a) Substance Abuse (15 hr.)
  - (b) Human Sexuality (10 hr.)
  - (c) Child Abuse Assessment & Reporting (7 hr.) *This class must be taken in California.*
  - (d) Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment, Detection, & Intervention

Applicants who began graduate training from January 1, 1995 through December 31, 2003.

In 1995, many California MSW Programs began incorporating spousal or partner abuse into their curriculum. When incorporated into the graduate program, a separate "certificate of completion" is not necessary. Check with the MSW program, or with the BBS, to ensure that this requirement has been met. If not, a 7-hour course may be taken through NASW-CA.

Applicants who begin graduate training on or after January 1, 2004.

These applicants shall complete a minimum of 15 contact hours of course work in spousal/partner abuse assessment, detection, and intervention. The BBS will accept a certificate from the chief academic officer of the educational institution indicating this course work was part of the master program curriculum.
  - (e) Aging and Long-term Care

Applicants who begin graduate study on or after January 1, 2004, shall complete a minimum of 10 contact hours of course work in aging and long-term care. The BBS will accept a certificate from the chief academic officer of the educational institution indicating this course work was part of the master program curriculum.
4. **Obtain the required 3200 supervised hours.** Carefully review the specific requirements for obtaining hours, the forms necessary to document the hours, and which practitioners may serve as supervisors.

- The BBS Web site [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov) offers all necessary applications, forms, and exam information.
  - Persons serving as clinical supervisors must complete the 15-hr. mandated supervision course.
5. **Complete the LCSW application.** Once the 3200 hours of experience have been obtained, submit all certificates, documents, and forms with the LCSW application to the BBS. Make a complete copy of the application packet for personal records. Send original packet ***Certified Mail*** with a request for receipt.
  6. **Wait to be deemed eligible to sit for exams.** Once the BBS has received the LCSW application and fee, it has up to ninety (90) days to review the packet and determine the applicant's eligibility. The BBS will notify the applicant by mail whether his/her application has been accepted.
  7. **Make reservations for the Written Exam.** The applicant will receive an "Examination Handbook" from Exporior, which will list exam dates and locations throughout California.
    - The applicant calls the testing center and schedules a date for the exam.
    - The written exam, designed specifically for the State of CA, is computerized and timed.
    - For details, refer to "LCSW Standard Written Exam Candidate Handbook" at [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov).
    - Applicants have one year, from the date they are eligible, to sit for the written exam.
    - If the applicant fails the exam, he/she has up to one year, to sit for the exam a second time.
    - The applicant must pass the standard written exam before taking the *Written Clinical Vignette Exam*.
  8. **Effective November 14, 2003, BBS eliminated the Oral Exam.** In its place, the BBS authorized a Written Clinical Vignette Exam. For details and more information about this new exam, please visit [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov) under "Examinations."
  9. **Keep Your Licensing File Active.** Once an applicant is approved to begin the exam process, to keep his/her file active, the applicant must sit for at least one exam every year until both exams are passed.
  10. **Stay up-to-date on licensing requirements.** Read the biannual *BBS News*, a publication that highlights changes at [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov) under "What's New." It is also mailed to anyone registered with the board.

**Important Suggestions:**

- Be Pro-active! Ask questions, read BBS publications, visit the web, and keep copies of everything.
- Read both the ASW and LCSW applications to better understand the process and requirements.
- Immediately inform the BBS of any changes to any pertinent personal information (name or address).
- Contact the BBS through email and keep written responses. Responses may take up to a week.
- Register for the new service of receiving automated BBS updates through email.

**Supervised Post-Master's Experience Requirements**

Section 4996.23 Supervised Post-Master's Experience Criteria Effective January 1, 2002

**Section 4996.23 Supervised Post-Master's Experience Criteria Effective January 1, 2002**

The experience required by subdivision (c) of Section 4996.2 shall meet the following criteria:

- (a) All persons registered with the board on and after January 1, 2002, shall have at least 3,200 hours of post-master's degree supervised experience providing clinical social work services as permitted by Section 4996.9.

At least 1,700 hours shall be gained under the supervision of a licensed clinical social worker. The remaining required supervised experience may be gained under the supervision of a licensed mental health professional

acceptable to the board as defined by a regulation adopted by the board. This experience shall consist of the following:

- (1) A minimum of 2,000 hours in clinical psychosocial diagnosis, assessment, and treatment, including psychotherapy or counseling.
  - (2) A maximum of 1,200 hours in client-centered advocacy, consultation, evaluation, and research.
  - (3) Of the 2,000 clinical hours required in paragraph (1), no less than 750 hours shall be face-to-face individual or group psychotherapy provided to clients in the context of clinical social work services.
  - (4) A minimum of two years of supervised experience is required to be obtained over a period of not less than 104 weeks and shall have been gained within the six years immediately preceding the date on which the application for licensure was filed.
  - (5) Experience shall not be credited for more than 40 hours in any week.
- (b) "Supervision" means responsibility for, and control of, the quality of clinical social work services being provided. Consultation or peer discussion shall not be considered to be supervision.
- (c) (1) Prior to the commencement of supervision, a supervisor shall comply with all requirements enumerated in Section 1870 of Title 16 of the California Code of Regulations and shall sign under penalty of perjury the "Responsibility Statement for Supervisors of an Associate Clinical Social Worker" form.
- (2) Supervised experience shall include at least one hour of direct supervisor contact for a minimum of 104 weeks. In addition, an associate shall receive an average of at least one hour of direct supervisor contact for every week in which more than 10 hours of face-to-face psychotherapy is performed in each setting experience is gained. No more than five hours of supervision, whether individual or group, shall be credited during any single week. Of the 104 weeks of required supervision, 52 weeks shall be individual supervision, and of the 52 weeks of required individual supervision, not less than 13 weeks shall be supervised by a licensed clinical social worker. For purposes of this section, "one hour of direct supervisor contact" means one hour of face-to-face contact on an individual basis or two hours of face-to-face contact in a group of not more than eight persons receiving supervision.
- (d) The supervisor and the associate shall develop a supervisory plan that describes the goals and objectives of supervision. These goals shall include the ongoing assessment of strengths and limitations and the assurance of practice in accordance with the laws and regulations. The associate shall submit to the board the initial original supervisory plan upon application for licensure.
- (e) Experience shall only be gained in a setting that meets both of the following:
- (1) Lawfully and regularly provides clinical social work, mental health counseling, or psychotherapy.
  - (2) Provides oversight to ensure that the associate's work at the setting meets the experience and supervision requirements set forth in this chapter and is within the scope of practice for the profession as defined in Section 4996.9.
- (f) Experience shall not be gained until the applicant has been registered as an associate clinical social worker.
- (g) Employment in a private practice as defined in subdivision (h) shall not commence until the applicant has been registered as an associate clinical social worker.
- (h) A private practice setting is a setting that is owned by a licensed clinical social worker, a licensed marriage and family therapist, a licensed psychologist, a licensed physician and surgeon, or a professional corporation of any of those licensed professions.
- (i) If volunteering, the associate shall provide the board with a letter from his or her employer verifying his or her voluntary status upon application for licensure.

(j) If employed, the associate shall provide the board with copies of his or her W-2 tax forms for each year of experience claimed upon application for licensure.

(k) While an associate may be either a paid employee or volunteer, employers are encouraged to provide fair remuneration to associates.

(l) Associates shall not do the following:

(1) Receive any remuneration from patients or clients and shall only be paid by his or her employer.

(2) Have any proprietary interest in the employer's business.

(m) An associate, whether employed or volunteering, may obtain supervision from a person not employed by the associate's employer if that person has signed a written agreement with the employer to take supervisory responsibility for the associate's social work services.

(n) Notwithstanding any other provision of law, associates and applicants for examination shall receive a minimum of one hour of supervision per week for each setting in which he or she is working.

## **NASW-CA Services for Associate Clinical Social Workers**

The California Chapter can assist applicants during the licensing process in the following ways.

### **1. Required Pre-license Classes**

The chapter offers the following pre-license classes on a monthly basis and some are offered online. The monthly class schedule is available at [www.naswca.org](http://www.naswca.org). Please click on "continuing education" and the "2007 CE Catalog" for monthly classes. To take selected online classes choose "Online CE Program."

- Human Sexuality, 10 hr
- Child Abuse Assessment and Reporting, 7 hr
- Spousal/Partner Abuse Assessment and Intervention, 7 hr
- Substance Abuse, 15 hr

### **2. CA News a Monthly Newsletter**

A monthly newsletter with innovative and timely articles, local and statewide news, events, and classes.

### **3. Social Work Job Listings**

The CA Chapter offers a bimonthly edition of the *Jobs Bulletin* at [www.naswca.org](http://www.naswca.org).

#### **NASW California Chapter**

Toll Free: (800) 538-2565 X 16

Local: (916) 442-4565 X 16

Email: [naswce@naswca.org](mailto:naswce@naswca.org)

#### **CA Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS)**

Web: [www.bbs.ca.gov](http://www.bbs.ca.gov)

ASW Analyst: (916) 574-7851 or (916) 574-7852

Email: [BBSWebMaster@bbs.ca.gov](mailto:BBSWebMaster@bbs.ca.gov)

Last Revised January 10, 2007