



Minnesota Board of Social Work

Biennial Report July 1, 2006 – June 30, 2008

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FY 2007-2008 (July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2008)

Cost of Preparing Biennial Report

Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197 requires that “A report to the legislature must contain, at the beginning of the report, the cost of preparing the report, including any costs incurred by another agency or another level of government.” The Board of Social Work spent an estimated \$750 to prepare this report.

Part 1. General Information

A. Board of Social Work Mission and Major Functions

Board Mission

The mission of the Board of Social Work is “to ensure to the citizens of Minnesota quality social work services by establishing and enforcing professional standards.” (Board of Social Work’s Strategic Plan, September 1994)

Major Board Functions

- 1. Establish and enforce minimum standards of licensure and continuing competency for social workers.**
 - Ensure applicants meet all requirements for initial licensure
 - Approve applicants for the national licensure examination
 - Issue and renew licenses to applicants and licensees who meet requirements
 - Establish, implement, and enforce standards for supervision and continuing education
 - Review and approve continuing education provider applications
- 2. Establish and enforce minimum standards of ethical practice for social workers.**
 - Make social work practice determinations
 - Receive, investigate, and resolve complaints against social workers
 - Take corrective or disciplinary action as deemed necessary to protect the public
 - Monitor licensees who are under disciplinary orders and corrective action agreements
- 3. Provide information to applicants and licensees about (a) examination, licensure and renewal requirements, and (b) ethical standards.**
 - Publish and distribute student handbooks and informational brochures

- Provide information, application forms, and online services to applicants and licensees via the Board's website
 - Respond to written and telephone requests for information from applicants and licensees
 - Make presentations to social work students in accredited social work programs at colleges and universities throughout the state
 - Attend social work professional conferences to distribute written information, make presentations, and answer questions regarding standards of practice and licensing requirements
- 4. Provide information to the public about the scope of social work practice, ethical standards governing social workers, and the complaint process.**
- Disseminate information to the public on actions taken by the Board via the Board's website and on request
 - Respond to requests for data
 - Educate the public about the Board's responsibilities, including how to register a complaint and how the complaint process works
 - Provide information on the Board's compliance process utilizing the video production "Compliance Process: An Overview"
- 5. Verify licensure status of social workers to employers, credentialing agencies, insurance agencies, and the public.**
- Provide free license verification services via the Board's website
 - Respond to telephone inquiries
 - Provide written verification

B. Major Board Activities During Biennium

Among the activities accomplished by the Board during the FY 2007-2008 biennium were the following.

1. Legislative Proposals

Two proposals, initiated by the Board, became effective August 1, 2007. The Board proposed a Temporary License in response to two new Minnesota MSW programs pending accreditation and enrolling students in the fall of 2007. The Board also initiated a proposal for a Provisional License to replace the alternate licensing method for applicants who are foreign-born and speak English as a second language, which expired on August 1, 2007.

Additional proposals, not initiated by the Board, but ultimately supported by the Board, will increase the standards for the clinical license and other licensing standards. The Department of Human Services (DHS) convened a task force, which met in October and November of 2006, to comply with a 2006 legislative mandate to "evaluate qualifications of all licensed mental health professionals..." Task force participants included representatives from the mental health licensing boards, professional associations, professional training schools, providers, advocates, and consumer/family groups. Participants reached general agreement to increase and clarify minimum standards for

clinical practitioners across the disciplines. Task force recommendations established a baseline of clinical standards for coursework, supervised practice, and supervision and resulted in the report “Baseline of Competency: Common Licensing Standards for Mental Health Professionals” (A Report to the Minnesota Legislature – January 15, 2007). The new clinical and other licensing standards have a delayed effective date of August 1, 2011, to allow the Board, academic programs, employers, and professionals time to implement the changes.

The Board convened its Legislative and Rules Committee and stakeholder groups to work on implementation issues related to the 2007 Legislation. Recommendations were presented and approved by the Board regarding policy issues, necessary changes to internal business processes, and technical changes to include in a 2009 legislative proposal. In addition, information and a “Q & A” section were created for the Board’s website. A written summary was also mailed to all licensees and applicants. The Board will continue its work on implementation initiatives, including modifications to the Board’s data base.

A 2009 legislative proposal has been under consideration and will include minor licensing modifications and a fee reduction proposal.

2. Legislative Mandate to Conduct Study

A Board committee is working with stakeholder and community groups to comply with the 2007 legislative mandate to “study and make recommendations to the legislature by December 15, 2008, on how to increase the numbers of licensed social workers serving underserved communities and culturally and ethnically diverse communities, and also explore alternative paths to licensure that does not include a standardized examination”. No funding was provided by the Legislature to study or implement initiatives to address the identified needs. However, through pro bono efforts and a Request for Proposals, the Board has conducted the study. A report and recommendations are being developed which include extremely important initiatives to effectively address the needs of the residents of Minnesota. It is uncertain whether the Board or the Legislature will initiate these recommendations.

3. Board Organization Assessment and Strategic Plan

An organization assessment was conducted and completed in November 2006, to ensure the Board was meeting its mission and to consider ways to streamline processes, reduce expenses, and simplify requirements. This assessment was the basis for two strategic planning exercises conducted during the summer of 2007, for both Board and staff. The Board reviewed its mission, considered the organization assessment, and identified its vision, noting barriers and strategies. The result was an implementation plan to achieve its goals. The Board reassessed the strategic plan initiatives and implementation plan in the spring of 2008. A summary of the planning initiatives is being used to monitor outcomes.

4. Electronic Government Services

The Board offers online services to applicants and licensees including license verifications, address changes, license applications and license renewals, and license requirement information. Online license renewal usage has increased from 4% to 67% since 2004. Online licensure application usage has increased from 45% to 69% since mid-2006. In addition, information on compliance actions taken against licensees and downloadable forms are available online. The website was expanded to make it more comprehensive and user-friendly, and a Frequently Asked Questions section has been added.

Many office functions, including auto-generated correspondence and reports, have been created and converted to electronic methods in order to reduce costs and create efficiencies.

5. Increased Education Outreach

The Board has provided increased public education information regarding licensing requirements and standards of practice to the public and stakeholder groups. Board members and staff provided approximately 26 public education programs during FY 2008 through informational booths and presentations at state and national conferences, and presentations to bachelors and masters social work academic programs throughout the state.

Brochures have been created and published on the compliance process and licensing requirements. In addition, the Board has produced a video on its compliance process, "Compliance Process: An Overview", which is streaming live on the Board's website.

C. Emerging Issues

1. Licensing Exemptions

To further meet its mission of public protection, the Board has established a Legislative Task Force to review current licensing exemptions, particularly for county social workers. During the fall of 2007 a Board member conducted a study pro bono for the Board to identify county employees who are currently in social work positions and who among them are licensed as social workers. Results of the study may be found in "Destination Deferred: Report to the Minnesota Board of Social Work On the Exemption from Mandatory Licensing For Social Workers in Minnesota County Social Services." The report included recommendations to the Board and set the stage for future work. The Task Force is currently gathering data and meeting with stakeholder groups to develop a plan to modify the licensing exemption for city, county, and state social workers. The goal is to ensure that vulnerable populations are provided services by licensed professionals who have demonstrated minimum competency. In addition, consumers would be provided redress, with access to the Board's complaint process, when they have received incompetent or unethical services from providers.

2. Report to the Legislature

The mandated study and report due to the Legislature on December 15, 2008, discussed in section B, number 2, will require implementation of recommendations

adopted by the Board and Legislature. Possible recommendations include working with stakeholder groups at the local, state, and national levels; possible Board initiated legislation; and increased data collection and research, with the goal of increased access for underserved communities to services provided by persons licensed as social workers and also an increased number of licensed social workers representing underserved communities.

3. Electronic Record Storage and Paperless Meetings

The Board is exploring the implementation of a scanning system for licensee and Board records to improve efficiencies and record retention. In addition, the Board is exploring electronic options to conduct meetings and transmit the necessary documents for Board and Committee meetings. The goal is to decrease the cost of producing paper copies for members and to increase efficiencies and security, while maintaining compliance with the Minnesota Data Practices Act and Open Meeting Law.

4. Changing Demographics

Minnesota is experiencing a significant change in the demographics of its residents, including an increasing aging population, and increasing numbers of residents from ethnically and culturally diverse communities. The social work profession and Board are conducting research to better identify the needs and implement strategies to address these needs from both a client/consumer and licensed professional perspective.

5. Professional Mobility

The Board is gathering data from Minnesota bachelors and masters accredited schools of social work to anticipate the number of new persons being prepared for the profession. Social work, like many professions, is also experiencing increased mobility of professionals. The Board must anticipate and implement policies for professionals trained outside of the United States, as well as licensed professional social workers moving to Minnesota from other jurisdictions, where licensing requirements may not be equivalent.

Part 2. Board Members and Staff; Board Budget

A. Board Members

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 148D.025, the Board has 15 members appointed by the Governor. The members include:

- 5 social workers licensed at the baccalaureate level
- 5 social workers licensed at the master's level
- 5 public members (as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 214.02)

The statutes require that 10 members of the Board be engaged in the practice of social work in Minnesota in the following employment settings:

- 1 from a state agency

- 1 from a county agency
- 2 from a private agency
- 1 from a private clinical practice
- 1 educator engaged in regular teaching duties at an accredited program of social work
- 1 engaged in the practice of social work in an elementary, middle, or secondary school
- 1 practicing social work in a licensed hospital or nursing home

In addition, of the 15 Board members, at least 5 must have expertise in communities of color, and at least 6 must reside outside the 7-county metropolitan area.

B. Board Staff

During the FY 2007-2008 biennium, the Board was authorized to employ the equivalent of 10.6 full-time employees (FTEs).

C. Receipts and Disbursements

The Board’s receipts and disbursements for the FY 2007-2008 biennium were as follows:

Item	FY 2007	FY 2008
Receipts (total revenue from all sources)	\$1,038,962	\$1,030,274
Disbursements (total direct and indirect costs)	\$974,038	\$976,428

D. Major Fees Assessed by the Board

Fee	Amount
Application Fees	
Licensure by Endorsement	\$85.00
LSW, LGSW, LISW and LICSW	45.00
Licensure and Renewal Fees (payable every 2 years)	
LSW	\$90.00
LGSW	160.00
LISW	240.00
LICSW	265.00

LSW = Licensed Social Worker
 LGSW = Licensed Graduate Social Worker
 LISW = Licensed Independent Social Worker
 LICSW = Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker

Part 3. Licensing Statistics

A. Persons Currently Licensed

Level	FY 2007	FY 2008
LSW	5119	5194
LGSW	1086	1291
LISW	708	697
LICSW	3242	3357
Total	10155	10539

B. New Licenses Issued During Biennium

Level	FY 2007	FY 2008
LSW	342	376
LGSW	291	300
LISW	20	24
LICSW	227	224
Total	880	924

Part 4. Complaints

A. Complaints Received During Biennium

	FY 2007	FY 2008
Number of Complaints Received	96	107
Number of Complaints per 1000 Licensees	9.6	10.7
Complaints by Type	-----	-----
Impairment	15	15
Boundaries	4	6
Confidentiality	6	5
Practice Issues	48	60
Failure to Report	1	2
Licensure	7	3
Sexual Contact or Harassment	2	4
Fee or Payment Issues	2	3
Unlicensed Practice/ Misrepresentation	11	9
Violation of Board Order	0	0
Non-jurisdictional	0	0

B. Complaints Opened During Biennium

	FY 2007	FY 2008
Number of Complaints Opened	107	119
<3 months	51	65
3-6 months	21	18
6-12 months	16	16
>12 months	11	1

When complaints were open for more than one year, the delays were caused by repeated unsuccessful attempts to negotiate remedies with licensees and their legal counsel.

C. Complaints Closed/Resolved During Biennium

	FY 2007	FY 2008
Number of Complaints Closed	111	100
Disposition of Closed Complaints		
Dismissed or Closed	98	96
Revocation	2	0
Voluntary Surrender	1	0
Suspension	2	1
Restrictions, Limitations, Conditions	2	0
Reprimand	1	3
Agreement for Corrective Action	1	0
Stipulation to Cease Practice	4	0

Part 5. Trend Data as of June 30, 2008 (By Fiscal Year)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Number of Persons Licensed (all levels)	9,831	9,803	9,727	9,703	9,798	9,816	9,936	10,005	10,155	10539
Number of Complaints Received	173	206	120	123	207	167	114	89	96	107
Complaints per 1000 Licensees	17	20	12	12	20	16	11	9	9	10
Complaints Open as of June 30	NA	NA	NA	56	45	35	63	15	8	19