

**ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK EXAMINERS
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE****CHAPTER 850-X-2
DEFINITIONS****850-X-2-.02 Classification Of Social Workers.**

The Board is required by statute to promulgate rules and regulations which set forth professional standards for the four classes of social worker. Alabama law recognizes four classes of Social Workers: Licensed Bachelor Social Worker; Licensed Master Social Worker; Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker; Private Independent Practice.

(1) Licensed Bachelor Social Worker (LBSW) is the basic licensing level. The LBSW must have a baccalaureate degree in social work from an accredited college or university whose social work program is approved or accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The candidate for the LBSW licensure must pass an exam as prescribed by the Board, then the LBSW is prepared to assume the beginning level professional role in public and private social service agencies. The Board requires that the LBSW work under the continuing supervision of a licensed graduate social worker or a licensed certified social worker for two (2) years or more, without further supervision as long as the LBSW remains in the same field of social work practice, job responsibilities are similar, and holds a current license. Licensed Bachelor Social Workers are prepared through beginning professional knowledge in human behavior in the social environment, generalist social work practice, knowledge of the history of social policy, knowledge of how to utilize social research finding in their practice and having had supervised field practicum experience. The LBSW provides generalist services in the role of social broker, enabler, counselor, case manager, educator, client advocate and mediator. Licensed Bachelor Social Workers may work with individuals, families, communities, groups and organizations. Licensed Bachelor Social Workers may conduct psychosocial assessments and may take social histories and/or conduct home studies. The LBSW utilizes the basic problem-solving process of gathering information, assessing that information at a beginning professional level, developing a plan of care, then assuming the roles enumerated above, implements the plan and conducts follow-up. An LBSW may not prescribe medication, nor make diagnoses, nor interpret psychological tests. An LBSW may take verbal orders from physicians only pertaining to social work practice.

(2) Licensed Master Social Worker Non-Clinical and Clinical (LMSW) - The LMSW must have a master of social work or a

doctor of social work degree from a college or university approved or accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. The candidate for licensure at the LMSW level must pass an exam as prescribed by the Board. An LMSW must keep a current license. The LMSW must make a designation of non-clinical or clinical upon receiving their license. The Board requires that the LMSW Non-Clinical work under the continuing supervision of a Board approved supervisor to include: licensed master social worker or a licensed independent clinical social worker for two (2) years obtaining a minimum 96 hours of supervision. The Board requires that the LMSW Clinical work under the continuing supervision of a Board approved supervisor to include: licensed independent clinical social worker for two (2) years obtaining a minimum 96 hours of supervision. An LMSW provides a wide range of services. The LMSW has preparation as a generalist social worker, knowledge of the history of social policy, knowledge of how to utilize social research finding in their practice and having had supervised field practicum experience with additional specialization in either direct or indirect services such as work in a field of practice or with a specific population. The LMSW may evaluate and assess difficulties in psychosocial functioning, develop a plan to alleviate those difficulties and either carry out the plan or refer clients to other qualified resources for assistance. An LMSW may provide preventive and treatment services pertaining to individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations. The LMSW should be able to engage the client system, develop a relationship and employ a series of interventions that modify or eliminate targeted behaviors and can promote positive growth and development. The LMSW can explain and interpret the results of social evaluations in the problem-solving process. A LMSW Non-Clinical with three years post licensure experience who is a board approved supervisor may supervise a LBSW and a LMSW Non-Clinical toward their independent licensure status. A LMSW Clinical with three years post licensure experience who is a board approved supervisor may supervise a LBSW toward their independent licensure status. The LMSW Non-Clinical is able to practice in social casework, community organization, social work research, and social work administration. The LMSW Clinical may practice in all the aforementioned areas to include clinical. An LMSW may not prescribe medication. An LMSW may take verbal orders from physicians only pertaining to social work practice.

(3) Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW) - The LICSW must have a master of social work or a doctor of social work degree from a college or university approved or accredited by the Council on Social Work Education and hold a current LMSW license. The LICSW must have received a minimum of 96 hours or more of postgraduate continuing clinical supervision provided by a board approved supervisors LICSW and not less than 3,000 work hours prior to application for the

LICSW exam. This may be pursued concurrently. The LICSW candidate must pass an exam as prescribed by the Board. The LICSW should be able to exercise independent judgment. The LICSW should be able to demonstrate skill and interventions directly related to individuals, families, groups, communities, or organizations. In at least one of these client groups, the LICSW shall demonstrate in-depth knowledge and skills. The LICSW should be able to employ practice theory and research findings in all aspects of their practice. The LICSW may supervise Licensed Bachelor Social Workers and Licensed Master Social Workers toward their independent licensure status. An LICSW may not prescribe medication. An LICSW may take verbal orders from physicians only pertaining to social work practice. An LICSW may engage in the private practice of social work in all areas except for social case work.

(4) Private Independent Practice (PIP) - Private practice of social work means that portion of social work practice in which a Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker is engaged in the private practice of social work services which includes practicing as an independent contractor in social casework.

(a) The applicant for certification for private independent practice in the area of social casework must present verifiable information regarding the appropriate degree, experience as defined in this section and appropriate supervision. The LICSW applying for PIP certification in the area of social casework only must have:

1. a current LICSW license;
2. three (3) years full-time or five (5) years part-time postgraduate experience and legally practicing in the specified social work method of social casework. For purposes of this section, the term "postgraduate" refers to that portion of experience acquired after having received one's master or doctoral degree in social work; or
3. one (1) year full-time or two (2) years part-time postgraduate experience in the specified social work method of social casework after receiving the LICSW.

(b) The applicant must present all information in relation to that defined practice method. An applicant may submit information relating to the practice method and may be certified, at the outset, in that practice method.

Author: Alabama Board of Social Work Examiners

Statutory Authority: Code of Ala. 1975, §§34-30-3 (1991); 34-30-23 (1991); 34-30-57(6) (1991).

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