

Social Work Licensure Modernization Act House Bills 5184 & 5185



NASW-Michigan is committed to reviewing and addressing problems within our licensure system. These efforts will be the first major review of the licensure law since Michigan implemented social work licensing in 2005.

Our efforts aim to:

- Increase the number of licensed social workers in Michigan to help address workforce shortages, including by potentially bringing back thousands of social workers to the profession
- Reduce unnecessary and/or problematic barriers within the licensure process
- Align Michigan with other national license legislative changes

Bill Descriptions

At its core, The Social Work Licensure Modernization Act aims to bring Michigan in step with other national license legislative change efforts. By updating our requirements, it aligns Michigan with how other states are already structured (both in terms of tiers and supervision), increase the number of licensed social workers in Michigan to help address workforce shortages, and reduce unnecessary and/or problematic barriers

What the Social Work Licensure Modernization Act proposes is to:

- Restructure the levels to Licensed Bachelor Social Worker (LBSW), Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW), and Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- Align Michigan required supervision hours to mirror the majority of states
- Replace the current ASWB exam requirement with a statewide jurisprudence exam

For most in our social work community, the bill changes nothing besides their credentials. However, for those who have been forced to leave the field due to renewal caps and the next generation of social workers looking to join the workforce, this change will provide a more seamless licensing transition

The Social Work Licensure Modernization Act would bring Michigan in step with other national license legislative changes. These new tiers would put us in line with how other states are already structured.

- Michigan is the only state in the United States with a limited license tier system
- Michigan's 4000 hours of required supervision are the most in the nation

The Social Work Licensure Modernization Act would increase the number of licensed social workers in Michigan to help address workforce shortages

- In 2021, Illinois passed and signed a law that successfully removed the requirement for social workers to take the ASWB examination for licensure. That change resulted in almost 3,000 new licensed social workers in the first six months of 2022
- We anticipate hundred of Michiganders will be made eligible to return to the social work profession

The Social Work Licensure Modernization Act would reduce unnecessary and/or problematic barriers

- Remove unnecessary regulation that disproportionately affects BIPOC communities
- Create a logical path for MSWs to become LMSWs while collecting the required supervision hours for becoming a licensed clinical social worker (LCSW)
- Removal of the 6 year renewal cap would allow licensees to stay in licensed in the state

