

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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# 132nd MAINE LEGISLATURE

## FIRST SPECIAL SESSION-2025

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**Legislative Document**

**No. 1298**

S.P. 528

In Senate, March 25, 2025

### **An Act Establishing Alternative Pathways to Social Worker Licensing**

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Reference to the Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services  
suggested and ordered printed.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D M Grant", is positioned above the printed name of the Secretary of the Senate.

DAREK M. GRANT  
Secretary of the Senate

Presented by Senator TALBOT ROSS of Cumberland.  
Cosponsored by Representative CRAFTS of Newcastle and  
Senators: BAILEY of York, BALDACCI of Penobscot, BENNETT of Oxford, MOORE of  
Washington, Representatives: ARFORD of Brunswick, DHALAC of South Portland, MORRIS  
of Turner, STOVER of Boothbay.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 32 MRSA §7053, first ¶**, as amended by PL 2007, c. 402, Pt. V, §7, is  
3 further amended to read:

4 To be eligible for a license to practice social work at any level, an applicant must be at  
5 least 18 years of age and must either satisfactorily pass any examination as the board may  
6 prescribe by its rules or qualify through an alternative pathway under section 7054-D. Each  
7 applicant must demonstrate trustworthiness and competence to engage in the practice of  
8 social work in such a manner as to safeguard the interests of the public. Applications for  
9 licensure must be submitted to the board together with the fee as set under section 7056.

10 **Sec. 2. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§1**, as amended by PL 2013, c. 262, §3, is further  
11 amended to read:

12 **1. Licensed clinical social worker.** To be qualified as a licensed clinical social  
13 worker, an applicant ~~shall have demonstrated~~ must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the  
14 board adherence to the ethics of the social work profession; ~~shall~~ must have either  
15 successfully completed the examination prescribed by the board or have qualified through  
16 an alternative pathway under section 7054-D; and ~~shall~~ must have received either:

17 A. A master's or doctoral degree in social work or social welfare from an accredited  
18 educational institution in a clinical concentration and:

19 (1) ~~Shall~~ Must have subsequently completed 2 years of social work experience  
20 with 96 hours of consultation in a clinical setting; or

21 (2) ~~Shall~~ Must have demonstrated 2 years of full-time clinical social work  
22 experience or its equivalent and have completed the graduate degree prior to  
23 January 1, 1987 and have completed 2 years of subsequent social work experience  
24 with 96 hours of consultation in a private setting; or

25 B. A master's or doctoral degree in social work in a nonclinical concentration from an  
26 accredited educational institution and:

27 (1) ~~Shall~~ Must have subsequently completed 4 years of social work experience  
28 with 192 hours of consultation in a clinical setting; or

29 (2) ~~Shall~~ Must have demonstrated 2 years of full-time clinical social work  
30 experience or its equivalent and have completed the graduate degree prior to  
31 January 1, 1987 and have completed 4 years of subsequent social work experience  
32 with 192 hours of consultation in a private setting.

33 The board may waive up to one year of the post-master of social work, clinical experience  
34 requirement pursuant to this subsection for those candidates who demonstrate to the  
35 satisfaction of the board equivalent clinical experience prior to receiving the master's  
36 degree in social work.

37 The board shall issue rules in accordance with Title 5, chapter 375 defining the clinical  
38 experience required for this level of licensure.

39 Beginning January 1, 2020, an applicant for initial licensure ~~shall~~ must demonstrate to the  
40 satisfaction of the board successful completion of a minimum of 12 hours of course work  
41 in family or intimate partner violence, including course work in spousal or partner abuse  
42 that addresses screening, referral and intervention strategies, including knowledge of

1 community resources, cultural factors, evidence-based risk assessment and same-gender  
2 abuse dynamics. An applicant may fulfill this requirement through course work taken in  
3 fulfillment of other educational requirements for licensure or through separate course work  
4 provided through contact hours, Internet hours or distance learning programs, as evidenced  
5 by certification from an accredited educational institution. The board shall accept  
6 certification from the accredited educational institution from which the applicant is a  
7 graduate that verifies the applicant's satisfaction of this requirement within the applicant's  
8 completed course curriculum. An applicant for initial licensure that is unable to  
9 demonstrate completion of the requirement of 12 hours of course work at the time the initial  
10 application is submitted ~~shall~~ must demonstrate to the board that this requirement has been  
11 fulfilled upon the applicant's first application for license renewal.

12 **Sec. 3. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§2-A**, as enacted by PL 2003, c. 211, §2, is amended  
13 to read:

14 **2-A. Licensed master social worker.** As a licensed master social worker, an applicant  
15 must have received either a ~~masters~~ master's or doctoral degree in social work or social  
16 welfare from an accredited educational institution, must have demonstrated to the  
17 satisfaction of the board adherence to the ethics of the social work profession and must  
18 have either successfully completed the examination prescribed by the board or have  
19 qualified through an alternative pathway under section 7054-D. After meeting these  
20 qualifications, the applicant must receive a "licensed master social worker" license. In  
21 addition, any person wishing to practice social work in a clinical setting must receive a  
22 "licensed master social worker, conditional" license.

23 ~~This subsection takes effect July 1, 2005.~~

24 **Sec. 4. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§3, ¶A**, as amended by PL 2009, c. 112, Pt. A, §13,  
25 is further amended to read:

26 A. The applicant must have received a bachelor's degree or higher in social work or  
27 social welfare from an accredited educational institution; demonstrated to the  
28 satisfaction of the board adherence to the ethics of the social worker profession; and  
29 either successfully completed the examination prescribed by the board or have  
30 qualified through an alternative pathway under section 7054-D; or

31 **Sec. 5. 32 MRSA §7053, sub-§3, ¶B**, as amended by PL 2003, c. 429, §2 and  
32 affected by §7, is further amended to read:

33 B. The applicant must have received a conditional license as a licensed social worker  
34 in accordance with subsection 3-B; completed the requirements for consultation and  
35 contact hours in accordance with subsection 3-C, paragraph B and subsection 3-D; and  
36 either successfully completed the examination prescribed by the board or have  
37 qualified through an alternative pathway under section 7054-D.

38 **Sec. 6. 32 MRSA §7054-D** is enacted to read:

39 **§7054-D. Alternative pathways to licensure**

40 A person who has attempted and failed to complete the examination prescribed by the  
41 board may qualify for licensure through one of the following alternative pathways.

42 **1. Licensed social worker.** An applicant for licensure as a licensed social worker  
43 must:

A. Complete a jurisprudence examination as prescribed by the board;

B. Provide an expanded agreement to provide consultation form as prescribed by the board documenting the intent to receive 144 hours of consultation concurrent with 4,800 hours of social work employment occurring within a period of not less than 3 years; and

C. Demonstrate competence in the 9 competencies established by the Council on Social Work Education, or successor organization, through successful completion of a bachelor's of social work graduate-level internship.

**2. Licensed master social worker.** An applicant for licensure as a licensed master social worker must:

A. Complete a jurisprudence examination as prescribed by the board; and

B. Demonstrate competence in the 9 competencies established by the Council on Social Work Education, or successor organization, through successful completion of a master's of social work graduate-level internship.

**3. Licensed master social worker, conditional clinical.** An applicant for licensure as a licensed master social worker, conditional clinical must:

A. Complete a jurisprudence examination as prescribed by the board;

B. Provide an expanded agreement to provide consultation form as prescribed by the board documenting the intent to receive 144 hours of consultation concurrent with 4,800 hours of social work employment occurring within a period of not less than 3 years; and

C. Demonstrate competence in the 9 competencies established by the Council on Social Work Education, or successor organization, through successful completion of a master's of social work graduate-level internship.

**4. Licensed clinical social worker.** An applicant for licensure as a licensed clinical social worker must:

A. Complete a jurisprudence examination as prescribed by the board;

B. Provide evidence, including documentation of clinical supervision using a form approved by the board, of successful completion of a clinical social work experience while licensed as a licensed master social worker, conditional clinical through 144 hours of consultation concurrent with 4,800 hours of social work employment occurring within a period of not less than 3 years; and

C. Provide 3 letters of recommendation from licensed clinical social workers, with at least 2 of the 3 letters being from licensed clinical social workers other than the applicant's social work practice consultant.

## SUMMARY

This bill establishes a method for a person who has attempted and failed to complete a State Board of Social Worker Licensure examination for licensure as a licensed social worker; licensed master social worker; licensed master social worker, conditional clinical; or licensed clinical social worker to qualify for licensure through an alternative pathway.