

PROFESSIONAL LICENSURE DIVISION[645]

Notice of Intended Action

**Proposing rulemaking related to continuing education for social workers
and providing an opportunity for public comment**

The Board of Social Work hereby proposes to rescind Chapter 281, “Continuing Education for Social Workers,” Iowa Administrative Code, and to adopt a new chapter with the same title.

Legal Authority for Rulemaking

This rulemaking is proposed under the authority provided in Iowa Code chapters 154C, 272C, 147, and 17A.

State or Federal Law Implemented

This rulemaking implements, in whole or in part, Iowa Code chapters 154C, 272C, 147, and 17A.

Purpose and Summary

This proposed rulemaking sets forth continuing education requirements for social workers. The rulemaking includes definitions related to continuing education, the number of hours of continuing education that licensees are required to obtain, the standards that licensees need to meet in order to comply with the proposed rules, and the types of continuing education courses that are permissible. The intended benefit of continuing education is to ensure that social workers maintain up-to-date practice standards and, as a result, provide high-quality services to Iowans.

Fiscal Impact

This rulemaking has no fiscal impact to the State of Iowa.

Jobs Impact

After analysis and review of this rulemaking, no impact on jobs has been found.

Waivers

Any person who believes that the application of the discretionary provisions of this rulemaking would result in hardship or injustice to that person may petition the Board for a waiver of the discretionary provisions, if any, pursuant to 645—Chapter 18.

Public Comment

Any interested person may submit written or oral comments concerning this proposed rulemaking. Written or oral comments in response to this rulemaking must be received by the Board no later than 4:30 p.m. on March 13, 2024. Comments should be directed to:

Tony Alden
Iowa Department of Inspections, Appeals, and Licensing
6200 Park Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50321
Phone: 515.281.4401
Email: tony.alden@dia.iowa.gov

Public Hearing

Public hearings at which persons may present their views orally or in writing will be held as follows:

March 12, 2024
9 to 9:30 a.m.

6200 Park Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa
Via video/conference call:
meet.google.com/upm-vmcy-kyc
Or dial: 424.269.9398
PIN: 166 396 680#

March 13, 2024
9 to 9:30 a.m.

6200 Park Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa
Via video/conference call:
meet.google.com/upm-vmcy-kyc
Or dial: 424.269.9398
PIN: 166 396 680#

Persons who wish to make oral comments at a public hearing may be asked to state their names for the record and to confine their remarks to the subject of this proposed rulemaking.

Any persons who intend to attend a public hearing and have special requirements, such as those related to hearing or mobility impairments, should contact the Board and advise of specific needs.

Review by Administrative Rules Review Committee

The Administrative Rules Review Committee, a bipartisan legislative committee which oversees rulemaking by executive branch agencies, may, on its own motion or on written request by any individual or group, review this rulemaking at its [regular monthly meeting](#) or at a special meeting. The Committee's meetings are open to the public, and interested persons may be heard as provided in Iowa Code section 17A.8(6).

The following rulemaking action is proposed:

ITEM 1. Rescind 645—Chapter 281 and adopt the following **new** chapter in lieu thereof:

CHAPTER 281
CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL WORKERS

645—281.1(154C) Definitions. For the purpose of these rules, the following definitions apply:

“*Active license*” means a license that is current and has not expired.

“*Approved program/activity*” means a continuing education program/activity meeting the standards set forth in these rules.

“*Audit*” means the selection of licensees for verification of satisfactory completion of continuing education requirements during a specified time period.

“*Board*” means the board of social work.

“*Continuing education*” means planned, organized learning acts acquired during licensure designed to maintain, improve, or expand a licensee’s knowledge and skills in order for the licensee to develop new knowledge and skills relevant to the enhancement of practice, education, or theory development to improve the safety and welfare of the public.

“*Hour of continuing education*” means at least 50 minutes spent by a licensee in actual attendance at and completion of an approved continuing education activity.

“*Inactive license*” means a license that has expired because it was not renewed by the end of the grace period. The category of “inactive license” may include licenses formerly known as lapsed, inactive, delinquent, closed, or retired.

“*License*” means license to practice.

“*Licensee*” means any person licensed to practice as a social worker in the state of Iowa.

645—281.2(154C) Continuing education requirements.

281.2(1) The biennial continuing education compliance period extends for a two-year period beginning on January 1 of each odd-numbered year and ending on December 31 of the next even-numbered year. Each biennium, each person who is licensed to practice as a licensee in this state will be required to complete a minimum of 27 hours of continuing education approved by the board.

281.2(2) Requirements of new licensees. Those persons licensed for the first time during the license renewal period will not be required to complete continuing education as a prerequisite for the first renewal of their licenses. Continuing education hours acquired anytime from the initial licensing until the second renewal may be used. The new licensee will be required to complete a minimum of 27 hours of continuing education per biennium for each subsequent license renewal.

281.2(3) Requirement of supervisors. For licensure at the independent level, persons serving in a supervisory role must complete three hours of continuing education in supervision.

281.2(4) Hours of continuing education credit may be obtained by attending and participating in a continuing education activity. These hours must be in accordance with these rules.

281.2(5) No hours of continuing education will be carried over into the next biennium except as stated for the second renewal. A licensee whose license was reactivated during the current renewal compliance period may use continuing education earned during the compliance period for the first renewal following reactivation.

281.2(6) The licensee will maintain a personal file with all documentation of the continuing education credits obtained.

645—281.3(154C,272C) Standards.

281.3(1) General criteria. A continuing education activity that meets all of the following criteria is appropriate for continuing education credit if the continuing education activity:

- a. Constitutes an organized program of learning that contributes directly to the professional competency of the licensee;
- b. Pertains to subject matters that integrally relate to the practice of the profession;
- c. Is conducted by individuals who have specialized education, training and experience by reason of which said individuals should be considered qualified concerning the subject matter of the program.

At the time of audit, the board may request the qualifications of presenters;

- d. Fulfills stated program goals, objectives, or both;
- e. Provides proof of attendance to licensees in attendance including:
 - (1) Date, location, course title, presenter(s);
 - (2) Number of program contact hours; and
 - (3) Certificate of completion or evidence of successful completion of the course provided by the course sponsor; and
- f. Contains one of the following content areas:
 - (1) Human behavior.
 1. Theories and concepts of the development of human behavior in the life cycle of individuals, families and the social environment;
 2. Community and organizational theories;
 3. Normal, abnormal and addictive behaviors;
 4. Abuse and neglect; and
 5. Effects of culture, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender.
 - (2) Assessment and treatment.
 1. Psychosocial assessment/interview;
 2. Utilization of the current edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5-TR) of the American Psychiatric Association, published March 2022;
 3. Theoretical approaches and models of practice—individual, couple, and family therapy and group psychotherapy;
 4. Establishing treatment goals and monitoring progress;
 5. Techniques of social work practice; and

6. Interdisciplinary consultation and collaboration.
- (3) Social work research, program evaluation, or practice evaluation.
- (4) Management, administration, and social policy.
 1. Organizational policies and procedures;
 2. Advocacy and prevention in social work practice;
 3. Management of social work staff and other personnel; and
 4. Management of social work programs.
- (5) Theories and concepts of social work education.
- (6) Social work ethics as they pertain to the rules of conduct.
- (7) An area, as demonstrated by the licensee, that directly relates to the licensee's individual practice as a social worker. The licensee will submit for consideration by the board a specific explanation of how the program relates to the licensee's individual practice setting as a social worker.

281.3(2) Specific criteria. Continuing education hours of credit can be obtained by completing:

- a. A minimum of three hours per biennium in social work ethics.
- b. Academic coursework that meets the criteria set forth in the rules. Continuing education equivalents are as follows:

1 academic semester hour = 15 continuing education hours

1 academic quarter hour = 10 continuing education hours

- c. Programs designed for the purpose of enhancing the licensee's administrative, management or other clinical skills.

d. Activities/programs that are sponsored/approved by:

- (1) ASWB Approved Continuing Education (ACE) Program; or
- (2) National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Continuing Education Unit (CEU) Approval Program.

e. Pro-bono/volunteer work that meets the following criteria:

- (1) A licensee may earn a maximum of 3 of the required 27 hours of continuing education for credit during one biennium by performing pro-bono/volunteer services for indigent, underserved populations, or in areas of critical need within the state of Iowa. Such services must be approved in advance by the board.

- (2) A licensee will apply for prior approval of pro-bono/volunteer services by sending a letter to the board indicating that the following requirements will be met:

1. The site for these services is identified including information about the clients, the services that will be offered, how they will be performed and the learning objectives.

2. A contract will be established between licensee and client(s), and each party will be aware that the services are being provided without charge.

3. The services will be subject to all the legal responsibilities and obligations related to the licensee's profession.

4. The licensee will keep records and files of these client services pursuant to the rules of 645—Chapter 282.

5. A representative from the site for pro-bono/volunteer services must provide a letter stating that these services are to be performed by the licensee.

6. Upon review, the licensee will receive a letter from the board indicating prior approval for these pro-bono/volunteer services that will be done for continuing education credit.

7. Following completion of such services:

- The licensee must provide the board a letter stating that the services were performed as planned.
- The representative on the site must provide a letter indicating such completion.

f. Instruction of a course at an approved college, university or graduate school of social work. A licensee may receive credit on a one-time basis not to exceed three hours of continuing education credit per biennium.

g. Instruction/presentation/moderation of continuing education programs. A licensee may receive credit on a one-time basis, not to exceed three hours of continuing education credit per biennium, for

programs at which the licensee is actually in attendance for the complete program provided the licensee receives a certificate of attendance in compliance with this rule.

h. Authorship of professional papers, publications or books and preparation of presentations and exhibits. A presentation must be made before a professional audience. Presentations may receive credit on a one-time basis for the article, publication, book or the preparation of a presentation or exhibit, not to exceed three hours of continuing education credit per biennium.

i. Supervision of a social work practicum student(s) from an accredited social work education program. A licensee may receive one credit for every 100 hours supervised, not to exceed 6 hours of continuing education credit per biennium.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 272C.2 and chapter 154C.