

CHAPTER 280
LICENSURE OF SOCIAL WORKERS

645—280.1(154C) Definitions. For purposes of these rules, the following definitions shall apply:

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

“*ASWB*” means the Association of Social Work Boards.

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

“*Grace period*” means the 30-day period following expiration of a license when the license is still considered to be active. In order to renew a license during the grace period, a licensee is required to pay a late fee.

“*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.

“*LBSW*” means licensed bachelor social worker.

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

“*License expiration date*” means December 31 of even-numbered years.

“*Licensure by endorsement*” means the issuance of an Iowa license to practice social work to an applicant who is or has been licensed in another state.

“*LISW*” means licensed independent social worker.

“*LMSW*” means licensed master social worker.

“*Mandatory training*” means training on identifying and reporting child abuse or dependent adult abuse required of social workers who are mandatory reporters. The full requirements on mandatory reporting of child abuse and the training requirements are found in Iowa Code section 232.69. The full requirements on mandatory reporting of dependent adult abuse and the training requirements are found in Iowa Code section 235B.16.

“*Private practice*” means social work practice conducted only by an LISW who is either self-employed or a member of a partnership or of a group practice providing diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders or conditions. In this context, “group practice” means an association of professionals in which an LISW is independently engaged in the practice of social work and has ongoing control of the clinical, financial, administrative, and professional arrangements between the LISW and the clients/patients of the LISW.

“*Reactivate*” or “*reactivation*” means the process as outlined in rule 280.14(17A,147,272C) by which an inactive license is restored to active status.

“*Reciprocal license*” means the issuance of an Iowa license to practice social work to an applicant who is currently licensed in another state and that state’s board of examiners has a mutual written agreement with the Iowa board of social work examiners to license persons who have the same or similar qualifications to those required in Iowa.

“*Reinstatement*” means the process as outlined in 645—11.31(272C) by which a licensee who has had a license suspended or revoked or who has voluntarily surrendered a license may apply to have the license reinstated, with or without conditions. Once the license is reinstated, the licensee may apply for active status.

645—280.2(154C) Social work services subject to regulation. Social work services provided to an individual in this state through telephonic, electronic or other means, regardless of the location of the social worker, shall constitute the practice of social work and shall be subject to regulation in Iowa.

645—280.3(154C) Requirements for licensure. The following criteria shall apply to licensure:

280.3(1) The applicant shall complete a board-approved application packet. Application forms may be obtained from the board’s Web site (<http://www.idph.state.ia.us/licensure>) or directly from the board office. All applications shall be sent to Board of Social Work Examiners, Professional Licensure Division, Fifth Floor, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0075.

280.3(2) The applicant shall complete the application form according to the instructions contained in the application. If the application is not completed according to the instructions, the application will not be reviewed by the board.

280.3(3) Each application shall be accompanied by the appropriate fees payable by check or money order to the Board of Social Work Examiners. The fees are nonrefundable.

280.3(4) No application shall be considered by the board until official copies of academic transcripts have been received by the board except as provided in 280.4(6).

280.3(5) The applicant shall provide verification of license(s) from every state in which the applicant has been licensed as a social worker, sent directly from the state(s) to the Iowa board of social work examiners office.

280.3(6) The candidate shall take the examination(s) required by the board pursuant to these rules.

280.3(7) An applicant for a license as an independent social worker shall have met the requirements for supervision pursuant to 280.6(154C).

280.3(8) Each social worker who seeks to attain licensure as an independent social worker shall have been granted a master's or doctoral degree in social work and practiced at that level.

280.3(9) Notification of licensure shall be sent to the licensee by regular mail.

280.3(10) Licensees who were issued their initial licenses within six months prior to the renewal shall not be required to renew their licenses until the renewal date two years later.

280.3(11) Incomplete applications that have been on file in the board office for more than two years shall be:

- a. Considered invalid and shall be destroyed; or
- b. Maintained upon written request of the candidate. The candidate is responsible for requesting that the file be maintained.

280.3(12) In lieu of the requirements in subrules 280.3(4) and 280.3(5), the board will accept the ASWB Social Work Registry verification of academic transcripts and verification of licensure in other states.

645—280.4(154C) Written examination.

280.4(1) The applicant is required to take and pass the ASWB examination at the appropriate level as follows:

- a. Bachelor level social worker—the basic level examination.
- b. Master level social worker—the intermediate level examination.
- c. Independent level social worker—the clinical level examination.

280.4(2) The electronic examination shall be scheduled with ASWB.

280.4(3) Application for any required examination will be denied or deferred by the board if the applicant lacks the required education or practice experience.

280.4(4) The applicant and the board shall be notified of the ASWB examination results, and the applicant may receive the results at the time of the examination. The board will accept only official results from the ASWB examination service that are sent directly from the examination service to the board.

280.4(5) The ASWB passing score will be utilized as the Iowa passing score.

280.4(6) An applicant may sit for the examination if the applicant meets the requirements stated in 645—280.3(154C). Upon written request of the applicant, the board may authorize a student to sit for the examination prior to the receipt of the official transcript if the student is in the last semester of an approved master of social work program. The student shall submit an application for licensure at the master's level and the fee, and, in lieu of a transcript, the student shall request that the school submit a letter directly to the board office. The letter shall state that the student is currently enrolled in a master of social work program and the student's expected date of graduation. Upon completion of degree requirements, the applicant shall have the transcript showing the date of the degree sent directly from the school to the board office at the Board of Social Work Examiners, Professional Licensure Division, Fifth Floor, Lucas State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa 50319-0075.

280.4(7) In lieu of the requirements in subrule 280.4(4), the board will accept the ASWB Social Work Registry verification of the ASWB examination results.

645—280.5(154C) Educational qualifications.

280.5(1) Bachelor level social worker. An applicant for a license as a bachelor level social worker shall present evidence satisfactory to the board that the applicant possesses a bachelor's degree in social work from a college or university accredited by the Council on Social Work Education at the time of graduation.

280.5(2) Master level social worker. An applicant for a license as a master level social worker shall present evidence satisfactory to the board that the applicant:

a. Possesses a master's degree in social work from a college or university accredited by the Council on Social Work Education at the time of graduation; or

b. Possesses a doctoral degree in social work from a college or university approved by the board at the time of graduation.

280.5(3) Independent level social worker. An applicant for a license as an independent level social worker shall present evidence satisfactory to the board that the applicant:

a. Possesses a master's degree in social work from a college or university accredited by the Council on Social Work Education at the time of graduation; or

b. Possesses a doctoral degree in social work from a college or university approved by the board at the time of graduation.

280.5(4) Foreign-trained social workers shall:

a. Provide an equivalency evaluation of their educational credentials by International Educational Research Foundations, Inc., Credentials Evaluation Service, P.O. Box 3665, Culver City, California 90231-3665, telephone (310) 258-9451, Web site www.ierf.org or E-mail at info@ierf.org; or obtain a certificate of equivalency from the Council on Social Work Education, 1725 Duke Street, Suite 500, Alexandria, Virginia 22314-3457, telephone (703)683-8080, Web site <http://www.cswe.org>. The professional curriculum must be equivalent to that stated in these rules. The candidate shall bear the expense of the curriculum evaluation.

b. Provide a notarized copy of the certificate or diploma awarded to the applicant from a social work program in the country in which the applicant was educated.

c. Receive a final determination from the board regarding the application for licensure.

645—280.6(154C) Supervised professional practice for the LISW.

280.6(1) The supervised professional practice shall:

a. Be the equivalent of two years of full-time post-master's social work degree practice at the master's level performing psychosocial assessment, diagnosis and treatment; or

b. Be 4,000 hours of post-master's social work degree experience at the master's level performing psychosocial assessment, diagnosis and treatment over a minimum two-year and maximum six-year period;

c. Have at least 110 hours of supervision which shall be equitably distributed throughout a minimum of a two-year period; and

d. Be obtained in the following manner:

(1) Face-to-face meetings between the supervisor and the supervisee unless the board has granted an exception allowing for an alternate form of supervision, upon written request of the applicant.

(2) Group supervision obtained using the following criteria:

1. No more than 60 hours of the 110 hours of supervision may be provided in group supervision;

2. Group supervision may be composed of no more than six supervisees per group.

280.6(2) The board maintains the authority to grant waivers relevant to the time parameters of the supervised professional practice upon written request of the applicant.

280.6(3) To meet the requirements of the supervised professional practice, the supervisor must:

a. Be an Iowa-licensed independent social worker as specified in rule 280.3(154C). An individual licensed in another state and providing supervision for an Iowa LISW candidate must be licensed at a level equivalent to Iowa's LISW level.

b. Have a minimum of 2,000 hours of practice earned over a period of two years of practice beyond receipt of a license to practice independent social work in Iowa or the equivalent license from another state.

c. Establish and maintain a plan throughout the supervisory period. Such a plan must be kept by the supervisor for a period of two years and must be submitted to the board upon its request for audit within 30 days from receipt of the request. The plan for supervision shall include:

- (1) The name, license number, date of licensure, address and telephone number of supervisor;
- (2) The name, license number, address and telephone number of supervisee;
- (3) The beginning date of clinical work experience under supervision and estimated date of completion;
- (4) A plan for direct supervision hours, including frequency of supervisor/supervisee's face-to-face meetings;
- (5) A plan for any group supervision;
- (6) The goals and objectives for the clinical work experience; and
- (7) The signatures of the supervisor and supervisee, and the dates of signatures.

d. Be responsible for supervision within the following content areas:

- (1) Practice skills;
- (2) Practice management skills;
- (3) Skills required for continuing competence;
- (4) Development of professional identity; and
- (5) Ethical practice.

e. Be accountable for the following areas of supervision:

- (1) Area of social work practice;
- (2) Agency providing services;
- (3) Legal and regulatory requirements;
- (4) Ethical standards of the profession; and
- (5) Acceptance of professional responsibility for the social work services provided by the supervisee.

f. Complete a supervision report sheet at the end of the supervised professional experience. This sheet shall be answered in full and signed by both the supervisor and supervisee. This report shall be submitted to the board for review and approval prior to the board's approval of the supervisee to sit for the clinical-level examination.

g. Exceptions to this rule shall be made on an individual basis. Requests for alternative supervisors must be submitted in writing, and the board must approve the supervisor prior to commencement of the supervision.

280.6(4) To meet the requirements of the supervised professional practice, the supervisee shall:

a. Obtain a written release of information for protection of client confidentiality pursuant to 645—Chapter 282, if the supervisor and supervisee are not employed by the same agency.

b. Have the following documentation for supervision of independent practice:

(1) The plan for supervision that was created at the beginning of the period of supervision and that was maintained by the supervisor. If there has been a change of supervisors, the LISW candidate has the responsibility to have a termination evaluation completed by that supervisor and to have the copy submitted to the next supervisor. All termination evaluations shall be available to the board upon request. The supervision provided by all qualified supervisors who have a plan of supervision with the applicant can be counted toward meeting the criteria for supervision.

(2) At the end of supervision, the supervisee shall have any and all supervisors complete a supervision report sheet provided by the board of social work examiners. This report shall be answered in full and signed by both the supervisor and supervisee. This report shall be submitted to the board

for review and approval prior to the board's approval of the supervisee to sit for the clinical-level examination.

645—280.7(154C) Licensure by endorsement. An applicant who has been a licensed social worker under the laws of another jurisdiction shall file an application for licensure by endorsement with the board office. The board may receive by endorsement any applicant from the District of Columbia, another state, territory, province or foreign country who:

1. Submits to the board a completed application;
2. Pays the licensure fee;
3. Shows evidence of licensure requirements that are similar to those required in Iowa;
4. Provides official copies of the academic transcripts;
5. Provides official copies of the examination score sent directly from the ASWB; and
6. Provides verification of license(s) from every jurisdiction in which the applicant has been licensed, sent directly from the jurisdiction(s) to the board office. Web-based verification may be substituted for verification direct from the jurisdiction's board office if the verification provides:
 - Licensee's name;
 - Date of initial licensure;
 - Current licensure status; and
 - Any disciplinary action taken against the license.

In lieu of the requirements in numbered paragraphs "4," "5," and "6" of this rule, the board will accept the ASWB Social Work Registry verification of academic transcripts, examination scores, and licensure in other states.

645—280.8(154C) Licensure by reciprocal agreement. The board may enter into a reciprocal agreement with the District of Columbia, any state, territory, province or foreign country with equal or similar requirements for licensure of social workers.

645—280.9(154C) License renewal.

280.9(1) The biennial license renewal period for a license to practice social work shall begin on January 1 of odd-numbered years and end on December 31 of the next even-numbered year. Every licensee shall renew on a biennial basis. The board shall send a renewal notice by regular mail to each licensee at the address on record at least 60 days prior to the expiration of the license. The licensee is responsible for renewing the license prior to its expiration. Failure of the licensee to receive the notice does not relieve the licensee of the responsibility for renewing the license.

280.9(2) Renewal procedures.

a. A licensee seeking renewal shall:

(1) Meet the continuing education requirements of rule 645—281.2(154C,272C) and the mandatory reporting requirements of subrule 280.9(3). A licensee whose license was reactivated during the current renewal compliance period may use continuing education credit earned during the compliance period for the first renewal following reactivation; and

(2) Submit the completed renewal application and renewal fee before the license expiration date.

b. An individual who was issued a license within six months of the license renewal date will not be required to renew the license until the next renewal two years later.

c. Those persons licensed for the first time shall 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 license 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.

d. Persons licensed to practice social work shall keep their renewal licenses displayed in a conspicuous public place at the primary site of practice.

e. Failure to receive the notice of renewal shall not relieve the licensee of the responsibility for submitting the required materials and the renewal fee to the board office 30 days before license expiration.

f. A pending application for a higher level of licensure does not relieve the social worker of the renewal or reactivation requirements. A social worker applying for a higher level shall renew the license that is held at the current level at the time of the renewal.

g. A social worker whose Iowa license is inactive, delinquent, closed, retired, voluntarily surrendered, suspended, or revoked cannot advance to a higher level until the license is again active.

280.9(3) Mandatory reporting of child abuse and dependent adult abuse.

a. A licensee who regularly examines, attends, counsels or treats children in Iowa shall indicate on the renewal application completion of two hours of training in child abuse identification and reporting in the previous five years or condition(s) for waiver of this requirement as identified in paragraph “*f.*”

b. A licensee who regularly examines, attends, counsels or treats dependent adults in Iowa shall indicate on the renewal application completion of two hours of training in dependent adult abuse identification and reporting in the previous five years or condition(s) for waiver of this requirement as identified in paragraph “*f.*”

c. A licensee who regularly examines, attends, counsels or treats both dependent adults and children in Iowa shall indicate on the renewal application completion of training in abuse identification and reporting in dependent adults and children or condition(s) for waiver of this requirement as identified in paragraph “*f.*”

d. Training may be completed through separate courses as identified in paragraphs “*a*” and “*b*” or in one combined two-hour course that includes curricula for identifying and reporting child abuse and dependent adult abuse.

e. The licensee shall maintain written documentation for five years after mandatory training as identified in paragraphs “*a*” to “*c*,” including program date(s), content, duration, and proof of participation.

f. The requirement for mandatory training for identifying and reporting child and dependent adult abuse shall be suspended if the board determines that suspension is in the public interest or that a person at the time of license renewal:

(1) Is engaged in active duty in the military service of this state or the United States.

(2) Holds a current waiver by the board based on evidence of significant hardship in complying with training requirements, including waiver of continuing education requirements or extension of time in which to fulfill requirements due to a physical or mental disability or illness as identified in 645—Chapter 281.

g. The board may select licensees for audit of compliance with the requirements in paragraphs “*a*” to “*e*.”

280.9(4) Late renewal. To renew a late license, the licensee shall complete the renewal requirements and submit the late fee within the grace period.

280.9(5) Inactive license. A licensee who fails to renew the license by the end of the grace period has an inactive license. A licensee whose license is inactive continues to hold the privilege of licensure in Iowa, but may not practice as a social worker in Iowa until the license is reactivated. A licensee who practices as a social worker in the state of Iowa with an inactive license may be subject to disciplinary action by the board, injunctive action pursuant to Iowa Code section 147.83, criminal sanctions pursuant to Iowa Code section 147.86, and other available legal remedies.

280.9(6) Upon receiving the information required by this rule and the required fee, board staff shall administratively issue a two-year license and shall send the licensee a wallet card by regular mail. In the event the board receives adverse information on the renewal application, the board shall issue the renewal license but may refer the adverse information for further consideration or disciplinary investigation.

645—280.10(272C) Exemptions for inactive practitioners. Rescinded IAB 8/31/05, effective 10/5/05.

645—280.11(272C) Lapsed licenses. Rescinded IAB 8/31/05, effective 10/5/05.

645—280.12(272C) Duplicate certificate or wallet card.

280.12(1) A duplicate wallet card or duplicate certificate shall be required if the current wallet card or certificate is lost, stolen or destroyed. A duplicate wallet card or duplicate certificate shall only be issued for such circumstances.

280.12(2) A duplicate wallet card or duplicate certificate shall be issued upon receipt of the completed application and receipt of the fee as specified in rule 645—284.1(147,154C).

280.12(3) If the board receives the completed application, stating that the wallet card or certificate was not received within 60 days after being mailed by the board, no fee shall be required to issue a duplicate wallet card or duplicate certificate.

645—280.13(17A,147,272C) License denial.

280.13(1) When the board denies an applicant licensure, the board shall notify the applicant of the denial in writing by certified mail, return receipt requested, or in the manner of service of an original notice, and shall cite the reasons for which the application was denied.

280.13(2) An applicant who has been denied licensure by the board may appeal the denial and request a hearing on the issues related to the licensure denial by serving a written notice of appeal and request for hearing upon the board by certified mail, return receipt requested, not more than 30 days following the date of mailing of the notification of licensure denial to the applicant. The request for hearing shall specifically describe the facts to be contested and determined at the hearing.

280.13(3) If an applicant who has been denied licensure by the board appeals the licensure denial and requests a hearing pursuant to this rule, the hearing and subsequent procedures shall be held pursuant to the process outlined in Iowa Code chapters 17A and 272C and 645—Chapter 11.

645—280.14(17A,147,272C) License reactivation. To apply for reactivation of an inactive license, a licensee shall:

280.14(1) Submit a reactivation application on a form provided by the board.

280.14(2) Pay the reactivation fee that is due as specified in 645—Chapter 284.

280.14(3) Provide verification of current competence to practice social work by satisfying one of the following criteria:

a. If the license has been on inactive status for five years or less, an applicant must provide the following:

(1) Verification of the license(s) from every jurisdiction in which the applicant is or has been licensed and is or has been practicing during the time period the Iowa license was inactive, sent directly from the jurisdiction(s) to the board office. Web-based verification may be substituted for verification from a jurisdiction's board office if the verification includes:

1. Licensee's name;
2. Date of initial licensure;
3. Current licensure status; and
4. Any disciplinary action taken against the license; and

(2) Verification of completion of 27 hours of continuing education within two years of application for reactivation.

b. If the license has been on inactive status for more than five years, an applicant must provide the following:

(1) Verification of the license(s) from every jurisdiction in which the applicant is or has been licensed and is or has been practicing during the time period the Iowa license was inactive, sent directly from the jurisdiction(s) to the board office. Web-based verification may be substituted for verification from a jurisdiction's board office if the verification includes:

1. Licensee's name;
2. Date of initial licensure;
3. Current licensure status; and
4. Any disciplinary action taken against the license; and

- (2) Verification of completion of 27 hours of continuing education within two years of application for reactivation; and
- (3) Verification of taking and passing the ASWB examination at the appropriate level as follows:
1. Bachelor level social worker – the bachelor’s level examination; or
 2. Master level social worker - the master’s level examination; or
 3. Independent level social worker - the clinical level examination.

645—280.15(17A,147,272C) License reinstatement. A licensee whose license has been revoked, suspended, or voluntarily surrendered must apply for and receive reinstatement of the license in accordance with 645—11.31(272C) and must apply for and be granted reactivation of the license in accordance with 280.14(17A,147,272C) prior to practicing social work in this state.

These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code chapters 17A, 147, 154C and 272C.

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⁰ Two or more ARCs

¹ Effective date of rules 161.212 to 161.217 delayed 70 days by the Administrative Rules Review Committee.

² Effective date of 280.100(154C) is July 1, 1993.

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