

Licensure Package FAQs

For Social Workers & Students

Why are these bills important to us?

Michigan faces ongoing behavioral health workforce shortages, and barriers in the current licensure process can delay or prevent qualified social workers from becoming fully licensed. These legislative efforts create financial resources, extended timeframes, and a practice-driven pathway to licensure, helping expand the workforce and improve access to care.

Social Worker Scholarship Program

Q: Who qualifies for the scholarship program?

A: Those who have taken the social work licensure exam at least once, but not yet passed, and who are serving or planning to serve communities in Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas.

Q: What costs can the scholarship cover?

A: Scholarships may cover licensure-related costs, including: exam fees, preparation courses or materials, transportation, and childcare.

Limited License Renewal Extension (HB 4280)

Q: Why extend the limited license renewal period to 10 years?

A: Extending the renewal period to 10 years reflects the reality that many social workers accumulate supervised hours gradually while serving communities in part-time or under-resourced settings. A decade-long window preserves workforce participation, as there is no option to re-apply once the max number of renewals has been reached.

Practice-Driven Path to Licensure

Q: Would this legislation eliminate the exam?

A: No. This legislation creates a practice-driven pathway to full licensure for applicants who demonstrate competence through additional supervised practice hours.

Q: Who qualifies for the examination waiver?

A: Limited license holders pursuing full licensure who have attempted the exam at least once, but not passed, and who have completed no less than 2,000 supervised hours in addition to the already required 4,000.

Q: Why can't we just revise the test itself?

A: This is actually already in motion, though it is not an easy or quick process. Efforts to create a more equitable test is only one way to expand opportunities for licensure, and this legislative method is being pursued in addition to test revitalization.

Q: What do we know about racial disparities in exam pass rates?

A: National and Michigan-specific data shows significant racial disparities, with Black and Latino candidates passing at lower rates than white candidates.

Q: Does the exam accurately measure real-world competence?

A: Many social work leaders have raised concerns that standardized exams do not fully capture real-world practice skills.



LEGISLATIVE CONTACTS

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Founded in 1955, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) is the largest membership organization of professional social workers in the world. NASW works to enhance the professional growth and development of its members, to create and maintain professional standards, and to advance sound social policies.

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