

Understanding Social Work Licensing in Arizona

Over the past 2 years, Arizona has made significant changes to licensure laws overseen by the Board of Behavioral Health Examiners (BBHE), which is how social workers obtain their licenses. These changes have caused some confusion and as a result, we hope to clarify.

Here's what you need to know:



Social workers in Arizona seeking initial licensure from the BBHE and who have not been previously licensed in another state or by a federal jurisdiction, **THERE ARE NO CHANGES** resulting from last year's bill or this year's legislation. An applicant is still required to submit an application, documentation of employment and education, evidence of clinical supervision, and pass an examination.



In the 2018 Legislative session (SB 1246, Chapter 55), licensure under the BBHE changed in two ways. The legislation granted licensure by endorsement for people who are licensed or certified by a federal jurisdiction, or by one or more states, at a substantially equivalent or higher practice level, subject to the applicant paying the prescribed fees, being in good standing, and having been licensed or certified for at least three years. The legislation also removed the requirements for at least 3,600 hours of practice in behavioral health in the prior 5 years, as well as the required examination and submission of a full set of fingerprints for a criminal records check when renewing a license.



During the current legislative session (HB 2569, Chapter 55), additional changes have been made that will impact people who seek licensure from the Board of Behavioral Health Examiners. The modifications will affect out-of-state applicants who have now established residence in Arizona. The new provisions allow an applicant to secure licensure if s/he has been licensed or certified in at least one other state at the practice level in accordance with Arizona state statute and determined by the BBHE, is in good standing, and has been licensed or certified for at least one year. In addition, the Board may verify that the applicant has completed the the education requirements, clinical supervision and examinations imposed by the other state. The out-of-state applicant must be in good standing, and have no complaints, allegations or investigations pending. All applicable fees must be paid by the applicant to Arizona Board. Arizona may require an applicant to pass an examination on this state's laws relevant to social work practice. A person licensed through this process will, thereafter, be overseen by the Arizona Board of Behavioral Health Examiners.

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