

TENNESSEE SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE CHART

The chart below provides a brief overview of social work regulation in Tennessee. Additional information on Social Work Licensure in Tennessee is posted on the NASW, Tennessee Chapter website at www.naswtn.com. The licensure section on that website has direct links to the Tennessee Social Work Licensure Board where individual licensure applications can be completed online, or downloaded by clicking on the document number in the online application. All applicants and licensees should be familiar with the **Rules and Regulations** related to Social Work Licensure in Tennessee. These rules are posted on the Licensure Board website and a link is also on the NASW, Tennessee Chapter website.

The use of the title **social worker** is restricted by Tennessee law to:

- Graduates of accredited schools offering baccalaureate or master’s social work degrees,
- Persons with a doctorate or PhD in social work, or
- Persons licensed in Tennessee with a LBSW, LMSW, LAPSW or LCSW.

Neither individuals, governmental entities, public or private agencies, businesses or organizations (including the media) shall use the title social worker unless individuals meet the above definition. The only exception is that those working in licensed nursing homes may use the title social worker based upon a definition in federal regulations for long term care facilities. (*Tennessee Code § 63-23-113*)

Licensed Baccalaureate Social Worker (LBSW)

Requirements for licensure

Graduate from CSWE accredited baccalaureate social work program, complete appropriate forms, submit criminal background check, pay fees, **pass Association for Social Work Boards (ASWB) bachelors licensing exam.**

Practice info: Generalist social work practice within agency or organization.

Examples: Geriatric social worker providing case management in senior service organization, social worker assisting homeless families with basic needs that works in an agency.

Licensed Master’s Social Worker (LMSW)

Requirements for licensure

Graduate from CSWE accredited social work graduate program, complete appropriate forms, submit criminal background check, pay fees, **pass Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) master’s licensing exam.**

Practice info: Practice within agency or organization. No independent practice.

Example: Master’s social worker in community mental health center working under LCSW supervision, social worker employed to assist with research study.

Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)

Requirements for licensure

Complete 3,000 hours of clinical experience under supervision of a LCSW. Supervised experience must be after receipt of LMSW and must be completed in no less than two years and no more than six years. Applicant must complete appropriate forms, submit criminal background check, pay fees and **pass Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) clinical practice exam.**

Practice info: Can practice clinical and non-clinical social work in an agency, organization, or independently. LCSW meeting requirements for supervisors can supervise LMSW working towards LCSW or LAPSW.

Examples: LCSW providing services and supervision in AIDS service organization and clinical social worker in private practice.

Licensed Advanced Practice Social Worker (LAPSW)

Requirements for licensure

Complete 3,000 hours of advanced generalist practice experience under supervision of a LAPSW or LCSW. Supervised experience must be after receipt of LMSW and be completed in no less than two years and no more than six years. Applicant must also complete appropriate forms, submit criminal background check, pay fees and **pass Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) advanced generalist practice exam.**

Practice info: Can practice **non-clinical social work** in an agency, organization, or independently. LAPSW meeting requirements for supervisors can supervise LMSW working towards LAPSW.

Examples: Social worker providing consulting services, social work educator or social work administrator.