

HOW TO GET YOUR SOCIAL WORK LICENSE (LSW) IN PENNSYLVANIA

In PA, you may earn your LSW license with an MSW/MSS from an accredited graduate program. You may take the required exam any time after the beginning of your final semester in the program.

STEP 1. Obtain the application for the LSW license from the PA State Licensing Board.

To Download:

- Go to www.dos.state.pa.us/social
- Click on “licensure information” on the list of options at the center of the page.
- Scroll down to “Board Application Forms to be downloaded.”
- Click on “Social Worker-Application for Examination/Licensure” (second from bottom in list of options; be careful not to choose Clinical Social Worker Application.)
- Print. The title reads: “Application For a License To Practice Social Work.”

To Receive by Mail, Contact:

The State Board of Social Workers, Marriage & Family Therapists and Professional Counselors:
P.O. Box 2649
Harrisburg, PA 17105-2649
Phone: 717-783-1389 Fax: 717-787-7769 Email: st-socialwork@pa.gov

STEP 2. You must fill out the application and mail it to the Board for pre-approval before you can register with ASWB to take the exam. ***Note:** If you are in your final semester of graduate school, the Dean/Chairperson/Registrar of your social work program must mail in the final page of the application (labeled “*Verification of Social Work Education*”) in a sealed official envelope. If you have already graduated, request an official transcript showing a Master's degree in social work or social welfare be sent directly from the educational institution to the Board.

STEP 3. Fill out your portion of the application (pp. 1-3) and mail it in. **Don't forget the application fee!** You may want to send it by certified mail. Once the State Board has approved your application, they will send you an approval letter and a booklet, which will enable you to register with the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) to take the exam.

STEP 4. The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) administers the exam. Once you receive your approval letter from the State Board, contact ASWB to register for the Master's Level Exam. We recommend that you also request or download the Candidate Handbook. The Handbook is not essential for registration, but it provides helpful information about the exam.

Association of Social Work Boards
400 Southridge Parkway, Suite B
Culpeper, VA 22701
Website: www.aswb.org Phone: 1-888-579-3926

To Download Handbook: <http://www.aswb.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/Candidate-Handbook.2014.pdf>

STEP 5. Register to take the exam by calling the ASWB phone number or by registering online. Using a credit card over the phone speeds things up. The cost for the Masters exam is \$230 (fee subject to change). The ASWB will send you a letter authorizing you to schedule the exam, along with a list of exam sites. The letter and your authorization number are good for one year.

Register early! It will take about 2 weeks to receive the letter, and it may take even longer for ASWB to transmit your information to the organization administering the exam. Thus you may have to wait 4 weeks after registering to call and schedule an exam date. Once you call your preferred site, it may take several weeks to get an appointment.

Which exam do I take?

To receive your LSW in Pennsylvania, you must take and receive a 70 or higher on the Master's Level Exam. ("Note: Some states require a higher score.) In Pennsylvania, you are only eligible to take the Clinical Exam (LCSW) after receiving your LSW and then completing 3000 supervised clinical hours (between 2-6 years). See the State Regulations or the PSCSW fact sheet on the LCSW Regulations for more details.

STEP 6. Ask the registrar's office at your school how soon after graduation a transcript can be issued (can sometimes take several weeks). An official transcript from your school must be sent directly to the State Board once you have completed your degree.

STEP 7. Getting Your LSW

Immediately after completing the exam, you will receive your score. Your test results will be forwarded by the ASWB to your State Board. This takes up to two weeks.

After receiving the application from you, your exam score from ASWB, and the transcript from your school, the State Board will send you your social work license in the mail. This should not take long; if it does, contact the State Board and inquire about the status of your application.