



Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board

Winter/Spring 2026

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Update - Exam Change to Qualify for the LPCC

As of January 1, LPCs who have completed supervision can apply for an LPCC relying upon their passing NCE score. The NCMHCE is no longer required for the issuance of an LPCC, however, LPCs applying for an LPCC may request approval to take the NCMHCE. With this change in exam policy, the Board has seen a significant increase in applications. We have processed about five times as many LPCC applications this year as compared to 2025. Your patience is appreciated as we evaluate the new applications. Some items to keep in mind:

1. You must have completed supervised hours training hours totaling at least 150 hours of training supervision and 3,000 work hours over a minimum of 24 months. Those hours must be submitted using eLicense or be on file with the Board from a prior submission process. If you are not sure your hours were submitted, they may not have been. Note: we cannot confirm requests regarding previously submitted hours.
2. The Board is not waiving any of the requirements for an LPCC. For example, LPCs who have been licensed for a number of years must still document completed supervision hours.

3. All applicants for a new license must complete the Ohio BCI and FBI background checks.

Partner News: Upcoming Changes to the ASWB Social Work Licensing Exams

Source: ASWB Association Update 3/26/2026

The social work licensing exams determine whether an aspiring social worker is ready to practice as a member of a profession that serves vulnerable client populations. Because the stakes are high — for licensure candidates and for the communities they hope to serve — ASWB adheres to rigorous exam development standards.

ASWB works regularly with a team of psychometricians and hundreds of volunteer social workers serving as subject matter experts to ensure the exams incorporate best practices and reflect current professional practice. In August 2026, ASWB will launch updated exams as part of its ongoing commitment to meeting and exceeding industry standards.

Developing the content and designing the structure of the 2026 social work licensing exams began in 2024 with an analysis of the practice of social work. A rigorous research process that gathers data through a survey of thousands of social workers, the practice analysis is required to ensure the exam remains current and relevant.

The 2026 exams will feature a new structure centering candidates' experiences and a renewed focus on applied knowledge rather than simple recall of information.

The new exams will:

- Test three content areas rather than four, reflecting the consolidation of knowledge statements as determined through the practice analysis
- Feature fewer questions overall, reducing the number of both scored and pretest questions
- Increase the proportion of three-option multiple-choice questions
- Include a higher proportion of questions that rely on the application of professional knowledge through the use of problem-solving and reasoning
- Retain the four-hour time limit to complete an exam
- Continue to follow psychometric standards for valid, reliable, and fair exams

There are also format changes, as shown below:

2018 exam format

- Four content areas

- 3- and 4-option multiple choice, with most questions having four options
- 150 operational questions
- 20 pretest questions
- 4-hour time limit

2026 exam format

- Three content areas
- 3- and 4-option multiple choice, with more questions having three options
- 110 operational questions
- 12 pretest questions
- 4-hour time limit

ASWB will implement these changes in August 2026. Candidates who are currently registered for an exam should reference their Authorization to Test email. For questions related to board approval and exam registration, contact the Candidate Services Center.

In spring 2026, ASWB will provide additional information about the updates to the exams. This will include updated exam resources and a revised *ASWB Examination Guidebook*. Please stay tuned to the ASWB website and social media channels for the latest and most accurate information about updates to the social work licensing exams.

[Read more about the exam development process behind these changes.](#)

An Intern's Perspective

By: Rebeca Vinseiro Figueira

Hello everyone!

I am celebrating one year of my role as the Investigative Intern for the Counselor, Social Worker, Marriage and Family Therapist Board! I have had the incredible opportunity to aid in the investigation process, helping to ensure the protection of the public. I qualified for the internship by being a student at The Ohio State University. I am a Master of Public Administration Candidate. Blending the public policy education I am pursuing into my administrative role of the investigations team has opened my eyes to the important role licensure boards have in Ohio.

My first task was to aid in the backlog of cases the Investigative team had. This meant I initiated the investigative process for the investigators of the Board, allowing for faster complaint turn over. Currently, I aid in initiating investigations by helping to triage cases, conducting research, and organizing evidence. Through this, I learned the necessary steps to ensure that procedural due process occurs for all complainants and licensees.

Additionally, I have had the opportunity to help lead the Alternative Therapies Ad Hoc Committee, created to explore the important ethical, legal, and clinical

concerns of various emerging therapies. We began by discussing Ketamine-Assisted Therapy. I prepared research into the key benefits and concerns arising from this treatment. Committee Members, with support from staff, developed an ethics statement to provide clarity regarding concerns surrounding Ketamine-Assisted Therapy and the role of licensees as a part of a treatment team. We will continue to work internally, and in collaboration with other boards, to issue guidance soon.

Working behind the scenes and seeing how Board members and staff work so diligently to protect the public has inspired the type of work that I want to do in the future. I would encourage students who think they may want to work in government or public policy to seek an internship with a government agency (many State of Ohio agencies post internships here - <https://careers.ohio.gov/>). The team has really welcomed me during my time here and I am excited to continue my work with the Board to achieve its goals!

Using the Correct Professional Title: Why It Matters

Choosing the right professional title isn't just a formality, it is a legal requirement tied directly to your scope of practice. The CSWMFT Board continues to see licensees and registrants using incorrect or unofficial titles, often because they resemble titles used in other states or reflect the work the licensee or registrant is doing. However, Ohio law is specific, and accuracy is important. For details on all license titles and abbreviations, please refer to [OAC 4757-3-02](#).

Several patterns show up repeatedly:

Marriage and Family Therapists

In many states, the title is *Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT)*. In Ohio, the correct title is Marriage and Family Therapist (MFT) or Independent Marriage and Family Therapist (IMFT). There is no "L" in Ohio's MFT license titles.

Counselors

Some counselors use PC or PCC, but these are not Ohio's official abbreviations. The State of Ohio uses LPC (Licensed Professional Counselor) and LPCC (Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor).

Social Workers

Social workers with an MSW sometimes use LMSW, a title recognized in other states. At present, Ohio does not have an LMSW license. Social workers who hold an MSW but are not LISWs may use MSW, LSW when signing documents or identifying their type of license.

LISWs occasionally use LCSW, but LISW is the correct Ohio abbreviation.

Trainees

Trainees often avoid using the required trainee title, opting instead for terms like "Clinical Counseling Intern" or "Therapy Intern."

Ohio law is clear. The titles are:

- Counselor Trainee (CT)
- Social Worker Trainee (SWT)
- Marriage and Family Therapist Trainee (MFTT)

These are the only acceptable titles if a one is registered with the Board as a Trainee.

Why Accuracy Matters

Your professional title is directly tied to your legal scope of practice.

There is no scope of practice in Ohio law for titles such as “LMSW” or “Clinical Counseling Intern.” Using an unofficial title can misrepresent your qualifications and create confusion for clients, employers, and regulatory bodies.

When your title matches your license, your scope of practice is clear, defensible, and aligned with state rules.

Highlighting Your Expertise

While your title must follow Ohio law, you still have plenty of room to showcase your skills. Your website bio, agency profile, or LinkedIn page is the perfect place to highlight:

- Specializations
- Populations served
- Treatment modalities
- Certifications
- Professional interests

Coaching vs. Licensed Practice

By: Whitney Caudill, CSWMFT Board Investigator

The Board has been receiving a higher volume of complaints regarding licensees who are also providing coaching services. Some of these complaints have resulted in formal discipline. If a licensee chooses to engage in coaching services, the following information is important to review prior to offering coaching. Licensees are also strongly encouraged to seek the advice of legal counsel related to starting a coaching business.

Coaching and clinical practice are fundamentally different services that must remain clearly and consistently separated. Therapy is a regulated clinical service that involves the diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders. Such services may only be provided by individuals licensed to practice within the scope defined by the Ohio Revised Code and the Ohio Administrative Code.

In contrast, coaching is an unregulated, non-clinical service focused on personal development, performance improvement, and future-oriented goal attainment. Although certain communication skills and strategies may appear similar, coaching does not include diagnosing or treating mental health conditions and therefore falls outside the scope of clinical practice.

When licensees fail to maintain a clear distinction between these roles—such as offering clinical services under the label of coaching or providing coaching within an established therapeutic relationship—they risk creating confusion for clients, establishing dual-role conflicts, and violating ethical and legal standards.

In some cases, individuals seek support not because they exhibit symptoms of a mental health disorder, but because they desire assistance navigating life transitions, addressing interpersonal challenges, improving communication skills, or making decisions about careers or relationships. Applying clinical interventions to asymptomatic clients often leads to frustration for both the licensee and the client because the service does not align with the client's needs or expectations.

To avoid confusion, licensees must always be clear about the specific service they are providing. This clarity begins with a comprehensive intake process and is reinforced through informed consent, documentation, and ongoing communication with clients. Prior to initiating coaching services, the clinician must determine whether the client's needs are developmental or clinical in nature. If mental health symptoms are present, therapy—not coaching—is the appropriate service. Additionally, a clinician may not simultaneously provide both coaching and therapy to the same client, as doing so compromises boundaries and violates the separation required under OAC 4757-5-03. Nor may a licensee provide coaching in one session and in another session, therapy, as a licensee of the Board.

To remain compliant and to protect both clients and licensure, licensees offering coaching should establish the two services within distinct operational structures. This includes maintaining separate business entities, websites, marketing materials, informed consent documents, and record-keeping systems. Clear separation assists clients in understanding whether they are receiving a regulated clinical service or an unregulated coaching service. It also ensures that confidentiality standards, documentation practices, and ethical obligations are applied appropriately to each service.

If clinical symptoms emerge during coaching, the clinician must discontinue coaching and refer the individual to mental health treatment. Likewise, clients who have reached stability in therapy may be referred to coaching if their goals shift from clinical needs to personal or professional development.

Maintaining separation between the two roles protects clients, safeguards the integrity of the therapeutic relationship, and ensures that licensees remain within their defined scope of practice. By establishing clear boundaries, obtaining appropriate training, and structuring their practices responsibly, professionals can possibly offer both services in a manner that is consistent with Ohio law and best supports client well-being.

Change in Policy – Out of State License Verifications

Beginning March 1, 2026, the Ohio CSWMFT Board discontinued issuing license verifications to other licensure boards, employers, and organizations. The Board will also no longer complete licensure forms provided by outside entities.

The official and primary source for verifying an Ohio license is the online license lookup system at elicense.ohio.gov. This system is updated in real time and reflects the current status of every license. Any verification previously issued by Board staff did not include information beyond what is publicly available through this lookup tool at elicense.ohio.gov.

This update aligns with the Board's long-standing practice of conducting its own online license verifications when reviewing out of state applications and follows an emerging trend of boards eliminating board-issued verifications. As part of evaluating applicants from other jurisdictions, the Board receives exam scores directly from the exam owner or administrator and relies on nationally standardized licensure laws and rules to ensure applicants meet Ohio's requirements. The growing use of reciprocity laws and interstate compacts has also informed the Board's decision to modernize its processes.

If a license verification indicates disciplinary action, additional information is available at:

<https://cswmft.ohio.gov/for-the-public/disciplined-licensees>.

The Board cannot provide details beyond what is included in publicly accessible consent agreements.

Guidance for boards in other states is provided on the Board website at <https://cswmft.ohio.gov/for-professionals/resources-for-professionals/moving-to-another-state>.

CE – The Basics

Continuing Education (CE) Guidance for CSWMFT Board Licensees and Registrants

Licensees and registrants of the CSWMFT Board are required to complete continuing education (CE) to maintain licensure. Except for Trainees who have no CE requirement and Social Work Assistants who complete 15 hours—all other licensees must complete at least 30 hours of CE per renewal.

Owing to the volume of inquiries, the Board cannot verify or preapprove individual CE programs.

Determining Whether a CE Program Qualifies

A key first step is to review the program's marketing materials or website:

- Does the provider identify which state board or association approved the CE?

- If yes, determine whether that approving entity is accepted by the CSWMFT Board (see the "Who can offer or approve CE programs?" section below).
- If no approval is listed, and the program is not an out-of-state, in-person training, it is not eligible for CE credit.

Frequently Asked Questions

When should I submit a Post Program Approval request in CE Broker?

- Only a limited number of CE types are eligible for post program approval.
- CE submitted incorrectly will be disapproved in CE Broker without additional explanation.
- If CE is not approved, refer to the Board's website and OAC 4757 for clarification.

Which CEs can be submitted without post-program approval?

- Many CE activities may be submitted directly if they already carry acceptable approval from a recognized entity. Check the certificate or provider website for details.

Can I take CE approved for a different CSWMFT profession?

Yes. If a CE program is approved for any CSWMFT profession (e.g., social work), it is acceptable for all CSWMFT professions (e.g., MFT, counseling).

How do I submit a college transcript?

- Select the college course option in CE Broker under Report CE and upload an official transcript.
- A syllabus is not required.
- One course is typically sufficient to meet most CE requirements.
- The Board will review the transcript and determine which courses meet CE categories.
 - Example: An LSW/BSW completing an MSW may receive 27 hours of general social work CE plus 3 hours of ethics.

What qualifies for post program approval?

Eligible activities include:

- Out-of-state, in-person courses
 - "In-person" means the presenter and attendee are physically in the same room.
 - Live online programs do not qualify as in-person.
- Books (excluding self-published works) and peer-reviewed journal articles
- Teaching or presenting
- Working at election polls
- College courses related to CSWMFT-licensed practice

- Only one course should be submitted; a single course may count for up to the maximum allowable hours.

What if the program lists no CE approval?

- If no CE approval is advertised, contact the provider before registering.
- The Board cannot determine eligibility for programs lacking clear approval.
- If the provider cannot identify an approving entity, the CE is unlikely to qualify.

Who can offer or approve CE programs?

The following CE sources are automatically accepted and may be reported in CE Broker without post program approval:

CSWMFT-Related Approvals

- CSWMFT Board
- CSWMFT Board-approved providers
- Approved associations: NASW, ASWB, NBCC, AAMFT, Joint Accreditation

Organizations Listed in OAC 4757-9-05, including State of Ohio agencies such as: Chemical Dependency Professionals Board, State Medical Board of Ohio, Department of Developmental Disabilities, Bureau of Workers' Compensation, Department of Education, Department of Health, Department of Job and Family Services, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Board of Nursing, State Board of Psychology, Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections, Department of Public Safety, Department of Youth Services, Attorney General of Ohio, and Supreme Court of Ohio.

Out-of-state licensure boards

Programs approved by boards that license counselors, social workers, MFTs, art therapists, or music therapists in other states are also accepted.

What if I'm unsure whether a CE qualifies?

- Ask the provider which approvals they hold or how they meet OAC 4757-9 requirements.
- If they cannot identify an acceptable approving entity, the CE likely does not qualify.
- You may also check whether the course is listed in CE Broker.
- If neither source clarifies eligibility, assume the CE is not acceptable.
- Do not contact the Board for pre-approval; staff cannot verify or evaluate CE in advance.
- Online or in-state programs not offered by an approved provider are not eligible for post approval.

What programs are no longer eligible for post approval?

- Online courses not offered by an approved provider

- In-state courses not offered by an approved provider

If you cannot confirm that an online or in-state program is offered by an approved provider, assume it is not eligible for CE credit.

Important Links

- [Continuing Education Requirements | Counselor and Social Worker Board](#)
- [Sources of Continuing Education | Counselor and Social Worker Board](#)
- Ohio Administrative Code Chapter 4757-9: <https://codes.ohio.gov/ohio-administrative-code/chapter-4757-9>

Counseling Compact- Live January 5, 2026

The State of Ohio went live in the Counseling Compact on January 5, 2026. LPCCs interested in seeking Compact Privileges can find more information at https://cswmft.ohio.gov/get-licensed/counselors/counseling_compact_privileges. Please carefully review ALL information included on this webpage before applying for a privilege through Compact Connect. Currently, Ohio, Minnesota, and Arizona are the only states offering privileges. The Compact Commission is optimistic that other states will be going live soon.

Social Work Compact

The Social Work Compact is drafting rules and establishing a budget. A database vendor has been identified. A specific timeline for issuing multi-state licenses has not been established.

CSWMFT Welcomes New Board Members

In December, Governor DeWine appointed Alan Demmitt, Ph.D., LPCC-S; Ashley Alexander, LISW-S; and Cheryl Thomas, Ph.D., IMFT-S, LPCC-S to the Board. Wayne Kinney, DSW, LISW, joined in January. Susie O'Brien, a public member, was appointed by Governor DeWine in February. In April, Laci Carsey, LPCC-S was appointed to the Board.

You can find more information about CSWMFT Board Members here: <https://cswmft.ohio.gov/about-the-board/CSWMFT-board-members>. If you are interested in serving on the Board visit: <https://cswmft.ohio.gov/about-the-board/board-resources/becoming-a-board-member>.

Board Actions/Discipline - January and March 2026 Board Meetings

Consent agreements for the actions listed below can be found at <https://cswmft.ohio.gov/for-the-public/disciplined-licensees>.

January and March 2026 Board Meetings:

Social Workers:

- Kimberly Bennington (LSW) 4757-5-09 (B). Monitored supervision.
- Mary Dempsey (LSW) 4757-5-05. Inactive – Escrow; mental health/fitness for duty assessment.
- Rosemary Diamond (LSW) 4757-5-03 (A)(4)(d); 4757-5-02 (D)(1). Cannot refer supervised visitation services to herself; EBAS exam.
- Natalie Dorman (LISW) 4757-6-01 (F). EBAS exam..
- Robert Helfrich (LSW)) 4757-5-04 (C). Suspension; Personal counseling; Monitored supervision; EBAS exam; no contact with former client.
- Ann Hull (LISW-S) 4757-5-02 (I). Reprimand; EBAS exam.
- Caitlin Phillips (LISW) 4757-5-05. Inactive – Escrow; mental health/fitness for duty assessment.
- Lei Solomon (LSW)) 4757-11-01 (C)(4). Reprimand.
- John Swindell (LSW) 4757-5-06 (B); 4757-5-09 (B). Monitored supervision.
- Amanda Annis (LSW) 4757-5-03 (A); 4757-5-03 (D); 4757-5-02 (A)(2). Monitored supervision; EBAS exam.
- Amanda Lewis (LSW) 4757.02; 4757.37; 4757-3-02 (D); 4757-23-01 (A)(1). Reprimand; Monitored supervision; EBAS exam.
- Lechanne Ledger (LSW) 4757-5-02 (E); 4757-6-01; 4757-23-01. Monitored supervision.
- Lindsay Feingold (LISW) 4757.02. Reprimand.
- Nicole Savage (LISW-S) 4757-5-03 (A)(4)(b); 4757-5-02 (D)(1); 4757-5-02 (A)(2); 4757-5-05. Suspension; personal counseling; Monitored supervision; supervision designation revoked; no solo private practice; EBAS exam.
- Peter Century (LSW) 4757-5-02 (A)(2); 4757-5-09 (A) (B). Monitored supervision; EBAS exam.
- Season Shipe (LISW-S) 4757-5-02 (A)(2); 4757-5-09 (B). Reprimand; EBAS exam.
- Eric Main (LISW) 4757-5-02 (F); 4757-5-03 (A). Surrender.

Counselors:

- Ashley Altomare (LPCC suspended) Surrender.
- Morgan Bowman (LPC) 4757-5-04 (C). Suspension; Monitored supervision; EBAS exam.
- Betsy Hobaugh (LPCC) 4757-11-01 (C)(4). Reprimand.
- Beth Kemper (LPC) 4757-11-01 (C)(4). Reprimand.
- Sarah Shearer (LPCC-S) 4757-5-09 (B) (C) (K) (L); 4757-5-06 (E)(1). Monitored supervision; EBAS exam; supervision designation revoked.
- Melissa Snow (LPCC) Surrender.
- Nathan Sole (LPCC-S) 4757-5-09 (B); 4757-5-08 (A). Suspension; Monitored supervision; EBAS exam; supervision designation revoked; no solo private practice.
- Angela Fox (LPCC) 4757-5-03 (A)(4)(b); 4757-5-03 (A)(4)(i); 4757-11-01 (C)(20). Reprimand; Monitored supervision; EBAS exam.
- Darwin Shieh (LPCC) 4757-5-03 (A); 4757-5-09 (B). Monitored supervision; EBAS exam.
- Jennifer Belvis (LPCC-S) 4757-11-01 (C)(20); 4757-5-10 (C). personal counseling; monitored supervision.

- John Luttrell (LPCC) 4757-5-09 (B) (L). Surrender.

2026 Board Meeting Dates

The CSWMFT Board meets at least six times per year. Below are the planned meeting dates. Usually, the Board only meets on the first day listed but reserves the second day in case there is sufficient business or a hearing. Details regarding Board meetings are posted to the CSWMFT Board website a week or so prior to the meeting. You can access meeting information at <https://cswmft.ohio.gov/about-the-board/news-and-events/events>.

- o May 14
- o July 9
- o September 10
- o November 12

