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

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Summer 2026

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Applying for an LISW, LPCC, or IMFT

Many MSWs, LPCs, and MFTs are preparing for supervised training and an independent license. Keep these requirements in mind:

- Supervision must be completed over a minimum of 24 months. LSWs, LPCs, or MFTs will have to renew at least once before receiving an independent license. Be prepared with completed CE so that you can renew timely.

- Before exam approval for LISW applicants, or licensure for LPCC and IMFT applicants, ensure your supervisor has submitted all supervision hours to the Board. The final training supervisor must submit every hour, including hours completed under previous supervisors.

- Applicants for a new license must complete Ohio BCI and FBI background checks.

Licensee Websites and Online Profiles

Board staff regularly review licensee websites and professional profiles. These platforms can help prospective clients make informed choices, but licensees should carefully monitor how much personal information they disclose, accurately describe their expertise and training, use the correct license title, and clearly identify a supervisor when practicing under supervision. Taking these steps will help to ensure clients have the right information to make an informed choice.

Be Alert to Suspicious Requests for Personal Information

The Board occasionally hears from licensees who receive calls or emails requesting personal information. If a request from an insurer, public agency, or licensing board seems suspicious, verify it before responding. Contact the organization through its official website or another trusted source to confirm that the request is legitimate and protect yourself from scams.

CE Reminder

Please review the Board's website and follow CE Broker's instructions when submitting continuing education. We worked with CE Broker to clarify the submission process so your completed hours are reported correctly and credited to your account.

New Board Members

Laci Carsey, LPCC-S, joined the Board in April 2026. She practices privately in the Lancaster area and previously served on the OCA Board.

Governor DeWine appointed Susie O'Brien in February as a public member of the Counselor Professional Standards Committee. Susie will retire this fall from the Ohio Secretary of State's office and lives in Upper Arlington.

Welcome Laci and Susie!

Getting to Know Board Member Ashley Alexander, LISW-S By Tracey Hosom, CSWMFT Investigator

Ashley Alexander was appointed to the Board by Governor DeWine in 2025. She brings experience in social work across school-based services, residential treatment, and community mental health. She currently works in private practice in Columbus. She has also worked with

the Governor's Office assisting human trafficking victims—an experience that ultimately led her to apply for the Board.

A Conversation with Ms. Alexander
Ms. Hosom: What drew you to wanting to serve on the Board?
Ms. Alexander: The perspective of protecting the public. That was very important to me—having a voice and representing what we are seeing.

Ms. Hosom: And now you're also serving as an investigative liaison. Have you encountered any surprises?
Ms. Alexander: Ethics are so important. I have been surprised by some of the cases and what people are doing. I see a connection between practitioners not taking care of themselves and burnout. We're all human. If you don't take care of yourself, it has an effect. In agencies, it can be harder to say, "I need a day off," or "I need some self-care." Productivity demands can make it difficult to take a break.

Ms. Hosom: You have the supervision designation, correct?
Ms. Alexander: Yes. Providing supervision is an amazing opportunity. Supervision is always a different experience, but I've found that everyone wants to be a good clinician. I encourage self-care with my supervisees—remember, "put your mask on before you help others." It's also beneficial for me as a clinician; providing supervision has a dual benefit.

Ms. Hosom: Is there anything that "stuck" with you from your own supervision?
Ms. Alexander: A major topic was mandated reporting. I learned that it's better to be safe than sorry. CPS are your friends; they can decide whether something is reportable. They are the experts. Good documentation is also essential. Documentation is often learned on the job, so having strong supervision while developing those skills is very helpful.

BWC's Medical & Health Symposium: September 16–18

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation's (BWC) Medical & Health Symposium (MHS) returns Sept. 16–18, 2026. Providers, clinicians, therapists, and other health-care professionals can learn from nationally recognized experts and explore innovations in workers' compensation care.

This year's sessions cover resilience, innovation, and the changing human experience in health care and recovery, including:

- Trauma's impact on the body and PTSD presumption laws
- Brain-computer interfaces, robotics, and the future of AI in medicine
- Knee replacement surgery and advanced physical therapy
- Resilience stories from Rebekah Gregory and Kina Hart

BWC is seeking CE approval for more than 25 types of health-care and legal professionals. The virtual showcase will also feature medical technology vendors and health-care partners.

Save the date and visit the MHS **website** to register and learn more.

Social Work Licensing Exams

As discussed in the Board's Winter/Spring 2026 Newsletter, ASWB has made changes to its exam. The Social Work Licensing Exams:

- Are based on the 2026 blueprint, found in the **ASWB Examination Guidebook**
- Test three content areas across all exam categories (Bachelors, Masters, Advanced Generalist, Clinical)
- Include a total of 122 questions (110 scored, 12 unscored)
- Include a mixture of three- and four-option multiple choice questions
- Have a 4-hour time limit

These changes ensure the exam is measuring competency to practice while reducing the burdens placed on examinees. More details can be found at: **https://www.aswb.org/exam/**.

Counseling Compact

As of the date of publication, seven states, including Ohio, are issuing Privileges to Practice under the Counseling Compact. You can find more details regarding applying at **https://counselingcompact.gov/**. Information for Ohio LPCCs can be found at **https://cswmft.ohio.gov/get-licensed/counselors/counseling_compact_privileges**.

Social Work Compact

Work continues on the Social Work Compact. Vendor partners are working on a database. Committee of the Compact continue to work on the rules necessary to implement the Compact. You can stay up to date by visiting **https://swcompact.org/**.

Texting with Clients: A Helpful Reminder
By Tracey Hosom, CSWMFT Board Investigator

Text messaging can be useful for brief information such as cancellations or appointment reminders. However, the Board is increasingly receiving complaints about **excessive** texting between providers and clients. Licensees and registrants should use texting **sparingly** and maintain clear professional boundaries.

Treatment should occur during scheduled client sessions—not through ongoing text exchanges. The Investigation Department often reviews client-provider conversations that extend far beyond appropriate brief communication. If your messages turn into multiple paragraphs, ask:

- Is this message necessary?
- Could this issue be addressed during the next session?

Retain text messages as part of the client record. Set expectations early and maintain consistent, professional communication practices.

Additionally, if a licensee or registrant is terminated from a paid or volunteer position, they are not responsible for continuing services or providing referrals. Do not continue texting with clients or former clients after termination.

If you have questions or topics for future "Ethics Issues" columns, please email: **ethics@cswb.ohio.gov**.

Board Actions/Discipline - May and July 2026 Board Meetings

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

May and July 2026 Board Meetings:

Social Workers:

- Elise Armstrong-Stone (LSW) 4757.02 (A)(2) and (B)(2). Reprimand; EBAS exam; supervision restriction; application restriction.
- Carrisa Salyers (LSW) 4757-5-03 (A); 4757-5-02 (D); Reprimand; EBAS exam.
- Beth Spears (LSW) 4757-5-05. Inactive – Escrow; mental health/fitness for duty assessment; EBAS exam.
- Chania Spencer (LSW) 4757-11-01 (C)(20); 4757-5-03 (A); 4757-5-09 (B) & (C); supervised monitoring; personal counseling.
- Suzanne Sunshine (LISW-S) 4757-5-02 (D)(1); 4757-5-03 (A)(4)(b). Suspension; supervised monitoring; solo private practice restriction; supervision designation revoked; EBAS exam.
- Candice Walker (LISW-S) 4757-5-02 (H); 4757-5-02 (D)(1). Reprimand.
- Julianna Waller (LSW) 4757-21-02 (A) & (B); 4757-5-09 (B). Supervised monitoring; EBAS exam.
- Summer Athey (LSW) 4757-5-03 (A); 4757-5-02 (D). Reprimand; EBAS exam.
- Kristen Blessing (LISW-S) 4757-5-03 (A); 4757-5-09 (B). Supervised monitoring; EBAS exam.
- Michel Gotwals (LISW) 4757-11-01 (C)(20); 4757-5-09 (L). Supervised monitoring; solo private practice restriction.
- Joshua Pollard (LSW) 4757-5-03 (A). Supervised monitoring; EBAS exam.

Counselors:

- Lauri Branam (LPCC-S) 4757-5-05. Personal counseling; Supervised monitoring; solo private practice restriction; successful completion of probation; supervision designation revoked.
- Melissa Frye (LPCC) 4757-5-03 (A); 4757-5-09 (B). Supervised monitoring; EBAS exam.
- Peter Giotta (LPC) Surrender.
- Claudia Hempill (LPCC-S) 4757-5-05. Inactive – Escrow; mental health/fitness for duty assessment.
- Roger Higginbotham (LPCC-S) 4757-11-01 (C)(4); 4757-5-02 (F); 4757-11-01 (B); 4757-11-01 (C)(9). Surrender.
- Robert Jakovlic (LPCC) 4757-5-03 (A); 4757-5-02 (A)(2); 4757-5-09 (B). Supervised monitoring.
- Gregory Jurica (LPCC-S) 4757-5-02 (F). Surrender.
- Jessica Litz (LPCC) 4757-5-03 (A). Supervised monitoring.
- Stephanie Ryall (LPC) 4757-5-02 (B)(2); 4757-5-03 (A). Supervised monitoring; personal counseling.
- Elizabeth O'Donnell (LPCC-S) 4757-7-02. Reprimand; EBAS exam.
- Nina Visconti (LPC) consent agreement continuation. Suspension; mental health/fitness for duty assessment; supervised monitoring; solo private practice restriction.
- Jesse Yanke (LPCC) 4757-5-04 (C). Suspension; no solo private practice; supervised monitoring.

2026 and 2027 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**.

2026

- September 10
- November 12

2027

- January 14
- March 11
- May 13
- July 8
- September 9
- November 18