

ALC – Occupational Licensing Review Subcommittee  
Occupational Entity Questionnaire

Responses to the following questions are due via email to Subcommittee staff no later than the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month immediately preceding the month the occupational authorization is scheduled for review by the Subcommittee.

1. Would consumers be at risk of substantial harm if Arkansas did not have this occupational authorization? What instances of specific and substantial harm have been documented in the past year?

*Social work is regulated, because it affects public health, safety, and welfare on both a societal and highly personal scale. Social workers serve many populations in communities, including abused and neglected children, individuals with mental illness and substance use disorders, veterans and their families, and survivors of crime and domestic violence. Consumers have been harmed by untrained individuals who do not have the proper training, experience, and education to provide mental health treatment. Social work licensing helps prevent this harm from occurring by ensuring practitioners have the necessary qualifications and can demonstrate minimum competence to practice with vulnerable client populations. The Board provides an important recourse to consumers to report harmful behaviors. The board plays a crucial role in enforcing the laws and rules established by the state of Arkansas.*

2. How many complaints were made to the occupational entity by consumers being harmed by unauthorized practitioners? What specific action was taken by the occupational entity?

*In FY23 there were two complaints against an unlicensed practitioner. The complainant was informed the individuals were not social workers. The Board was unable to verify if they held any other type of license or other information. Overall, the Board has received 30 complaints for FY23. Fifteen were unsubstantiated and thus dismissed. The others are listed in question #3 or are still pending investigation.*

3. How many complaints were made to the occupational entity by consumers being harmed by authorized practitioners? What specific action was taken by the occupational entity?

*For FY23, the Board had two complaints of social workers who had sexual relationships with a client. These licenses were revoked. There were four (4) instances of fraudulent billing or*

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*recordkeeping, one (1) inappropriate relationship (online) and two (2) of dual relationship/boundary issues. In the cases of sexual misconduct, the licenses were revoked. In the other cases, a period of probation was issued with requirements for additional continuing education.*

4. Were any applicants who otherwise met authorization requirements denied an authorization in the past year? If so, why?

*No.*

5. How much does the occupational entity collect annually in fees, and what are annual expenses? How much money does the occupational entity have in reserves?

*In FY23, the Board collected \$239,150. Annual expenses were \$204,343. There is currently \$833,285 in reserve.*

6. If the occupational entity has a positive amount in reserves, when was the last time reserve funds were used? For what purpose?

*In FY17 the number of employees for the Board increased from one to two. Reserves were used to fund this position at that time. The Board's reserves have been used in the past for increases in rent, personnel cost, and other onetime costs.*

7. Does the occupational entity have any other sources of revenue? Could occupational authorization fees be reduced without causing the occupational entity to be underfunded?

*There are no other sources of revenue. Beginning in FY24, the Board began reducing funds according to ACT 114 of 2023.*

8. How many applicants for the occupational authorization fail each year? Does the occupational entity track how many applicants that do not progress are veterans, women, or minorities?

*According to the Association of Social Work Boards, who administers the national exam, the pass rate for Arkansas is 73%.*

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9. Can applicants complete the training requirements for this occupational authorization with vocational or non-traditional education (e.g., apprenticeships)? What percentage of applicants complete apprenticeships?

*No. Arkansas requires a bachelor's or master's degree in social work from a university accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. These requirements are consistent with every other state in the U.S.*

10. In what ways would removal of the occupational authorization or reduction of occupational authorization requirements be harmful to current authorization holders?

*Clinical social workers practicing in Arkansas would be prohibited from practicing in any other U.S. jurisdiction unless they first obtain licensure. Bachelor's and master's social workers would also be required to be licensed in most states. If Arkansas eliminated social work regulation, it could not participate in the U.S. Social Work Licensing Compact that may in the future impact Arkansas. Additionally, eliminating social work licensing may result in decreased wages as some research has shown that occupational licensing increases salary premiums. Third party reimbursement of social work services may be impacted if licensing requirements are removed. Modifying or eliminating third party reimbursement may result in job loss for current license holders.*