

## Becoming a Licensed Social Worker in Washington

In Washington, individuals must have a graduate degree in social work before they can become licensed. The Washington Department of Health (DOH) issues licenses for a [Licensed Advanced Social Worker \(LASW\)](#) or a [Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker \(LICSW\)](#). There are *associate* licenses for individuals who are in the process of earning supervised hours needed for full licensure.

<b>Licensed Advanced Social Worker (LASW)</b>	<b>Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker (LICSW)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn a master’s or doctoral degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited school.</li> <li>• An LASW is considered non-clinical and can practice social work (including psychotherapy under the supervision of an LICSW or other licensed, independent mental health services provider).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earn a master’s or doctoral degree in social work from a CSWE-accredited school.</li> <li>• LICSW is a clinical mental health professional credential and allows you to practice independently in the state of Washington.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Apply for a Licensed Social Worker Associate-Advanced (LSWAA)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the <a href="#">application packet</a> or <a href="#">submit an application online</a>. Additional materials to submit with this application include:</li> <li>• An official copy of your graduate transcript (to be sent directly to DOH)</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Approved Supervisor Licensed Social Worker form</a> indicating who will be supervising you</li> <li>• application fee</li> </ul>	<p><b>Apply for a Licensed Social Worker Associate-Independent Clinical (LSWAIC)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete the <a href="#">application packet</a> or <a href="#">submit an application online</a>. Additional materials to submit with this application include:</li> <li>• An official copy of your graduate transcript (sent directly to DOH)</li> <li>• The <a href="#">Approved Supervisor Licensed Social Worker form</a> indicating who will be supervising you</li> <li>• application fees</li> </ul>
<p>Complete <a href="#">3,200 hours of supervised work experience</a></p>	<p>Complete <a href="#">4,000 hours of postgraduate clinical social work experience in no less than three years</a></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 800 hours of experience must be earned from face-to-face client contact.</li> <li>• Must receive at least 90 hours of supervision. Of your supervision hours, at least 50 must include direct supervision by a LASW or LICSW; the 50 hours may be in one-to-one supervision or group supervision.</li> <li>• 40 hours may be with an equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner; the 40 hours must be in one-on-one supervision (such as licensed psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychiatric nurse practitioners).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1,000 hours must be directly treating clients under the supervision of a LICSW</li> <li>• While completing these hours, you must spend at least 130 hours must under direct supervision.</li> <li>• At least 70 of your supervision hours must be with an LICSW, though any portion of the remaining 60 can come from another qualified mental health services provider. 60 hours must be in on-to-one supervision. The remaining 70 hours may be on-to –one or group supervision.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CONTINUING EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS:</b> Associate social workers (LSWAAs and LSWAICs) are also required to complete continuing education. Renewal of these licenses requires completion of 18 continuing education hours every year. Every two years, six of these hours must be in <b>ethical and legal topics</b>. Before receiving their permanent licenses, associate social work licensees will be required to show that they have completed 36 hours of continuing education.</p>	

<p><a href="#">Social Worker License Application Packet</a> and send it to the DOH or <a href="#">complete the application online</a>. You will need to provide supplemental materials, such as the <a href="#">Verification of Social Worker Postgraduate Supervised Experience form</a>.</p>	<p>After completing 4,000 supervised hours, you will be eligible to submit an application for a full LICSW license. As with your previous application, you can print out the <a href="#">application packet</a> and mail it to the DOH or <a href="#">complete the application online</a>. You will need to submit supplemental materials, including the <a href="#">Supervised Postgraduate Experience form</a>.</p>
<p>The <a href="#">ASWB Advanced Generalist exam</a> is required for LASW licensure in the state of Washington. Once your LASW application has been reviewed by DOH and found to be complete, DOH will give you permission to register for the exam. Within two weeks of your test date, DOH will receive your test scores.</p>	<p>You must take the <a href="#">ASWB Clinical exam</a> to become licensed. Upon approval of your LICSW application, you will be notified that you are eligible to register for the exam.</p>
<p>Pass the ASWB Advanced Generalist exam, receive LASW license</p>	<p>Pass the ASWB Clinical exam, receive your LICSW license</p>
<p>You can begin practicing social work (and clinical social work under the supervision of an LICSW) in the state of Washington.</p>	<p>This will allow you to practice in the state of Washington without supervision.</p>
<p>Must renew license every year no later than your date of birth. DOH requires that LASWs and LICSWs complete 36 hours of continuing education every two years. Six of the 36 hours must be in ethical and legal topics. Every six years, all licensed social workers must complete six hours of training in the recognition and management of suicidality.</p>	

Notes: For more information including updated schedules and fees: <https://doh.wa.gov/licenses-permits-and-certificates/professions-new-renew-or-update/social-worker-and-social-worker-associate/licensing-information>

Social Work licensing requirements statutes (laws) and rules:

- [RCW 18.225](#)
- [WAC 246-809](#)

Social work title protection in Washington:

- [RCW 18.320.010](#)

**WA Department of Health Social Work Licensing:**

<http://www.doh.wa.gov/LicensesPermitsandCertificates/ProfessionsNewReneworUpdate/SocialWorker>

**Association of Social Work Boards:** <http://www.aswb.org/>

**National Association of Social Workers-Washington State Chapter:** <http://www.nasw-wa.org/>

**National Association of Social Workers:** <http://www.socialworkers.org>

*Handout created by Syrene Miller, LSWAIC, NASW-WA Membership Engagement Committee.*