

Minnesota Board of Social Work

Biennial Report

FY 2001-2002 (July 1, 2000 - June 30, 2002)

Cost of Preparing Biennial Report

Minnesota Statutes, section 3.197 requires that "A report to the legislature must contain, at the beginning of the report, the cost of preparing the report, including any costs incurred by another agency or another level of government." The Board of Social Work spent an estimated \$200 to prepare this report.

Part 1. General Information

A. Board of Social Work Mission and Major Functions

Board Mission

The mission of the Board of Social Work is "to ensure to the citizens of Minnesota quality social work services by establishing and enforcing professional standards." (Board of Social Work's Strategic Plan, September 1994)

Major Board Functions

- 1. Establish and enforce minimum standards of licensure and continuing competency for social workers.**
 - Approve applicants for the licensure examination
 - Issue and renew licenses
 - Establish, implement, and enforce standards for supervision
 - Review and approve continuing education reported by licensees
 - Review and approve continuing education sponsor applications
- 2. Establish and enforce minimum standards of ethical practice for social workers.**
 - Make social work practice determinations
 - Receive and investigate complaints against social workers
 - Take corrective or disciplinary action as deemed necessary to protect the public
 - Monitor licensees who are under disciplinary orders and corrective action agreements
- 3. Provide information to applicants and licensees about (a) examination, licensure and renewal requirements, and (b) ethical standards.**
 - Publish and distribute licensure and student handbooks

- Respond to written and telephone requests for information from applicants and licensees
 - Make presentations to social work students in accredited social work programs at colleges and universities throughout the state
 - Attend social work professional conferences to distribute written information, make presentations, and answer questions
- 4. Provide information to the public about the scope of social work practice, ethical standards governing social workers, and the complaint process.**
- Disseminate information to the public on actions taken by the board
 - Respond to requests for data
 - Educate the public about the board's responsibilities, including how to register a complaint and how the complaint process works
- 5. Verify licensure status of social workers to employers, credentialing agencies, insurance agencies, and the public.**
- Respond to telephone inquiries
 - Provide written verification

B. Major Board Activities During Biennium

Among the activities accomplished by the board during the FY 2001-2002 biennium were the following.

1. Changes to Internal Operations – Complaint Unit

- Implemented alternative dispute resolution (ADR) strategies in the complaint process
- Upgraded computer database for complaint and disciplinary data
- Integrated complaint and disciplinary data with licensure data
- Reduced legal costs by exercising more authority in investigating complaints and drafting complaint-related documents
- Worked with other health licensing boards in developing "Complaint Resolution Process Guidelines" to streamline the complaint process

2. Changes to Internal Operations – Licensure Unit

- Upgraded computer database for licensure data
- Integrated licensure data with complaint and disciplinary data
- Reorganized job functions within the licensure unit to increase the efficient processing of applications and renewals
- Worked with the social work community through a Special Committee on Board Operations (SCOBO) to develop recommendations on ways to streamline the licensure and renewal processes

3. Changes to Internal Operations – Administrative

- Appointed a new executive director
- Upgraded the board's database
- Collaborated with other health licensing boards on computer-related projects

- Completed a Strategic Information Resource Management Plan (SIRMP) to identify the board's short-run and long-run strategic objectives and ways to achieve those objectives

4. Increased Outreach to Social Workers

- Updated the board's website to make information about the board and its functions more available to applicants, licensees, and the public
- Gave educational presentations on licensure and ethical standards to students in baccalaureate- and master's-level social work programs throughout the state
- Presented information to licensees at social work conferences and meetings throughout the state

C. Emerging Issues

1. Legislative Proposals

The board anticipates initiating legislative proposals to implement recommendations made by SCOBO and adopted by the board in May, 2002. Non-controversial recommendations will be incorporated into legislative proposals for the 2003 legislative session. Recommendations which may be more controversial will be deferred until the 2004 or 2005 session. Issues which may be more controversial include (1) reducing the number of licensure levels from four to three, and (2) eliminating the exemption of city, county, and state agency social workers from licensure requirements.

2. Board Operations

The SCOBO report included a number of recommendations for changes in board operations. The recommendations are designed to simplify the board's procedures and make the board's operations more efficient. The board has begun implementing a number of the recommendations, but it anticipates that not all recommendations will be fully implemented until sometime during the FY 2003-2004 biennium.

3. Electronic Government Services

The board has received funds through the Office of Technology to enhance its Electronic Government Services. During FY 2003, the board anticipates putting into place an online renewal system and revamping the board's website to be more comprehensive and user-friendly.

4. Licensure Examination Study

In 2001, legislation was passed requiring the board, upon receipt of funding from federal or private sources, to commission a study by an independent researcher to determine the extent to which the social work licensure examination failure rate for applicants who were born in a foreign country and for whom English is not their first language is greater than the failure rate for applicants from other populations taking the licensure examination, and the underlying cause for any such disparity. The board anticipates seeking funding, and if funding is available, to complete the study and make a report to the legislature in 2004.

Part 2. Board Members and Staff; Board Budget

A. Board Members

In accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 148B.19, the board has 15 members appointed by the Governor. The members include:

- 5 social workers licensed at the baccalaureate level
- 5 social workers licensed at the master's level
- 5 public members (as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 214.02)

The statutes require that 10 members of the board be engaged in the practice of social work in Minnesota in the following employment settings:

- 1 from a state agency
- 1 from a county agency
- 2 from a private agency
- 1 from a private clinical practice
- 1 educator engaged in regular teaching duties at an accredited program of social work
- 1 engaged in the practice of social work in an elementary, middle, or secondary school and licensed by the board of teaching
- 1 practicing social work in a licensed hospital or nursing home

In addition, of the 15 board members, at least 5 must have expertise in communities of color, and at least 6 must reside outside the 7-county metropolitan area.

B. Board Staff

During the FY 2001-2002 biennium, the board was authorized to employ the equivalent of 11.5 full-time employees (FTEs).

C. Receipts and Disbursements

The board's receipts and disbursements for the FY 2001-2002 biennium were as follows:

Item	FY 2001	FY 2002
Receipts (total revenue from all sources)	\$ 1,167,055	\$ 1,161,000
Disbursements (total direct and indirect costs)	\$775,144	\$1,091,345

D. Major Fees Assessed by the Board

Fee	Amount
Application Fees	
Reciprocity	\$150.00
LISW and LICSW	90.00
LSW and LGSW	45.00
Licensure and Renewal Fees (payable every 2 years)	
LSW	\$115.20
LGSW	201.60
LISW	302.40
LICSW	331.20

LSW = Licensed Social Worker
LGSW = Licensed Graduate Social Worker
LISW = Licensed Independent Social Worker
LICSW = Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker

Part 3. Licensing Statistics

A. Persons Licensed as of June 30, 2002

Total	9,703
LSW	5,124
LGSW	1,090
LISW	789
LICSW	2,699

B. New Licenses Issued During Biennium

Level	FY 2001	FY 2002
LSW	366	333
LGSW	200	260
LISW	39	47
LICSW	149	134
Total	754	774

Part 4. Complaints

A. Complaints Received During Biennium

	FY 2001	FY 2002
Number of Complaints Received	120	123
Number of Complaints per 1000 Licensees	12	12
Complaints by Type		
Impairment	5	8
Boundaries	15	23
Confidentiality	11	6
Practice Issues	52	46
Failure to Report	3	1
Licensure	13	12
Sexual Contact or Harassment	1	0
Fee or Payment Issues	1	2
Unlicensed Practice/ Misrepresentation	6	10
Violation of Board Order	2	0
Non-jurisdictional	11	15

B. Complaints Opened During Biennium

	FY 2001	FY 2002
Number of Complaints Opened	120	123
<3 months	58	50
3-6 months	17	48
6-12 months	31	23
>12 months	14	2

When complaints were open for more than one year, the delays were caused by repeated unsuccessful attempts to negotiate remedies with licensees and their legal counsel.

C. Complaints Closed/Resolved During Biennium

	FY 2001	FY 2002
Number of Complaints Closed	125	109
Disposition of Closed Complaints		
Dismissed or Closed	111	93
Revocation	0	1
Voluntary Surrender	2	1
Suspension	2	0
Restrictions, Limitations, Conditions	4	10
Reprimand	2	0
Agreement for Corrective Action	4	4

Part 5. Trend Data as of June 30, 2002 (By Fiscal Year)

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
Number of Persons Licensed (all levels)	8,612	8,693	8,613	9,002	9,328	9,783	9,831	9,803	9,727	9,703
Number of Complaints Received	131	151	128	189	154	140	173	206	120	123
Complaints per 1000 Licensees		18		16		18		20		12
Complaints Open as of June 30	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	56