



Continuing Education Frequently Asked Questions

All social workers licensed by the Massachusetts Board of Registration of Social Work (Licensing Board) are required to obtain continuing education (CE) as a condition for renewal of their licenses in order to promote and enhance the professional competence of all licensed social workers. Licensees must complete the required amount of continuing education hours prior to the renewal of their license, unless he or she is exempt from such requirements or is entitled to pro-rate such requirements. A free copy of the Rules and Regulations: 258 CMR can be downloaded free of charge at the [Licensing Board's website](#).

Massachusetts Social Work Continuing Education Information has been prepared as a service to NASW Members, authorized by The Massachusetts Board of Registration of Social Work.

- **How long is the social work licensure period?**
- **When must CE requirements be completed?**
- **How many CEs are required for each 2-year licensure period?**
- **Who do my CEs need to be approved by?**
- **Where can I attend in-person CE events and classes?**
- **Are there alternatives to in-person CE events and classes?**
- **What records of program attendance must I maintain?**
- **What about CEs for licensed social workers in BSW, MSW, DSW or PhD programs?**
- **Do retired social workers need CEs?**
- **What about license renewal?**

HOW LONG IS THE SOCIAL WORK LICENSURE PERIOD?

The licensure period is the two-year period between license renewals which begins on October 1st of each even-numbered year and ends on September 30th of the next even-numbered year.

WHEN MUST CE REQUIREMENTS BE COMPLETED?

CE requirements must be completed every two years at the time of license renewal by October 1st of every even year. Licensees will be required to sign their renewal form affirming that he or

she has completed the required number of continuing education hours. Licenses should not be renewed until CE requirements are completed. Social Workers may not practice with an expired license. The Licensing Board conducts random CE audits following licensure renewal. A licensee must provide the board with documentation of CE hours only if you are selected for audit. Please be aware that failure to provide documentation may result in disciplinary action.

HOW MANY CEs ARE REQUIRED FOR EACH 2-YEAR LICENSURE PERIOD?

All licenses expire on October 1st of every even year. Licensees must complete the required amount of continuing education hours prior to the renewal of their license, unless he or she is exempt from such requirements or is entitled to pro-rate such requirements:

LICSW: 30 hours • LCSW: 20 hours • LSW: 15 hours • LSWA: 10 hours

Exemption for Licensed State, County, or Municipal Social Workers

A social worker who holds a license to practice social work issued by the Licensing Board, but who provides social work services exclusively in his or her capacity as an employee of a unit of state, county or municipal government located within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, is exempt from the CE requirements for their level of licensure. If you are selected for the Continuing Education Audit and are exempt from the requirements you will be provided an affidavit to sign attesting to said exemption. Please remember that in order to be considered exempt you must have worked solely for one of the aforementioned entities for the entire licensure cycle for which you are renewing.

Pro-ration of Continuing Education Requirements

CE requirements are pro-rated based on the issuance date of your license. If one is licensed for part of the two-year period, requirements are pro-rated by quarters (6 month periods). A social worker who first receives his or her license during the:

- first quarter (between Oct. 1 of an even year and March 31 of the following odd year) must complete 75% of the continuing education hours normally required for his or her level of licensure;
LICSW=22.5 • LCSW=15 • LSW=7.5 • LSWA=4
- second quarter (between April 1 and Sept. 30 of an odd year) must complete 50% of the continuing education hours normally required for his or her level of licensure;
LICSW=15 • LCSW=10 • LSW=5 • LSWA=2.5
- third quarter (between Oct. 1 of an odd year and March 31 of the following even year) must complete 25% of the continuing education hours normally required for his or her level of licensure;
LICSW=7.5 • LCSW=5 • LSW=2.5 • LSWA=1.5

- last quarter (on or after April 1 of an even calendar year in which that licensure period ends) is not required to complete any continuing education hours for that licensure period.
LICSW=0 • LCSW=0 • LSW=0 • LSWA=0

*All social work licenses renew on October 1 of every even year.

WHO DO MY CEs NEED TO BE APPROVED BY?

Only CE programs offered by or accredited by a Recognized Entity--an educational institution, professional organization or other entity which has been recognized or authorized by the Licensing Board to sponsor, conduct or approve continuing education programs in social work, are acceptable.

*All licensees must receive a minimum of 75% of their continuing education credit in courses approved for social work continuing education by a recognized entity set forth in 258 CMR, 31.04 (2). The Massachusetts Licensing Board recognizes the following entities:

- National NASW or its State Chapters
- Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)
- Social Work Schools (accredited by CSWE)
- National Association of Black Social Workers
- Other US or Canadian Social Work Licensing Boards

Other organizations or individuals providing CE programs to social workers can apply to obtain CE authorization for their programs through the Collaborative, an entity of NASW and Boston College and Simmons Schools of Social Work, set up to review prospective sponsoring organization programs for CE approval. For any NASW CE program, a participant must attend 100% of the program to receive CE hours.

All CE programs must have a Social Work Authorization number. Program sponsors are required to issue certificates of attendance bearing an authorization number to participants.

**While licensees may receive all of their continuing education from the above noted recognized entities, up to 25% of continuing education credit may be obtained through courses that have been approved for other professions by the following organizations AND contribute to the professional competence of the social work licensee. In order to be accepted for continuing education credit, the program must be an organized learning experience, be at least fifty (50) minutes in length, and contribute to the growth of professional competence in social work practice. Go to <http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/licensee/dpl-boards/sw/regulations/rules-and-regs/258-cmr-3100.html> for "Program Content Requirements", 258 CMR 31.04 (1). The Licensing Board has approved the following organizations:

- American Psychological Association (APA)
- National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC)
- Board of Nursing Home Administrator's (NHA)
- American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC)
- Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME)

Continuing education credit will not be given for programs that do not apply directly to and "contribute to the growth of professional competence in social work practice." Programs focused on marketing skills, management or other business skills, or computer proficiency skills will not be considered acceptable, as those types of courses are intended to enhance business skills, and not social work skills.

Please note that Professional Development Points (PDPs) gained through Professional Development Programs provided by a school system will not be accepted.

All programs must have an Authorization number from one of the above noted entities. Program sponsors are required to issue certificates of attendance bearing an authorization number to participants.

*****Special Approval of Individual Continuing Education Activities**

A licensed social worker may obtain credit toward completion of the continuing education required by 258 CMR 31.03(1) for an activity that provides information or knowledge which contributes directly to the professional competence of a social worker, and has been specially approved by the Board pursuant to 258 CMR 31.04(4). Such activities include, but shall not necessarily be limited to lectures, course or conference presentations, publication of a professional article or book, or research activities which lead to a conference presentation or publication.

To obtain approval, a licensee must submit to the Licensing Board a written request for continuing education credit for that activity, accompanied by satisfactory written proof of his or her completion of that activity, at least sixty (60) days prior to the end of the licensure period for which continuing education credit is being sought. The number of continuing education hours requested can not exceed fifty percent (50%) of the total number of continuing education hours required for renewal of that social worker's license. Contact the Licensing Board for more information at 617-727-3064 or at erin.e.murphy@state.ma.us.

WHERE CAN I ATTEND IN-PERSON CE EVENTS AND CLASSES?

NASW-MA offer [Live CE Events](#) to the public that cover a variety of topics. [Visit the online calendar](#) to see upcoming live CE events!

ARE THERE ALTERNATIVES TO IN-PERSON CE EVENTS AND CLASSES?

Yes! Distance courses are legitimate alternatives to attending live conferences. They must be offered by a recognized social work entity or by one of the approved professional associations. A post-test to evaluate the participant's learning must be administered. Different from face-to-face contact for the delivery of continuing education, distance learning includes home study through studying a book or article, audio or video tape and completing a post-test, as well as interactive course work completed using the internet.

NASW MA offers distance learning alternatives in our FOCUS newsletter. Simply Read the CE program presented in the newsletter, complete the post test and evaluation, and mail it to the Chapter office with your check. Score an 80% or better and NASW MA will mail you a certificate for your CEs. It's that easy!

You can get all of your CEs online if you so choose at [The Social Work Online CE Institute](#). The Social Work Online CE Institute features audio, text, and video webinar courses produced by NASW Chapters.

The Social Work Online Institute offers three types of courses:

- [OnDemand](#): Stream audio/video instantly through your computer.
- [CEtoGO](#): Downloadable courses for learning on the go, compatible with mobile devices.
- [Electronic Document](#): Text courses that can be read online or printed out for later. Includes FOCUS CE courses.

Additionally, the national NASW office offers a [National NASW Lunchtime Webinar Series](#): Short for Web-based seminars, Webinars are presentations, lectures, workshops or seminars transmitted over the Web using video conferencing software.

WHAT RECORDS OF PROGRAM ATTENDANCE MUST I MAINTAIN?

Licensees should keep a record of their Continuing Education (CE) hours including course names, dates, number of hours, and where relevant, authorization number and/or authorizing body. Licensees are required to keep certificates of completion or other written evidence of completion provided by sponsor/program for 4 years. All certificates should include name, license number, date, title, length of program, and who it was approved by. Do not submit materials to the Licensing Board unless requested. Falsification of reports of CE hours may result in disciplinary action.

It is the licensee's responsibility to maintain appropriate documentation demonstrating that all programs submitted meet the Licensing Board's continuing education requirements as

summarized above and/ or as found in the Board's Regulations at 258 CMR 31.00.
<http://www.mass.gov/ocabr/licensee/dpl-boards/sw/#31.05>.

WHAT ABOUT CEs FOR LICENSED SOCIAL WORKERS IN BSW, MSW, DSW or PhD PROGRAMS?

Their courses meet CE requirements if the school is accredited by CSWE. One CE unit is given for every course hour. Transcripts must be available to the Licensing Board if requested.

DO RETIRED SOCIAL WORKERS NEED CEs?

Massachusetts does not offer an inactive or retired status of licensure. If you wish to renew your license you must complete the continuing education requirement for your level of licensure.

WHAT ABOUT LICENSE RENEWAL?

It is your responsibility to renew your license by October 1st of every even year. This is true even if you received your license just months before the renewal date. Renewals are sent approximately 90 days prior to renewal date and you should receive a computerized license renewal application (which includes CE information). Sign it and return it with the renewal fee to the address indicated. It is the licensee's responsibility to ensure that the address on file at the Licensing Board is current and can be changed on their website at <https://secure.reg.state.ma.us/coa/coauth.asp?color=red&Board=SW>.

License Renewal Fees: LICSW: \$82.00 • LCSW: \$68.00 • LSW: \$54.00 • LSWA: \$42.00

IF YOU DON'T RECEIVE A RENEWAL APPLICATION, IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO GET ONE FROM THE LICENSING BOARD. CALL 617-727-3073.