

2026 Social Work Legislation - Kentucky Board of Social Work

Purpose: Align Kentucky statutes with the Social Work Licensure Compact (enacted 2024) to enable multistate licensing by late 2026/early 2027

KEY UPDATES:

1. Compact Implementation

- Integrates multistate license terminology throughout statutes
- Ensures consistency with compact standards
- Enables Kentucky social workers to practice across state lines

2. Definition Consolidation

- Centralizes key terms in KRS 335.020 for chapter-wide consistency
- Updates "practice of social work" to align with current standards
- Adds clarity for clinical social work practice

3. Telehealth

- Codifies existing telehealth practices into statute
- Adds emergency exception for crisis intervention
- Accommodates federal employees and international practice

4. Workforce development

- Creates clear pathway for student interns/trainees
- Board to establish appropriate safety standards for clinical training
- Supports professional pipeline

5. Regulatory Cleanup

- Streamlines application processing timelines
- Updates examination language to "board-approved"
- Removes outdated requirements (e.g., 3-month wait after failed exams)
- Requires FBI background checks for new applicants (compact requirement)

6. Technical Updates

- License display requirements for virtual practice
- Updates cross-references in related statutes
- Aligns temporary permit authority with current practice

No new costs or burdens on licensees or the Board. These changes clarify and modernize existing responsibilities without expanding regulatory scope or creating new fees.

These updates position Kentucky to participate fully in interstate social work practice while maintaining strong public protection. The changes represent necessary modernization rather than policy expansion, ensuring Kentucky's regulatory framework remains effective as the social work profession evolves.

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