

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



The Kentucky Board of Social Work

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KENTUCKY BOARD OF SOCIAL WORK

125 Holmes Street, Suite 310
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Andy Beshear

Governor

Marc Kelly

Executive Director

January 31, 2025

The Honorable Andy Beshear
Governor, Commonwealth of Kentucky
Kentucky State Capitol Building
700 Capitol Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Governor Beshear:

On behalf of the Kentucky Board of Social Work, we are pleased to provide an annual report for 2024. The enclosed report reflects the activities of the board for the past year including an overview of the board's activities, license activity, financial information, disciplinary actions, and recommendations.

The Kentucky Board of Social Work was created by the Legislature in KRS 335.010 in 1975. Its first mandate is to protect the public from being misled by incompetent and unauthorized people and from unprofessional conduct on the part of qualified social workers. Secondly, the purpose of the board is to promote high standards of professional performance for those engaged in the profession of social work by regulating the title, and by setting standards of qualification, training, and experience for those who seek to engage in the practice of social work. The ongoing oversight increases the protection of individuals, families, and communities.

Please contact us if there are any questions. You are always welcome to attend our board meetings and to visit the office or meet with the board and staff to discuss issues or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Hank Cecil, LCSW, in blue ink.

Hank Cecil, LCSW
Board Chair

Handwritten signature of Marc Kelly, LCSW, in blue ink.

Marc Kelly, LCSW
Executive Director

cc. Members of the Kentucky General Assembly
Honorable Scott Brinkman, Secretary of the Executive Cabinet
Legislative Research Commission

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Executive Summary

The Kentucky Board of Social Work (KBSW) safeguards public health, safety, and welfare by regulating the practice of social work, ensuring that licensees meet professional and ethical standards. Established in 1975 under KRS Chapter 335, the board oversees licensure, investigates complaints, and enforces disciplinary actions when necessary.

In 2024, the board issued 1,164 new licenses, bringing the total number of active licenses to 7,808. This growing professional community is vital to addressing Kentucky's social and mental health needs. Despite the increasing number of licensees, the board received only 84 complaints, representing approximately 1% of the total licensees, and substantiated just 37 violations. These figures underscore the high ethical standards and professionalism of Kentucky's social workers.

The board operates as an independent, self-sustaining agency, funded entirely through licensure fees and fines. It receives no taxpayer funding and contributes to public resources by paying office rent and fees to the state. In FY2024, the board demonstrated fiscal responsibility, generating \$523,280.81 in revenue while incurring \$448,574.07 in expenditures.

Key accomplishments in 2024 include:

- Integration of technological advances, such as an improved website, online licensure portal in development, and live-streamed board meetings, to enhance transparency and accessibility.
- Support for Kentucky's participation in the Social Work Compact, fostering interstate practice mobility.
- Amendments to regulations to streamline processes for license renewals, inactive status, and temporary permits.
- Continued efforts to ensure timely licensure application processing, with the majority completed well within statutory deadlines.

The board remains committed to transparency, efficiency, and protecting the public while advancing the social work profession. This report reflects the board's unwavering dedication to these principles, ensuring accountability to both the public and the legislature.

Board Members and Staff

(As of December 31, 2024)

The Kentucky Board of Social Work comprises seven voluntary members, including one public member, appointed by the governor. Supported by dedicated staff and contracted professionals, the board ensures the integrity and efficiency of its operations. The list of current members and staff is detailed in this section, highlighting their roles and contributions.

Hank Cecil, LCSW, Chair

Mayfield, Kentucky

Commission expires 6/21/2026.

Whitney Cassity-Caywood, Ph.D., LCSW, Vice-Chair

Bowling Green, Kentucky

Commission expires 6/21/2025.

Laura Guffey, LSW, Secretary

Edgewood, Kentucky

Commission expires 6/21/2028.

Genesia Kilgore-Bowling, Ph.D., CSW

Pikeville, Kentucky

Commission expires 6/21/2026.

Lori Vogel, LCSW

Lexington, Kentucky

Commission expires 6/21/2025.

Vacant, LCSW

_____, Kentucky

Commission expires 6/21/2026.

Tiffany Peyton, Citizen At Large

Louisville, Kentucky

Commission expires 6/21/2026.

Staff

Marc Kelly, Executive Director

Direct line: 502-782-2856

Marc.Kelly@ky.gov

Vanessa Jones, Executive Assistant

Director line: 502-564-2350

Vanessag.Jones@ky.gov

Affiliations / Memberships

Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)

Board Attorney

Mark Brengelman, Attorney at Law

The Board has two Personal Service Contracts:

Scanlan Investigative Services – Dan Carney, Contract Investigator
Mark Brengelman, Attorney at law, Legal Services

Date of hire: 2022

Duration of Contract: through 06/30/2026

Functional job description: Contract investigators serve the board as assigned to investigate complaints against licensed social workers. Their duties include interviewing the complainant, respondent social worker, pertinent witnesses; reviewing relevant court documents and other records; preparing summary reports for the board's complaint committee; and testifying as needed at administrative hearings.

Functional job description: Contract attorneys serve the board as assigned to provide general legal advice and assistance. Their duties include reviewing complaints against licensed social workers, composing complaint settlement agreements, representing the board in litigation at the administrative, state, and federal court levels; and assisting on employment law related issues, such as ADA; FMLA; and other legal items assigned by the Board.

Overview of Board Activity

In 2024, the Kentucky Board of Social Work (KBSW) convened monthly to fulfill its statutory responsibilities under KRS Chapter 335. These meetings included discussions on licensure, complaints, disciplinary actions, regulatory updates, and advancements to improve the board's efficiency and accessibility.

Key activities included:

1. Public Protection:
 - The board reviewed complaints, ensuring accountability with 37 substantiated violations while maintaining due process and fairness.
 - Continued vigilance in enforcing ethical standards through oversight of licensure and disciplinary actions.
2. Licensure and Application Processing:
 - Processed over 1,200 applications for new licenses, consistently meeting or exceeding statutory deadlines.
 - Streamlined application reviews, with most completed within five to ten days when submissions were complete.
3. Educational Outreach:
 - Conducted educational presentations for social work students and professionals to promote understanding of licensure requirements and ethical practice.
 - Engaged with professional organizations such as the Kentucky Association of Social Work Educators (KASWE), the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Kentucky Chapter and the Kentucky Society of Clinical Social Workers to support social workers and workforce development.
4. Regulatory Updates:
 - Amended regulations to improve license renewal processes, temporary permits, and inactive licensure status for flexibility.
 - Supported the Social Work Compact adoption in Kentucky, enhancing interstate practice mobility and reducing administrative barriers.
5. Technological Advancements:
 - Contracted for a new online portal for license applications and renewals.
 - Improved public access to board information through live-streamed meetings and a user-friendly website optimized for smartphones.
6. Collaboration with National Organizations:
 - Participated in the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Delegate Assembly and its Education Meeting, addressing issues such as supervision standards, practice mobility, artificial intelligence, and telehealth.
7. Compliance with State and Federal Laws:
 - The board adhered to open meetings and records requirements, ensuring transparency in decision-making.
 - Operated independently and fiscally responsibly, contributing rent and service fees to the state.
 - Presented concerns to the legislative AI Task Force
 - Continued implementation of SB 120, ensuring applicants with criminal convictions have access to licensure, promoting fairness and public protection.

By continually refining its processes and embracing innovation, the board maintained its commitment to safeguarding public welfare, ensuring accountability, and supporting the evolving needs of Kentucky's social work community.

Financial Report FY24

The Kentucky Board of Social Work operates as an independent, self-sustaining agency, funded entirely through fees collected for licensure, renewals, applications, and disciplinary fines. It does not receive any taxpayer funding, ensuring that its operations impose no financial burden on the public. In addition to its operational expenses, the board pays office rent and service fees to the state, further contributing to public resources.

In FY2024, total revenue exceeded expenditures by \$74,706.74. This responsible fiscal management allows the board to efficiently meet its regulatory obligations while maintaining financial independence.

Expenditures and Revenue: July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024

Expenditure Description	FY2024
Regular Salaries and Wages	\$136,195.54
Per Diem (Boards and Committees)	\$8,000.00
Employers FICA	\$10,883.24
Emp Ret-Inc Paymt F/Sick Leave	\$90,755.38
Employers Health Insurance	\$19,355.64
Employers Life Insurance	\$24.00
Workers' Compensation	\$320.00
Employee Training-St Emp Only	\$79.42
Legal Services-1099 Rept	\$39,778.77
Other Professional Services-1099 Rept	\$35,880.46
Security Guard Serv-1099 Rept	\$10,983.00
Temporary Manpower Services	\$2,786.42
Rental Of State Own Bld&Lnd-St Ag	\$24,989.24
Insurance Premium – Not employee	\$9,223.08
Postage And Postage Meters	\$2,788.30
Internal Enterprise IT Charges	\$1,900.00
Office Supplies	\$4,798.74
Storage Fees at Record Center	\$129.00
In-State Travel	\$20,001.65
Dues/Subscriptions	\$250.00
Other COT Charges	\$22,835.59
IT Business Applications Software	\$2,400.00
Telephone Charges - Other	\$2,700.00
Other IT Software	\$415.00
Personal Computer Hardware < \$5,000	\$1,048.00
Networking Hardware < \$5,000	\$44.74
Business Applications Software Maintenance	\$8.86
Total Expenditures	\$448,574.07

Revenues

Fiscal Year	Revenue Source	Revenue Source Description	Amount
2024	R361	General Permits	-\$25.00
2024	R381	License Application Fee	\$40,975.60
2024	R383	Initial License Fee	\$159,368.26
2024	R384	Renewal License Fee	\$260,357.24
2024	R385	Reinstatement License Fee	\$21,725.00
2024	R386	Other Fees Related to Licenses	\$40,854.71
		Total Revenues	\$523,255.81

Social Work Licensure

KBSW oversees licensure across three categories: Licensed Social Worker (LSW), Certified Social Worker (CSW), and Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW). Licensure requirements include education, experience, and examination. Fees are structured by category, with mandatory continuing education for renewal. Kentucky also participates in the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) to ensure national standards are upheld.

Kentucky has three categories of licensure:

- KRS 335.090** Licensed Social Worker
Bachelor's in social work or equivalent*
- KRS 335.080**
Certified Social Worker
Master's or Doctorate in Social Work
- KRS 335.100**
Licensed Clinical Social Worker
Master's or Doctorate in Social Work

Licensure Fees

- Paid at initial licensure
- Renewed every three years
- Continuing education required

LSW: \$75 fee / 15 hours CE

CSW: \$125 fee / 30 hours CE

Title	Initial	Education	Post-Grad Experience	Supervision	ASWB Exam
Licensed Social Worker	LSW	BSW*	None	None	Bachelors
Certified Social Worker	CSW	MSW, PhD, DSW	None	None	Masters
Licensed Clinical Social Worker	LCSW	MSW, PhD, DSW	2 years full time and clinical practice under supervision	2-year experience post degree and 150 hours of supervision	Clinical

*Individuals with equivalent degrees as specified by regulation may obtain approval to sit for the Bachelor exam and by complying with all other licensure requirements.

License Statistics

In 2024, KBSW issued 1,227 new licenses, including temporary permits. The license categories include LSWs, CSWs, and LCSWs. Efficient processing enabled timely issuance, reflecting the board's commitment to professionalism and public service.

A. Total New Licenses Issued

Category of License	2024
Temporary Permits Non-Clinical Social Work	5
Temporary Permits Clinical Social Work	125
LSW	43
CSW	550
LCSW	514
Total new licenses issued:	1,227

B. Total Active Licenses by Category (includes new licenses issued) *

Category of License	As of 12/31/2024
LSW	481
CSW	2982
LCSW	4383
Total active licenses:	7,846

*Licenses are renewed every 3 years.

Disciplinary Report

In 2024, the Kentucky Board of Social Work received eighty-eight complaints, representing only 1% of the 7,846 licensed social workers. Of these complaints, forty-one were substantiated, leading to disciplinary actions such as written admonishments, continuing education requirements, fines, enhanced supervision, and suspensions. No licenses were revoked.

This low complaint-to-licensee ratio reflects the overall professionalism and ethical adherence of Kentucky's social workers. The board's investigation and resolution processes ensure public trust and uphold the integrity of the profession.

Practice Violation Category	*No. of Substantiated Complaints (2024)
Dual Relationship	20
-- Dual Relationship of Sexual Nature	5
Failure to Adhere to Supervision Guidelines	8
Impairment	5
Breach of Confidentiality	15
Fraudulent Billing	3
Insufficient Records/Falsified Documentation	3
Inappropriate Termination/client abandonment	3
Practicing outside Scope	5
Failure to respond to initiating complaint	1
Harm to clients	9
Act of Poor Judgement	2
Fraud/misrepresentation	12
Other Ethics Violation	31

*Complaints may involve more than violation

2024	Number
New complaints received	88
Complaints dismissed – insufficient evidence or no violation of the governing laws or regulations	47
Pending final action	39
Referred to administrative hearing officer	1
Resolved by assurance of voluntary compliance	1

Exemptions in the law limit the board's ability to act on certain complaints, even when they involve significant concerns. In 2024, the board received a total of 145 complaints, but 39% of these were "unactionable" due to legal exemptions. This gap reveals a critical issue: the board was unable to

address 57 of the public's concerns due to statutory limitations. These complaints often highlight systemic issues, but the board lacks authority to intervene.

Examples of Unactionable Complaints

- A social worker operating in an exempt agency engaged in unethical behavior.
- Allegations of improper conduct by individuals claiming the title "social worker" without education as a social worker and working in an exempt agency.

Recommendations

To address workforce challenges and evolving professional demands, the board recommends:

1. Continued engagement with the Social Work Compact to facilitate mobility.
2. Updates to the Code of Ethical Conduct to reflect advances in technology and telehealth.
3. Legislative amendments to update governing laws.
4. Introduction of provisional licenses for social work students to expand the workforce pipeline.
5. Increase LSW applications.