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**SENATE BILL 5354**

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**State of Washington**

**68th Legislature**

**2023 Regular Session**

**By** Senators Trudeau, Warnick, Dhingra, Hasegawa, Randall, Robinson, Saldaña, Torres, Wellman, and C. Wilson

Read first time 01/13/23. Referred to Committee on Health & Long Term Care.

1 AN ACT Relating to aligning social worker licensing requirements  
2 with national standards and requirements for other mental health  
3 professionals; amending RCW 18.225.090; and creating a new section.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the standards  
6 for licensing social workers have changed since social workers were  
7 first licensed in the state of Washington in 2001. Therefore, the  
8 legislature intends to align licensing standards more closely to  
9 those articulated by the national association of social workers, the  
10 association of social work boards, and the forthcoming interstate  
11 compact on social work licensing.

12 **Sec. 2.** RCW 18.225.090 and 2021 c 21 s 1 are each amended to  
13 read as follows:

14 (1) The secretary shall issue a license to any applicant who  
15 demonstrates to the satisfaction of the secretary that the applicant  
16 meets the following education and experience requirements for the  
17 applicant's practice area.

18 (a) Licensed social work classifications:

19 (i) Licensed advanced social worker:

1 (A) Graduation from a master's (~~or doctorate~~) social work  
2 educational program accredited by the council on social work  
3 education or a social work doctorate program at a university  
4 accredited by a recognized accrediting organization, and approved by  
5 the secretary based upon nationally recognized standards;

6 (B) Successful completion of an approved examination;

7 (C) Successful completion of a supervised experience requirement.

8 The supervised experience requirement consists of a minimum of  
9 (~~three thousand two hundred~~) 3,000 hours with supervision by an  
10 approved supervisor who has been licensed for at least two years. Of  
11 those supervised hours:

12 (I) At least (~~ninety~~) 90 hours must include direct supervision  
13 as specified in this subsection by a licensed independent clinical  
14 social worker, a licensed advanced social worker, or an equally  
15 qualified licensed mental health professional. Of those hours of  
16 directly supervised experience (÷

17 ~~(1) At least fifty hours must include supervision by a licensed~~  
18 ~~advanced social worker or licensed independent clinical social~~  
19 ~~worker; the other forty hours may be supervised by an equally~~  
20 ~~qualified licensed mental health practitioner; and~~

21 ~~(2) At~~) at least (~~forty~~) 40 hours must be in one-to-one  
22 supervision and (~~fifty~~) 50 hours may be in one-to-one supervision  
23 or group supervision; and

24 (II) Eight hundred hours must be in direct client contact; and

25 (D) Successful completion of continuing education requirements of  
26 (~~thirty-six~~) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

27 (ii) Licensed independent clinical social worker:

28 (A) Graduation from a master's (~~or doctorate~~) level social work  
29 educational program accredited by the council on social work  
30 education or a social work doctorate program at a university  
31 accredited by a recognized accrediting organization, and approved by  
32 the secretary based upon nationally recognized standards;

33 (B) Successful completion of an approved examination;

34 (C) Successful completion of a supervised experience requirement.

35 The supervised experience requirement consists of a minimum of (~~four~~  
36 ~~thousand~~) 3,000 hours of experience, over a period of not less than  
37 (~~three~~) two years, with supervision by an approved supervisor who  
38 has been licensed for at least two years and, as specified in this  
39 subsection, may be either a licensed independent clinical social  
40 worker who has had at least one year of experience in supervising the

1 clinical social work of others or an equally qualified licensed  
2 mental health practitioner. Of those supervised hours:

3 (I) At least (~~one thousand~~) 1,000 hours must be direct client  
4 contact; and

5 (II) Hours of direct supervision must include:

6 (1) At least (~~one hundred thirty~~) 100 hours by a licensed  
7 mental health practitioner;

8 (2) At least (~~seventy~~) 70 hours of supervision with a licensed  
9 independent clinical social worker meeting the qualifications under  
10 this subsection (1)(a)(ii)(C); the (~~other sixty~~) remaining hours  
11 may be supervised by an equally qualified licensed mental health  
12 practitioner; and

13 (3) At least (~~sixty~~) 60 hours must be in one-to-one supervision  
14 and (~~seventy~~) the remaining hours may be in one-to-one supervision  
15 or group supervision; and

16 (D) Successful completion of continuing education requirements of  
17 (~~thirty-six~~) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

18 (b) Licensed mental health counselor:

19 (i) Graduation from a master's or doctoral level educational  
20 program in mental health counseling or a related discipline from a  
21 college or university approved by the secretary based upon nationally  
22 recognized standards;

23 (ii) Successful completion of an approved examination;

24 (iii) Successful completion of a supervised experience  
25 requirement. The experience requirement consists of a minimum of  
26 (~~thirty-six~~) 36 months full-time counseling or (~~three thousand~~)  
27 3,000 hours of postgraduate mental health counseling under the  
28 supervision of a qualified licensed mental health counselor or  
29 equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner, in an approved  
30 setting. The (~~three thousand~~) 3,000 hours of required experience  
31 includes a minimum of (~~one hundred~~) 100 hours spent in immediate  
32 supervision with the qualified licensed mental health counselor, and  
33 includes a minimum of (~~one thousand two hundred~~) 1,200 hours of  
34 direct counseling with individuals, couples, families, or groups; and

35 (iv) Successful completion of continuing education requirements  
36 of (~~thirty-six~~) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

37 (c) Licensed marriage and family therapist:

38 (i) Graduation from a master's degree or doctoral degree  
39 educational program in marriage and family therapy or graduation from  
40 an educational program in an allied field equivalent to a master's

1 degree or doctoral degree in marriage and family therapy approved by  
2 the secretary based upon nationally recognized standards;

3 (ii) Successful passage of an approved examination;

4 (iii) Successful completion of a supervised experience  
5 requirement. The experience requirement consists of a minimum of two  
6 calendar years of full-time marriage and family therapy. Of the total  
7 supervision, (~~one hundred~~) 100 hours must be with a licensed  
8 marriage and family therapist with at least five years' clinical  
9 experience; the other (~~one hundred~~) 100 hours may be with an  
10 equally qualified licensed mental health practitioner. Total  
11 experience requirements include:

12 (A) A minimum of (~~three thousand~~) 3,000 hours of experience,  
13 (~~one thousand~~) 1,000 hours of which must be direct client contact;  
14 at least (~~five hundred~~) 500 hours must be gained in diagnosing and  
15 treating couples and families; plus

16 (B) At least (~~two hundred~~) 200 hours of qualified supervision  
17 with a supervisor. At least (~~one hundred~~) 100 of the (~~two~~  
18 ~~hundred~~) 200 hours must be one-on-one supervision, and the remaining  
19 hours may be in one-on-one or group supervision.

20 Applicants who have completed a master's program accredited by  
21 the commission on accreditation for marriage and family therapy  
22 education of the American association for marriage and family therapy  
23 may be credited with (~~five hundred~~) 500 hours of direct client  
24 contact and (~~one hundred~~) 100 hours of formal meetings with an  
25 approved supervisor; and

26 (iv) Successful completion of continuing education requirements  
27 of (~~thirty-six~~) 36 hours, with six in professional ethics.

28 (2) The department shall establish by rule what constitutes  
29 adequate proof of meeting the criteria. Only rules in effect on the  
30 date of submission of a completed application of an associate for her  
31 or his license shall apply. If the rules change after a completed  
32 application is submitted but before a license is issued, the new  
33 rules shall not be reason to deny the application.

34 (3) In addition, applicants shall be subject to the grounds for  
35 denial of a license or issuance of a conditional license under  
36 chapter 18.130 RCW.

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