

Responses to Survey - Board of Social Work Examiners/Professional Counselors Total responses: 140 (of which 2 out-of-state) Sampling done of lengthier responses.

<p>Highest Compliment</p>	<p><i>Ability to monitor on behalf of licensees</i> - 57 <i>Ability to keep profession from criticism because of bad actors</i> - 32 <i>Other:</i> - Ability to keep professionals abreast of changes in practice. --Handle the annual permit process efficiently. -- Staff is most accommodating. -- On the whole, believe the board has served the public and profession very well. -- Does a good job of monitoring the profession -- Professional and approachable</p> <p><i>Ability to streamline Continuing Ed</i> - 34 <i>None</i> - 30</p>
<p>Biggest Complaint</p>	<p><i>Licensing fees too high</i> - 32 <i>Licensing renewal timelines too strict</i> - 3 <i>Other:</i>-- Disorganization, confusing and changing rules, slow response time -- Difficult to get responses to questions at times -- Difficulty in renewing on line -- This board seems to be accountable to no one. The year I received the "comment," I was put through a ridiculous series of extremely time-consuming tasks and some absurd investigation and subjected to an extremely frustrating process during which I had no apparent rights. The problem was that there was no response from the board to my inquiries which would have resolved the problem in the first place. I was accused of being "unethical" by even stating my case and complaint. It was not a positive experience. Further, the "comment" on my file is not visible to anyone as a "minor" or "serious" infraction. It appears the same as someone who sexually assaulted a client! Their rules appear arbitrary and they don't need anyone's permission to be imposed. We are represented by the board, but have no say in who is appointed. It is a very irritating system. I have no objections to a licensing board, in general. However, there should be a fair process for appointments and accountability to provide a valid service. -- Lack of oversight of board, very unclear expectations and complete lack of professionalism, impossible to contact with questions. -- The licensing procedure is very tedious. -- INCREDIBLY SLOW to respond to emails/phone calls regarding licensing/continuing ed questions. Responses can often be vague, even when given in writing. It's almost as if they are trying to devalue/discourage providers from ethical practice by means of omitting/misleading information. They are downright rude when questioned about it. -- Time taken in the review process for eligible counselors prior to sitting for their test. -- Application process seems unwieldy at times. -- I've heard licensees aren't always given due process when accused of an offense. -- Do not take an active enough role to increase or ensure professionalism in field in the state.</p> <p><i>Lack of Information</i> - 12 <i>Board's response to unlicensed practice</i> - 8 <i>Regulations too strict</i> - 8 <i>None</i> - 57</p>
<p>Other reasons the board is important: - I would like to see interstate coordination of licensing and I hope the board can play a role in that.-- Standards of practice are necessary to provide services to people of the highest quality and for the protection of their welfare and rights. -- To ensure that only those with the proper credentials and training provide services. -- Consistency of standards. Interstate portability of licensure. -- We need a licensing board in order to protect the public and keep our profession held to the highest standards. -- It's important to have a licensing board, however, this particular mix on the current board is horrible, or at least the administration of it is horrible. I have waited weeks upon weeks for email responses, a month for a return phone call (even after placing multiple phone calls). They have lost licensing documentation of my staff, only to find it weeks later after we were in the process of re-submitting. This is extremely frustrating for young professionals entering the field, and moreso for me as their supervisor. When I have requested a response in writing, they respond with information that is misleading, and only after I ask about 10 subsequent questions (with lag time on email/phone calls, do I get the correct information). Honestly, it is maddening. They have also implemented new tracking sheets for documentation that border on HIPAA violations, asking far too much detail, and when they implemented this and are forcing new licensees to use them, they never posted them to their website. How exactly is one supposed to know that there's a new tracking form when it isn't posted? Rules and forms changes are not posted in a timely manner. When these issues are brought to them to address, it's almost as if a virtual shrug is given and a smug "oh, well." I'm so displeased with the current board and think there needs to be some sweeping changes in how it's run, at least administratively. I have had staff wait upwards of 5 months to get approved to test for licensure, only by the board's sheer disorganization. (continued next page)</p>	

Other reasons board important (continued): -- Licensure is the highest standard to which a professional is held. This is a demonstration of credentials met by the licensee. The purpose is to protect the public. In the field of counseling, this is very serious. A lot of harm can be done through ethics violations. The licensing board is the entity to which ethical violations are reported and heard. In addition, the board makes sure counselors stay current on continuing education. Licensing requires education, training, experience and judgment. It's a way of demonstrating professional competence and achievement. There's a lot of responsibility in being licensed and licensure should not be easily obtained nor standards lowered. -- Ability to protect the public from charlatans/abusive or unprofessional counselors. -- It was most helpful while becoming licensed. Other than that, no contact other than continuing education. I look up licensees at times on the website. -- Assures ethical standards are met by all licensed and licensed-eligible counselors Assures all educational standards are met in order for the counselor to be licensed Oversees the testing process and ensures counselor competencies are met. A board member commented: "The complaints that come before us are revolting, at times. We have had cases of sexual abuse and other examples of psychotherapists practicing in a very unprofessional manner. Due to the intimate nature of the relationship that develops through the process of psychotherapy, the profession needs oversight more than any other I can think of. The potential for abuse is so high. -- It creates statewide standards and also a systems for consumers to be protected. -- Ensuring that mental health professionals are providing services for vulnerable populations in an ethical manner. -- Monitor practitioners who may be unethical and give those of us who are ethical an avenue for support as well. -- The Board sets standard for our profession, ensures that we are receiving supervision in the first few years of practice, requires ongoing education and holds us accountable to the standards of our profession. It allows the public to know who is licensed and in good standing. -- Hopefully the licensing board will support licensees when our right to practice is threatened (as by the Board of Psychologists in the last few years) by working with the licensees on legislation, etc. -- Provides resources for professional issues and concerns about current and updated laws, and ethics -- To regulate and ensure continued education. The renewal process needs to be revamped; it is very difficult to renew in a timely manner. Colorado's DORA is much easier.

Public Health - 2	Public Welfare - 21	Public Safety - 25	None of these- 10	All or combination - 78
Scope of Practice:	Too Narrow - 18	Too Broad - 9		Just Right - 105

Problems with own or other professions' scope of practice - None with own profession = 128 Yes. 9 Board of Psychologists - 8 Own Board = 1.
 -- **Comment regarding just right scope:** -- I get nervous when social workers or counselors argue that they can perform any task as long as they have had the training to assure competence. The scope of practice should be clearly outlined and adhered to. -- We have the training to do what we do, significant hours of supervised practice and the opportunities to add certifications if we wish to broaden our skills.
 -- **Comments regarding too narrow a scope:** -- Regulations prevent therapists from using psychological testing if qualified to do so. -- LCPC's continue to struggle for equal billing abilities to LCSW's who have less education related to clinical work. - Use of the word "assessment" in advertising has been denied professional counselors. I believe properly trained LCPCs should be allowed to advertise their expertise in assessment. - I believe we are seeing changes as we are being required to apply for other type of license now that we were told we could practice in prior to this. An example would be marriage and family counseling. Initially, while working through the 3000 required hours we were allowed to practice marriage and family counseling upon completion- changed. I believe the board is beginning to restrict our field. - Licenses should be available and required for anyone working in social work. There should be licensure for bachelor's level social workers. - As issues not seen before in this state and relating to social work in 21st century Montana continue to become primary, social workers need a larger scope of practice to provide appropriate, up-to-date, and effective therapies/case management, and milieus to reach successful conclusions. We, as an entity charged with providing good healthcare to the citizens of Montana, need to remove the stigma of "We've always done it this way" and look to what is working for others and assess if implementation here has validity. - I believe that a person who holds a Masters of Social Work and is Licensed as a Clinical Social Worker should be able to sit for examination for Licensure as an addictions counselor if the supervision requirements are met.
 -- **Comments regarding too wide a scope:** -- Witch hunt mentality of board members. - We are not qualified to do psychological assessments, however, we are allowed to do them without the requisite training necessary to always provide ethical services to potentially vulnerable populations. - I feel it is too wide for LCPC's because many do not have a degree in social work or human services and therefore do not necessarily have the experience and skills to be practicing mental health. - I don't think that people other than licensed counselors should provide supervision. Social workers do not allow LCPC's to do supervision. Why are we allowing social workers to supervise??

What laws/regulations have caused the most problems? None = 24

From a person licensed as a psychologist in Washington state who is licensed as a licensed clinical professional counselor in Montana. She notes a problem with a requirement, in order to complete 1 year of a post-doc, that two licensed mental health therapists be on staff if her supervisor, who must be a psychologist licensed in the State of Montana, is not on site because of a lack of licensed mental health therapists. She also is concerned about a requirement that she submit reports that include a projective test. This requirement assumes that all psychologists have been trained in projectives and accept a psychodynamic theoretical orientation. --The lack of support from the legislature to recognize social workers as a specific profession. People with no social work education can call themselves social workers. What other profession that is licensed and regulated allows that? - Changes to application for licensure process and increased retroactive enforcement of fees. - In trying to renew my license, I would rather mail it but I never received a bill and forgot. -- Failure to allow LCPC's the same rights to apply for federal jobs and failure to consider LCPC's eligible for reimbursement by all the same entities as LCSW's who have less clinical training.-- Lack of reciprocity between one state and another. - Comment comparing Licensed Professional Counselors and Licensed Social Workers: For LCSW licensure, there must be 3,000 hours of supervised post- graduate hours logged. That took time. I could easily have applied for licensure as an LCPS over 18 months ago, but I wanted the LCSW license, so I persevered and made the qualified hours. - The year the board decided to impose late fees for late licensure renewal after years of not even issuing a warning for late renewals. This rule was reasonable, but it was imposed without warning after years of not only failing to address late renewals but actually representing it as "not a big deal." This year, they doubled the renewal fee without any explanation as to why or what the additional funding was needed for. We receive no real services from this board, and now they need twice as much money to provide the same lack of support to us? -- Current dispute regarding right of master's level therapists to administer psychological testing after appropriate training. -- New regulations on continuing education for EVERY program submitted. This is very hard for small providers who work to get good guest professionals to provide free CEU training to our staff because we can't pay our staff huge wages...and this is another cost for us in order to keep people in our rural setting. We use free CEU credit as a kind of employee benefit and we are approved for loan repayment, so just recruiting people to work for us is hard enough. Now we have yet another cost to have to assume, when Medicaid rates are not going up and we have no where to try to recoup this through fee for services. -- Discontinuing the oral panels a licensed eligible counselor had to pass for licensure and the increased fees for less participation by the board or fewer requirements. -- Refining and making more restrictive the definition of "supervisor", such that new graduates cannot seek out supervision from their friends who just became licensed themselves. Also, adoption of the licensed marriage and family therapist law, assigning them to our board, with no representation on our board. The statute allowed for a lower level of training to be licensed and we had to write all the rules for the MFTs. -- Social workers who have supervised master's level students ought to be grandfathered in instead of having to stop until they get continuing ed classes since no supervisory classes were offered when I obtained my Master's. -- Auditing -- The requirement that substance (drug/alcohol) clinical treatments are designated to LAC even though MSW's are required [to have] specific post-graduate education to address drug/alcohol education. But, as it may, the State accepts their responsibilities insuring the LAC treatment providers are adequately providing best practices to persons in need of drug/alcohol treatment. - - Renewing my license, which should be done every two years, like Colorado. The fee increase is higher but Colorado's are even higher & they get the money for two years instead of one. They have recently adopted the continued educations requirement, like Montana's BSWLPC has done for years. - Turf wars between professions can be a challenge. Unsure how to answer this. However, when serving on the board, I was aware of a jurisdiction (think it was a province in Canada) that all mental health professions came through a singular license, with delineated competencies with some tiering. For example all entering must demonstrate by degree and training a minimum for doing therapy--individual--family--group, diagnose; grief work, trauma,--by definition a minimum therapeutic work was understood. Specific testing, specific evaluations/assessments (i.e. divorce-related custody was another specialty. addictions specialty, etc. There is a field outside of regulation (coaching--business, life, wellness) that is evolving that may need some oversight. - The [screening] panel did not listen, was judgmental, not supportive, and not strength based. I left there feeling hopeless & was treated like a criminal.

<p>Consumer complaint filed?</p>	<p>No = 125 Yes = 6 Board was effective = Yes= 1 (In Ohio) Board was not effective: 5. (see below) 1) I was charged a late fee and received a "comment" on my file, because my license was renewed late. However, I actually sent my license fee in before the deadline. I had discovered the license was not renewed when looking for a different licensed provider online. I made three inquiries to the admin office, beginning in January, asking if there was a problem with my renewal application. CB did respond to one of my voice mail messages with a simple message stating she was returning my call. She never mentioned the fact that they hadn't received my application and check. It wasn't until March, when I finally was able to get her to call me back that I learned they never received it. I complained, but all I received from the board was the official comment, a long investigation, accusations and a great deal of frustration. The stipulation they expected me to sign was condescending and inaccurate. I had no way to represent myself and no one but the board even considered my complaint. There was no recourse for me to take. If there was, I was not informed of it. 2) A hearing was conducted. The licensee was initially found in violation of ethics laws, but for unspecified reasons, the case was later dismissed with prejudice. The board should have let the complaints know why the case had been dismissed. Matter dropped. 3) Reported unethical behavior by a psychologist and was told their was nothing they could do. 4) The board should have disciplined the licensee by suspending her license until she completed at least 12 hours of continuing education specific to the areas of: ethical boundaries with regard to minors, understanding the dynamics of child sexual abuse, understanding the dynamics of intimate partner violence. 5) It took five years for action to be taken. That is way too long!</p>
<p>Nonlicensee comments</p>	<p>Saying Board of Social Work Examiners and Professional Counselors:: Necessary for Public Health - 196, Public Safety - 130, Public Welfare - 146 Some respondents marked all or a combination.</p>