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The original instrument and the following digest, which constitutes no part of the legislative instrument, were prepared by Brandi Cannon.

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DIGEST

SB 155 Original

2021 Regular Session

Bouie

Present law provides for the Louisiana Social Work Practice Act.

Present law provides for definitions. Proposed law adds a definition for "social worker" as one who has successfully completed an undergraduate or graduate level academic program in social work.

Present law provides that five years of experience is necessary for any RSW, LMSW, or LCSW to serve on the Louisiana State Board of Social Work Examiners (board). Proposed law reduces the experience necessary to serve on the board to three years.

Present law provides that an individual beginning practice as a social worker shall submit an application for credentials within 90 days of commencing practice. Proposed law provides that all components of application for licensure, certification, or registration shall be completed within 90 days of commencing practice.

Present law provides that the board, at each meeting, shall update the listing of licensed, certified, and registered social workers and make that list available to the public. Proposed law eliminates that requirement.

Present law provides that an applicant for LCSW must have completed 5,760 postgraduate hours of social work practice, including 3,840 hours practicing social work under the supervision of a board-approved clinical supervisor. Proposed law reduces the required experience to 3,000 hours over a minimum of two years and a maximum of four years and provides that the board may extend this timeframe if circumstances warrant.

Present law extends reciprocity regarding applications for licensure as an LMSW or LCSW to those from any state, territory, commonwealth, or the District of Columbia which has substantially equal licensure requirements, requires an examination for licensure, and grants reciprocity to those with La. credentials. Proposed law removes the requirement that the home state of the applicant grant reciprocity to La. applicants.

Proposed law provides that the board may license an applicant if the applicant passes the board exam on the La. Social Work Practice Act and the rules, standards, and procedures of the board.

Present law provides that the board shall mail an application for renewal of a license, certificate, or registration to each person to whom a license, certificate, or registration was issued or renewed during the current year. Proposed law requires the board to provide notice for renewal of a license, certificate, or registration.

Present law provides that the renewal of a license, certificate, or registration which has lapsed for a period in excess of three months but less than six months may be effected upon submission to the board of a renewal application accompanied by a fee which shall be twice the amount of the normal renewal fee specified by the board. Proposed law extends applicability of present law to a license, certificate, or registration which has lapsed for six months or less.

Proposed law provides that for the renewal of any license, certificate, or registration which has lapsed for at least six months but not more than 60 months, the applicant shall submit proof of completion of 20 hours of approved social work continuing education and pass the board exam on the La. Social Work Practice Act and rules, standards, and procedures prior to reinstatement. Continuing education requirements for LCSW applicants shall include at least 10 hours of clinical content and three hours of ethics training. Continuing education requirements for LMSW and RSW applicants shall include at least three hours of ethics training.

Proposed law provides that for the renewal of any license, certificate, or registration which has lapsed for more than 60 months, the applicant shall submit proof of completion of 40 hours of approved social work continuing education and pass the board exam on the La. Social Work Practice Act and the rules, standards, and procedures prior to reinstatement. Continuing education requirements for LCSW applicants shall include at least 20 hours of clinical content and three hours of ethics training. Continuing education requirements for LMSW and RSW applicants shall include at least three hours of ethics training.

Proposed law provides that no individual shall assume the title "social worker" until that person has successfully completed an undergraduate academic social work program or a graduate level academic social work program.

Present law provides that the board may deny, revoke, or suspend any license, certificate, or registration issued by the board or applied for, or otherwise discipline a social worker for certain enumerated causes including the use of drugs or intoxicating beverages to an extent which affect a social worker's professional competence. Proposed law provides that the board may discipline a social worker for incapacity or impairment due to the use of drugs or intoxicating beverages that prevents the social worker from engaging in the practice of social work with reasonable skill, competence, and safety to the public and proposed law further adds the cause of practicing social work with a lapsed license, certificate, or registration.

Present law provides that the state of Louisiana shall be a party to the prosecution of all disciplinary actions and hearings before the board pertaining to the suspension or revocation of a license, certificate, or registration and the attorney general shall appear on behalf of the state. Proposed law allows other approved legal counsel to appear on behalf of the state.

Proposed law provides that the board may issue a cease and desist order to stop an individual from engaging in an unauthorized practice or violating or threatening to violate a statute, rule, or order which the board has issued or is empowered to enforce. Proposed law further provides the cease and desist order shall state the reason for its issuance and notice of the individual's right to request a hearing.

Proposed law provides that any individual whose license, certificate, or registration has been revoked or suspended shall return the license, certificate, or notice of registration to the office of the board within 10 days after a notice of revocation or suspension.

Present law provides that no license, certificate, or registration shall be denied to any applicant based upon the applicant's race, religion, creed, national origin, sex, or physical impairment so long as the physical impairment does not interfere with the performance of professional duties. Proposed law adds age, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, or differing abilities, and removes physical impairment.

Present law provides that an individual may hold a social worker certificate for no more than three years from the issuance of the original certificate and requires the individual to take an examination approved by the board within the first six months after certification and annually for the next two and a half years or until they have achieved a passing score. Proposed law removes the requirement for the individual to take the examination.

Effective January 1, 2022.

(Amends R.S. 37:2704(A)(1), (2), and (3), 2705(A) and (D), 2706(B), 2708(A)(3), 2709(B), 2712(1), 2713, 2714(B)-(E), 2716(B), 2717(A)(2) and (D), 2719, and 2724(B); adds R.S. 37:2703(19), 2712(3), 2714(F) and (G), 2715(F), and 2717(A)(13), (G), and (H))