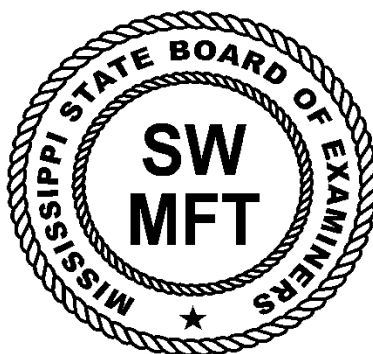


**MISSISSIPPI
BOARD OF EXAMINERS
FOR SOCIAL WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY
THERAPISTS**



**FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR FISCAL YEARS 2023 – 2027**

Mississippi Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists

1. Comprehensive Mission Statement

The mission of the Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists is to ensure that the public is protected from the unprofessional, improper, unauthorized, and unqualified practice of social work and marriage and family therapy by implementing and administering licensure requirements prescribed by law.

2. Philosophy

The philosophy of the Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists is to adhere to the professional standards of exemplary quality of services, innovation, integrity, accountability, respect of our citizens, and teamwork among our staff and board members in protecting the lives of the public we serve.

The Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists is committed to the continual protection of the people of Mississippi by promoting high standards of professional performance for those engaged in the profession of social work and the profession of marriage and family therapy through regulation and by setting standards of qualification, education, training, and experience for those who engage, or seek to engage, in the practice of social work and marriage and family therapy.

3. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks

Statewide Goal #1: To ensure that licensees have access to adequate resources for examination preparation.

Relevant Benchmarks:

- 1) Percentage of exam pass rates for applicants in a licensed field of study
- 2) Number of licensees who receive licensure to enter the workforce in the applied discipline

Statewide Goal #2: To protect the public's safety, including providing timely and appropriate responses to filed complaints, and the completion of resolving those cases.

Relevant Benchmarks:

- 1) Case clearance rates (the number of outgoing cases as a percentage of the number of incoming cases)
- 2) Time to case disposition (percentage of cases disposed within the time standard set for each case type)
- 3) Age of pending case load (number of days from case filing to date of measurement of the pending caseload)
- 4) Average cost of processing a single case, by case type

- 5) Regulatory efficiency: average length of time to resolution of documented complaints to professional licensing agencies

Statewide Goal #3: To create an efficient and convenient system for processing applications, renewals, and other forms/documents through the use of new technology.

Relevant Benchmarks

- 1) Number and average cost of regulatory actions taken, by regulatory body and type of action
- 2) State dollars saved by providing government services online (e.g. document retrieval, issue of new business permits, license renewal)

4. Overview of the Agency 5-Year Plan

The Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists (Board) has targeted two (2) areas as a priority for the next five years. The Board plans to implement a system to process applications expediently, and to expand regulatory efforts in order to safeguard public individuals.

The first priority is to provide applicants and licensees with a more expedient and cost-effective process for obtaining and maintaining licensure required to practice in the State of Mississippi. Improving board staff efficiencies with access to relevant and up-to-date technology will be beneficial to both licensees and the public. The impact of the online renewal application continues to be a convenience to licensees by reducing the need for costly certified mail or express mail delivery and reduce the staffing time needed to process a paper renewal. With the implementation of the new online renewal in FY 2022, the Board sees opportunity for an increase in other online functionality for FY 2023 and FY 2024 such as an accessible online database that allows licensees to log-in and make changes to selected information such as updating addresses, inputting continuing education, as well as a secure payment portal to process documents such as name change requests, out-of-state verification requests, and duplicate certificate requests. This system will also allow new applicants to have the accessibility of electronic application submission, thus increasing processing time for licensure.

During FY 2025 and 2026, the Board will research methods to determine if the online system aids in the reduction of the number of licensees who fail to renew their license. The Board expects to use this data to implement needed programs to reduce the number of lapsed licenses by FY 2027.

The second priority will be to maximize consumer protection. The current average turnaround time for complaint investigations is two to three years. Our agency experienced one of the largest increase in licensure through reciprocity due to COVID-19. There is a correlation between the amounts of complaints with increasing numbers of licensees. The goal for FY 2023 is to formulate a more efficient system to increase the turnaround time for processing complaints, including investigative work and disciplinary actions. This includes the addition of an investigator and attorney to work in conjunction with the assigned Board member. The Board would like to add the investigator and attorney during FY 2023 at a cost not to exceed \$25,000 each. It is estimated that

the addition of an investigator and attorney would close the three-year processing gap to one-year maximum case completion.

5. Agency's External / Internal Assessment

- 1) COVID-19 has severely impacted our agency with an increase in licensure by reciprocity which has negatively impacted the workloads of staff.
- 2) The unplanned increase in the number of complaints requiring hearings could adversely affect the budget.
- 3) Changes in technology would improve turnaround time for application processing and licensure renewals thus taking the burden off of staff.
- 4) Since our agency is self-funded, legislative budget constraints are considered each time new or expanded services are requested.

6. Agency Goals, Objective, Strategies and Measures by Program for FY 2023 through FY 2027:

Program 1: Licensure

GOAL A: Ensure public safety and welfare through appropriate regulation of social work and marriage and family therapy licensure (Miss. Code Ann. § 73-53-1 and § 73-54-3)

OBJECTIVE A.1. Protect the public from the unprofessional, improper, unauthorized and unqualified practice of social work and marriage and family therapy

Outcome: Percentage increase in social work licenses annually

Outcome: Percentage increase in marriage and family therapists annually

Outcome: Percentage increase in marriage and family therapy associates annually

A.1.1. STRATEGY: Manage licensure of social work and marriage and family therapy, and promote compliance through investigating complaints and discipline violators

Output: Number of Marriage and Family Therapy Associates (LMFTA)

Output: Number of Marriage and Family Therapist

Output: Number of Social Workers

Output: Number of licensees who renewed online

Output: Number of advertisements/type

Output: Number of complaints resolved

Efficiency: Cost per license renewal

Explanatory: Estimated number of applicants licensed yearly and jurisdictional complaints received