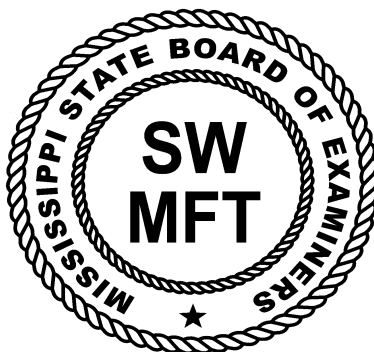


**MISSISSIPPI  
STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS  
FOR SOCIAL WORKERS AND MARRIAGE AND FAMILY  
THERAPISTS**



**FIVE YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN  
FOR FISCAL YEARS 2020 – 2024**

## **1. Comprehensive Mission Statement**

It is declared to be policy of the State of Mississippi that the profession of social work affects the public health, safety and welfare and required appropriate regulation and control in the public interest. It is the intent of this Mississippi State Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists to protect 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 by regulating the title 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.

It ensures 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 Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists practices the philosophy of accountability, good customer service, innovation, integrity, respect of our citizens, and teamwork among our staff and board members in protecting the lives of the public we serve.

## **3. Relevant Statewide Goals and Benchmarks**

Statewide Goal #3: To Make available an accessible, quality public higher education at an affordable cost that prepares Mississippians to become productive, financially self-sufficient member of society while meeting the human resource needs of Mississippi and its employers, including the creation of new jobs through the commercialization of university based research

Relevant Benchmarks:

- Licensure exam pass rates for graduates with four year degrees in a licensed field of study

Statewide Goal #4: To protect the public's safety, including providing timely and appropriate responses to emergencies and disasters and to operate a fair and effective system of justice.

Relevant Benchmarks:

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

Statewide Goal #5: To protect Mississippians from risks to public health and to provide them with the health-related information and access to quality healthcare necessary to increase the length and quality of their lives.

Relevant Benchmarks:

- Number of practitioners needed to remove health professional shortage area designation, by type of practitioner

Statewide Goal #9: To create an efficient government and an informed and engaged citizenry that helps to address social problems through the payment of taxes, the election of capable leaders at all level of government, and participation in charitable organizations through contributions and volunteerism.

Relevant Benchmarks

- Regulatory efficiency: average length of time to resolution of documented complaints to professional licensing agencies
- Number and average cost of regulatory actions taken, by regulatory body and type of action
- 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) was mandated by the Mississippi Legislature in 1997 to ensure that those who choose to practice of social work and marriage and family therapy in the State of Mississippi have demonstrated the ability to meet or exceed established minimum qualification to enter practice in this state and hold those licensees accountable to abide by the laws of the state and rules of the Board. Overall, the Board has one (1) budgetary program and that is Licensure. Under the Licensure program, the Board is responsible for determining applicant eligibility, examination, licensing, license renewal (includes continuing education for licensees), and enforcement (complaint, investigation, and disciplinary actions). There are three (3) levels of social work licensure: Licensed Social Worker (LSW), Licensed Master Social Worker (LMSW), and the Licensed Certified Social Worker (LCSW). There are two levels of marriage and family therapy licensure: Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist Associate (LMFTA) and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (LMFT).

The Board has targeted two (2) areas as priorities for the next five years. The first priority will be to maximize consumer protection and customer service. The Board will provide applicants and licensees with an accurate and cost-effective process for obtaining and maintain licensure required to practice in the State of Mississippi. Improve board staff efficiencies with technology. When Board staff can be more efficient by having access to relevant and up-to-date technology that is 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 success of the online renewal in FY 2020, the Board sees opportunity for other online functionality such as online accessible database that allows licensees to log-in and make address changes, and request, and pay for duplicate certificates, etc. The Board will also research methods to reduce the number of licensees who fail to renew their license. By FY 2022, the Board expects to implement programs to reduce the number of nonrenewals by 20%.

The second priority will be to implement a “no fail” jurisprudence examination for social workers and marriage and family therapists in FY 2021. The purpose of the jurisprudence examination is to insure that social workers and marriage and family therapists are familiar with the laws and rules that govern the practice of social work and marriage and family therapy. This “no fail” examination will require the applicant or licensees to choose the correct answer

to the practice question before they proceed to the next question on the examination. Applicants for licensure will be required to successfully complete the examination before licensure and licensees will be required to successfully complete the examination before the renewal of their license. It is estimated that the jurisprudence examination will also reduce the number of complaints involving a violation of ethical and boundary issues with clients by 10% by FY 2022. The Board will also revise the complaint review process to ensure that complaints filed with the Board are finalized in a timely manner.

## **5. Agency's External / Internal Assessment**

The Board of Examiners for Social Workers and Marriage & Family Therapists has been working diligently to establish its direction for the upcoming years. Since we are self-funded, legislative budget constraints are considered each time new or expanded services are requested. Internal fiscal controls are in place to manage financial costs. Expenditures are reconciled by the Board monthly to verify acceptable accounting practices. Monthly board meetings allow input from the public to be readily heard thus minimizing the time it takes to make changes to meet the needs of the licensees. An external factor that could harm the Board would be the cost associated with the unplanned increase in the number complaints requiring hearings. The strategic plan is an ongoing process and the Executive Committee of the Board of Examiners will review the strategic plan annually. Revisions will be based upon new trend in practice and a review of our mission and goals.

## **6. Agency Goals, Objective, Strategies and Measures by Program for FY 2020 through FY 2024:**

GOAL A: Ensure public safety by licensing and regulation of social workers and marriage and family therapist.

OBJECTIVE A.1. Assure that licensing of qualified individuals for the practice of social work and marriage and family therapy occurs in a timely, technologically-advanced, cost-effective manner to increase the availability of licensees while protecting the public

Outcome: Average time to issue license (in working days)

A.1.1 STRATEGY: Examine, License, and Renew Social Workers and Marriage and Family Therapists

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

Output: Number of Marriage and Family Therapist

Output: Number of Social Workers

Efficiency: Percent of licenses issued within 14 days following the last board meeting

Efficiency: Cost per licensee

Explanatory: Licensure exam pass rates for graduates with four year degrees in a licensed field of study

OBJECTIVE A.2. Increase the number of licensees that renew their license online

Outcome: Percent of licensees who renew online

Number of Marriage and Family Therapist increase annually

Number of social work licenses increase annually.

A.2.1 STRATEGY: Advertise the importance and cost savings for licensees who renew online

Output: Number of licensees who renewed online

Output: Number of advertisements/type

Efficiency: Percent of licensees renewing online

OBJECTIVE A.3 To investigate all complaints received and take disciplinary actions against licensees who have violated the law and/or Board rules.

Outcome: Percent of complaint resulting in disciplinary action

Recidivism rate for those receiving disciplinary action

Percent of documented complaints resolved within 180 days of assignment

A.3.1 STRATEGY: Investigate complaints, discipline violators and promote compliance.

Output: Number of complaints resolved

Efficiency: Average time for complaint resolution

Efficiency: Cost per complaint

Explanatory: Number of jurisdictional complaints received

A.3.2 STRATEGY: Implement a jurisprudence exam for applicants and licensees to educate them on the laws and rules of the Board

Output: Number of exams given

Efficiency: Reduce number of ethical complaints