

U.S. social work licensing frameworks

Social work involves a broad scope of practice which distinguishes it from other regulated behavioral health professions which are distinctly clinical in nature. U.S. jurisdictions regulate social work practice through one or more license categories. The primary license categories are bachelors, masters and clinical. Some states utilize a fourth category of license for advanced masters practice which includes independent macro (non-clinical) practice. In other states, this scope of practice is simply part of the masters license. A handful of states have a fifth type of license for associates. With limited exceptions, license requirements include a social work degree, a passing score on the national examination that corresponds to the license category, and a period of supervised practice experience (for the clinical license). The following provides an overview of the licensing frameworks in each of the U.S. jurisdictions.

Clinical, Masters and Baccalaureate License – 37 jurisdictions

Alabama	Iowa	Nebraska ^{1,5}	Pennsylvania
Alaska	Kansas	Nevada ¹	South Carolina ¹
Arizona	Kentucky	New Jersey	Tennessee ¹
Arkansas	Louisiana ⁵	New Mexico ¹	Texas ¹
Delaware	Maine	North Carolina ^{1,5}	Utah
Guam	Maryland	North Dakota	Virginia
Hawaii	Minnesota	Northern Mariana	Washington DC ¹
Idaho	Mississippi	Islands	West Virginia ¹
Illinois ⁴	Missouri ¹	Oklahoma ²	
Indiana	Montana	Oregon	

Clinical and Masters License – 7 states

Colorado	Florida ³	New York	Washington ³
Connecticut	Georgia	Vermont	

Clinical License – 2 states

California	Rhode Island
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Clinical, Masters, Baccalaureate and Associate/Non-SW Certification – 6 jurisdictions

Massachusetts	Ohio ⁴	Virgin Islands
Michigan ³	South Dakota	Wisconsin ^{3,5}

Clinical, Baccalaureate, Associate/Non-SW Certification – 1 state

New Hampshire

Clinical and Baccalaureate License – 1 state

Wyoming

Notations

¹Jurisdiction has both a masters license and advanced practice macro license

²Jurisdiction has masters license and two advanced practice macro licenses

³Advanced macro practice is the only masters license

⁴The LSW encompasses both bachelors and masters practice

⁵Jurisdiction utilizes a voluntary certification for one or more categories of practice