
SENATE BILL 5638

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2022 Regular Session

By Senators Wagoner and Dhingra

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1 AN ACT Relating to expediting approval for applicants for an
2 associate license as a social worker, mental health counselor, or
3 marriage and family therapist; and amending RCW 18.225.145.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

5 **Sec. 1.** RCW 18.225.145 and 2021 c 57 s 2 are each amended to
6 read as follows:

7 (1) The secretary shall issue an associate license to any
8 applicant who demonstrates to the satisfaction of the secretary that
9 the applicant meets the following requirements for the applicant's
10 practice area and submits a declaration that the applicant is working
11 toward full licensure in that category:

12 (a) Licensed social worker associate—advanced or licensed social
13 worker associate—independent clinical: Graduation from a master's
14 degree or doctoral degree educational program in social work
15 accredited by the council on social work education and approved by
16 the secretary based upon nationally recognized standards.

17 (b) Licensed mental health counselor associate: Graduation from a
18 master's degree or doctoral degree educational program in mental
19 health counseling or a related discipline from a college or
20 university approved by the secretary based upon nationally recognized
21 standards.

1 (c) Licensed marriage and family therapist associate: Graduation
2 from a master's degree or doctoral degree educational program in
3 marriage and family therapy or graduation from an educational program
4 in an allied field equivalent to a master's degree or doctoral degree
5 in marriage and family therapy approved by the secretary based upon
6 nationally recognized standards.

7 (2) Associates may not provide independent social work, mental
8 health counseling, or marriage and family therapy for a fee, monetary
9 or otherwise. Associates must work under the supervision of an
10 approved supervisor.

11 (3)(a) An applicant for associate licensure under this section
12 may work as a social worker associate, mental health counselor
13 associate, or marriage and family therapist associate while the
14 application is being processed. The applicant must provide required
15 documentation within reasonable time limits established by the
16 department, and if the applicant does not do so, the applicant must
17 stop working.

18 (b) Prior to the completion of a criminal background check
19 performed by either the employer or the secretary, the applicant's
20 approved supervisor must be physically present on-site when the
21 applicant is performing clinical counseling.

22 (4) Associates shall provide each client or patient, during the
23 first professional contact, with a disclosure form according to RCW
24 18.225.100, disclosing that he or she is an associate under the
25 supervision of an approved supervisor.

26 ~~((4))~~ (5) The department shall adopt by rule what constitutes
27 adequate proof of compliance with the requirements of this section.

28 ~~((5))~~ (6) Applicants are subject to the denial of a license or
29 issuance of a conditional license for the reasons set forth in
30 chapter 18.130 RCW.

31 ~~((6))~~ (7)(a) Except as provided in (b) of this subsection, an
32 associate license may be renewed no more than six times, provided
33 that the applicant for renewal has successfully completed eighteen
34 hours of continuing education in the preceding year. Beginning with
35 the second renewal, at least six of the continuing education hours in
36 the preceding two years must be in professional ethics.

37 (b) If the secretary finds that a waiver to allow additional
38 renewals is justified due to barriers to testing or training
39 resulting from a governor-declared emergency, additional renewals may
40 be approved.

1 (8) For the purpose of this section, "approved supervisor"
2 includes licensed marriage and family therapists, licensed mental
3 health counselors, licensed clinical social workers, licensed
4 psychologists, licensed physicians practicing as psychiatrists, or
5 licensed psychiatric nurse practitioners. If the supervisor's license
6 does not match the discipline for which the applicant has applied to
7 be an associate, the secretary may establish additional requirements
8 by rule.

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