



**Counselor, Social Worker,
and Marriage and Family
Therapist Board**

Counselor Trainee Registration

Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage & Family Therapist Board

BACKGROUND/QUALIFICATIONS

- Registration is based on an exemption in the law allowing enrolled students to work in the scope of practice of the LPC, MFT, and LSW. Note: there is no legal requirement for a student intern to register with the Board.
 - 4757.10 (7)
- The designation of trainees has existed at least since 1997.
- Eligibility: master's level student.
 - Ohio does not have an equivalent for BSW students, though this was raised as a 'problem' during a February 2025 Ohio education summit.
 - No trainee registration is issued for art and music therapists.
 - Board issues the license based on a certification from CBMT and ATCB.
- Enrollment in a practicum, field, or internship course is required.



BACKGROUND/QUALIFICATIONS - CONTINUED

- Background checks – FBI and Ohio.
- Registration is valid for the academic term + 60 days (to allow for appropriate termination).
 - Summer term – varies based on enrollment and degree program requirements.
- Supervised at the site by the same license type with an independent license and “S”.
- A Trainee registration can be extended for up to 6 months from the date of graduation.



CURRENT STATUS

- Currently, CSWMFT has nearly 50,000 licensees/registrants (includes nearly 2000 inactive/escrow licenses)

License Type	Count
Licensed Social Worker	17510
Licensed Independent Social Worker	12521
Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor	9556
Licensed Professional Counselor	5129
Counselor Trainee	1129
Social Worker Trainee	788
Independent Marriage and Family Therapist	616
Licensed Professional Music Therapist	403
Registered Social Work Assistant	323
Licensed Professional Art Therapist	240
Marriage and Family Therapist	238
Marriage and Family Therapist Trainee	72
Temporary Licensed Social Worker	1
Total	48526

- As of 6/1/2025 there were 1989 active trainees (the registrants decline over the summer). This FY (7/1-present) we have issued 1658 new Trainee registrations. The difference between the issued and active is renewed registrations:
 - CT - 1129
 - SWT - 788
 - MFTT - 72



TRAINEE REGISTRATION BENEFITS

- No scope limits. Trainees work in the dependent (permanent) license scope of practice.
- Services eligible for Medicaid reimbursement.
- Private insurance and other programs?
- “Stamp” of government approval.



TRAINEE REGISTRATION ISSUES

- Ethics complaints – too often we receive complaints from site staff, clients, *and* faculty (!).
 - We communicate that trainees are in *training*.
 - Ethics issues should normally be addressed by the school and site, without involvement of the Board unless it is egregious and involves significant harm to a client.
- Disciplinary authority – schools have more impact than the Board. We could terminate a trainee registration and note the file for later consideration. The degree program is in a stronger position than the Board to address violations.
- Processing of applications – initial and renewal.



TRAINEE REGISTRATION ISSUES - CONTINUED

- Documentation of qualifications is generally a significant issue. Clear, but unfollowed directions.
- Terms where students are not enrolled in an internship or field course?
- Outsized expectations of service from the Board (e.g. processing time).
- Viewed as “junior” clinicians; assigned caseloads; increase in anxiety and pressure; proper assignment of clients?
- Pseudo license – the Trainee registration can suggest more public protection than is occurring:
 - No exam
 - Still enrolled in coursework



LOOKING AHEAD

- Issue the registration for a minimum of 12 months.
- Encourage consistent information from degree programs
 - “Consolidated” approval letter covering all eligible students
- Streamlining the current rule(s).
- Explore supervision requirements



OPEN QUESTIONS

- Are trainees paid? *We think most, but do not know for certain. There have been some issues in the past related to compensation, such that we have had to reinforce that there is no rule/law against paying interns or trainees.*
- Is this a path to licensure? *As of 2025, most people who obtain a license (MFT, LPC, and LSW/MSW) held a trainee registration.*
- Does the trainee registration result in more students finishing their degrees? *The Board has no data regarding this issue. The assumption is that being paid for interning helps.*
- Does the trainee registration lead to “better” clinicians? *The easy answer/assumption is yes. However, TBD.*
- Client perceptions of trainees? *Unknown.*



FOR MORE INFORMATION

- <https://cswmft.ohio.gov/get-licensed/counselors/ct-license-instructions>
- ORC 4757.10

(7) Provide for voluntary registration of all of the following:

- (a) Master's level counselor trainees enrolled in practice and internships;
- (b) Master's level social worker trainees enrolled in fieldwork, practice, and internships;
- (c) Master's level marriage and family therapist trainees enrolled in practice and internships.

(8) Establish a schedule of deadlines for renewal.

(C) Rules adopted under division (B)(7) of this section shall not require a trainee to register with the board, and if a trainee has not registered, shall prohibit any adverse effect with respect to a trainee's application for licensure by the board.



QUESTIONS?

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