



Economic Impact Analysis Virginia Department of Planning and Budget

18 VAC 140-20 – Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work
Department of Health Professions
October 2, 2009

Summary of the Proposed Amendments to Regulation

The Board of Social Work (Board) proposes to specify the clinical course requirements for the clinical social worker license.

Result of Analysis

The benefits likely exceed the costs for all proposed changes.

Estimated Economic Impact

Under Virginia Code § 54.1-3700, a clinical social worker is defined as “a social worker who, by education and experience, is professionally qualified at the autonomous practice level to provide direct diagnostic, preventive and treatment services where functioning is threatened or affected by social and psychological stress or health impairment.”

The current regulations state the following as the education requirements for the clinical social worker license:

A. Education. The applicant shall hold a minimum of a master's degree from an accredited school of social work. Graduates of foreign institutions shall establish the equivalency of their education to this requirement through the Foreign Equivalency Determination Service of the Council of Social Work Education.

1. The degree program shall have included a graduate clinical course of study; or
2. The applicant shall provide documentation of having completed specialized experience, course work or training acceptable to the board as equivalent to a clinical course of study.

The Board proposes to specify the content of educational programs that would be considered as clinical courses of study. This proposal is being implemented to provide additional guidance to programs and applicants on the acceptable coursework for clinical licensure. The specific content would include clinical course requirements by general categories, the minimum number of required field placement/practicum hours, and accreditation standards for master's level clinical programs. This information is generally contained in recently adopted Guidance Document 140-6, which became effective April 17, 2009.

Prior to the development of these requirements, the Department of Health Professions (DHP) invited all of the accredited schools of social work with master's programs in Virginia to participate in a discussion about the minimal coursework necessary to be considered a clinical concentration. According to DHP, the curricula for all of the accredited social work programs in Virginia conform to the proposed requirements for these regulations. So in practice, the implementation of the specified language in the regulations will not have a large impact beyond providing beneficial clarity for individuals seeking licensure concerning what would be acceptable by the Board.

Businesses and Entities Affected

The proposed amendments affect the accredited schools of social work with master's programs in Virginia (George Mason University, Norfolk State University, Radford University, and Virginia Commonwealth University) as well out-of-state programs that wish to place students in Virginia, and future potential programs.

Localities Particularly Affected

The proposed amendments do not disproportionately affect particular localities.

Projected Impact on Employment

The proposal amendments are not expected to significantly affect total employment.

Effects on the Use and Value of Private Property

The proposal amendments are not expected to significantly affect the use and value of private property.

Small Businesses: Costs and Other Effects

The proposal amendments are not expected to significantly affect small businesses.

Small Businesses: Alternative Method that Minimizes Adverse Impact

The proposed amendments are not expected to adversely affect small businesses.

Real Estate Development Costs

The proposed amendments are unlikely to significantly affect real estate development costs.

Legal Mandate

The Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) has analyzed the economic impact of this proposed regulation in accordance with Section 2.2-4007.04 of the Administrative Process Act and Executive Order Number 36 (06). Section 2.2-4007.04 requires that such economic impact analyses include, but need not be limited to, the projected number of businesses or other entities to whom the regulation would apply, the identity of any localities and types of businesses or other entities particularly affected, the projected number of persons and employment positions to be affected, the projected costs to affected businesses or entities to implement or comply with the regulation, and the impact on the use and value of private property. Further, if the proposed regulation has adverse effect on small businesses, Section 2.2-4007.04 requires that such economic impact analyses include (i) an identification and estimate of the number of small businesses subject to the regulation; (ii) the projected reporting, recordkeeping, and other administrative costs required for small businesses to comply with the regulation, including the type of professional skills necessary for preparing required reports and other documents; (iii) a statement of the probable effect of the regulation on affected small businesses; and (iv) a description of any less intrusive or less costly alternative methods of achieving the purpose of the regulation. The analysis presented above represents DPB's best estimate of these economic impacts.