

**DRAFT**

Virginia Board of Social Work
Quarterly Board Meeting Minutes
Friday, December 20, 2024, at 10:00 a.m.
9960 Mayland Drive, Henrico, VA 23233
Board Room 3

PRESIDING OFFICER: Teresa Reynold, MSW, LCSW, Board Chairperson

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Elke Cox, MSW, LCSW, Vice-Chairperson
Kimberly Jackson, Citizen Member
Joan Landolt, MSW, LCSW
Martha Meadows, MA, LCSW
Denise Purgold, MSW, LCSW
Sherwood Randolph, MSW, LCSW

BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT: Victoria Cartagena, MSW, LCSW

BOARD STAFF PRESENT: Krystal Blanton, Discipline & Compliance Case Specialist
Jaime Hoyle, JD, Executive Director
Jennifer Lang, Deputy Executive Director- Discipline
Charlotte Lenart, Deputy Executive Director- Licensing
Sharniece Vaughan, Licensing & Operations Supervisor
Rebecca Walker, Licensing Specialist

DHP STAFF PRESENT: Matt Novak, Policy & Economic Analyst, Department of Health Professions
Arne Owens, Agency Director, Department of Health Professions

BOARD COUNSEL PRESENT: James Rutkowski, Assistant Attorney General

PUBLIC ATTENDEES: Nikki Baldwin, Citizen Member, Music Therapy Advisory Board
Kevin Holder, LCSW, Richmond Association of Black Social Workers
Denise Daly Konrad, Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF)
Ophelia von Ludwig, LCSW
Mark Smith, Greater Washington Society for Clinical Social Work (GWSCSW),
Virginia Society of Clinical Social Work (VSCSW)
Trinette Randolph, *Boost!* Program Manager, Virginia Health Care Foundation (VHCF)

CALL TO ORDER: Ms. Reynolds called the Board Meeting to order at 10:07 a.m.

ROLL CALL/ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM: All Board members and staff were introduced. Seven members of the Board were present at roll call; therefore, a quorum was established.

MISSION STATEMENT: Ms. Hoyle read the mission statement of the Department of Health Professions, which was also the mission statement of the Board.

PUBLIC HEARING: The Public Hearing was held for the Board to hear public comments regarding the proposed regulation action regarding licensure of music therapist.

PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS: None

Public Hearing concluded at 10:20 a.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA:

The agenda was adopted as presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

No public comment was provided.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

The Board reviewed the minutes from the last meeting held on September 27, 2024.

Motion: Ms. Purgold made a motion, which Ms. Cox properly seconded, to approve the minutes from the September 27, 2024, meeting as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

AGENCY REPORT:

Mr. Owens welcomed everyone and congratulated the newest Board member, Joan Landolt.

Mr. Owens announced that it is the 2-year anniversary of the Governor's *Right Help, Right Now* initiative. Mr. Jenkins and Ms. Hoyle serve as co-leaders of Pillar 5, whose mission is to prioritize the behavioral health workforce, with a particular focus on underserved communities. Mr. Owens commented on the 2024 General Assembly which added behavioral health practitioners to address the needs of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Owens stated that DHP was preparing for the upcoming 2025 General Assembly. He reported that DHP had several agency bills moving forward for consideration.

Mr. Owens stated that the agency was in the process of reviewing its internal budget. He reminded the Board of the different support functions that assist the regulatory boards at DHP, including but not limited to, the Administrative Proceedings Division, Human Resources, Procurement, Information Technology, Operations, Facilities, and Finance Departments.

Mr. Owens reported on employee retention efforts through the completion of a study of agency salaries.

BOARD CHAIR REPORT:

Ms. Reynolds thanked the Ad Hoc Committee and the full Board for taking the time to have to have a meeting so close to the holiday.

PRESENTATIONS:**Overview of Boost 200 Program**

Ms. Randolph presented a PowerPoint presentation on how the *Boost!* Program pays for supervision and exam preparation for Supervisees in Social Work and Residents in Counseling. (See Attachment A)

LEGISLATION & REGULATORY REPORT:

Mr. Novak reviewed with the Board the current regulatory actions for the Board of Social Work as of December 5, 2024. A copy of the chart was included in the agenda packet.

Petition for Rulemaking

Mr. Novak reviewed and discussed a petition for rulemaking received to amend 18VAC140-20-50(A) of the Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work to permit a supervisee that has received approval to obtain supervision but has not yet begun supervision to pause the four-year timeframe to obtain supervision until the supervisee is ready to begin earning supervision hours again.

There was one public comment on the petition.

Mr. Novak explained the petition for rulemaking process to the Board. He stated that the Board has the option to make a motion to accept the petition and initiate a NOIRA or deny the petition, stating the reasons for the denial.

Ms. Hoyle briefly discussed changes the Board of Counseling and the Board of Psychology are considering as it relates to supervised experience for residents.

Motion: Ms. Purgold made a motion, which Ms. Landolt properly seconded, to deny the petition for rulemaking and to send the petition to the regulatory committee for further study and review. The motion passed unanimously.

The Board is interested in this topic and wants to consider the scope of potential amendments broadly to allow for other changes to be made as necessary.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Ad Hoc Committee

Mr. Randolph reported the Board has formalized the process for meeting in-person and virtually. The Committee and stakeholders met on November 13, 2024, to discuss the racial disparities in the Association of Social Work Board (ASWB) examination and discuss alternative pathways to licensure.

Next steps will include researching which states allow alternative pathways to examination and identify those pathways, reach out to ASWB to participate in the next Committee meeting to discuss their plan to address the racial disparities in their examination, asking stakeholders for a written official stance on alternative pathways and including both social work reports in the agenda for the next meeting

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Ms. Hoyle provided a report summary on the efforts to diversify, and clinical social work workforce requested by the Chair of the Senate Committee on Rehabilitation and Social Services to review HB606, which was passed by indefinitely during the 2024 General Assembly Session.

Ms. Hoyle discussed possible examination alternatives such as timing of examination and length of supervision. She mentioned that Minnesota and Illinois use alternative pathways that include additional supervision requirements. Ms. Hoyle also cautioned that using alternative pathways would limit the licensee's ability to join the Social Work Compact in the future.

The Board discussed the possible alternatives.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT:

Ms. Hoyle stated that her report was included in the discussion under unfinished business.

DISCIPLINE REPORT:

Ms. Lang referenced the discipline report included in the agenda packet. She reported that due to the large backlog, there are 219 open cases for the Board of Social Work. A new employee has hired for another 6 months to assist with the backlog.

Ms. Lang mentions that there has been a 13% increase for all three behavioral science Boards. She announced that Ms. Blanton was hired as the new Discipline and Compliance Case Specialist in October. She previously worked with the Board of Medicine since 2007 and holds a master's degree in public administration from Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU).

LICENSING REPORT:

Ms. Lenart discussed licensure statistics and satisfaction survey results for the Board of Social Work which is included in the agenda packet. Ms. Lenart announced the Board's new licensing specialist, Rebecca Walker started in October 2024.

Ms. Lenart outlined the reengineering efforts to the Board's website including the online application handbooks, the step-by-step process for registration of supervision applications, updating forms, applications, license verifications, and the automatic email.

Ms. Lenart indicated that she gave a presentation on the licensure process to the Virginia Social Work Education Consortium (VSWEC) on October 23, 2024.

NEXT MEETING DATES:

The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, March 14, 2025.

**CONSIDERATION OF
RECOMMENDED
DECISION:**

Recommendation (see Attachment B)

ADJOURNMENT:

Ms. Reynolds adjourned the meeting at 11:53 a.m.

Teresa Reynolds, MSW, LCSW, Chair

Jaime Hoyle, JD, Executive Director

Boost!

Making Mental Health Happen

Board of Social Work Meeting

December 20, 2024

About the Virginia Health Care Foundation

VHCF is a statewide public/private partnership initiated 32 years ago by the Virginia General Assembly and its Joint Commission on Health Care.

VHCF's **mission** is to increase access to primary health care, including behavioral health services, for uninsured and medically underserved Virginians.

One critical component of access is a sufficient health workforce with adequate distribution throughout the state.

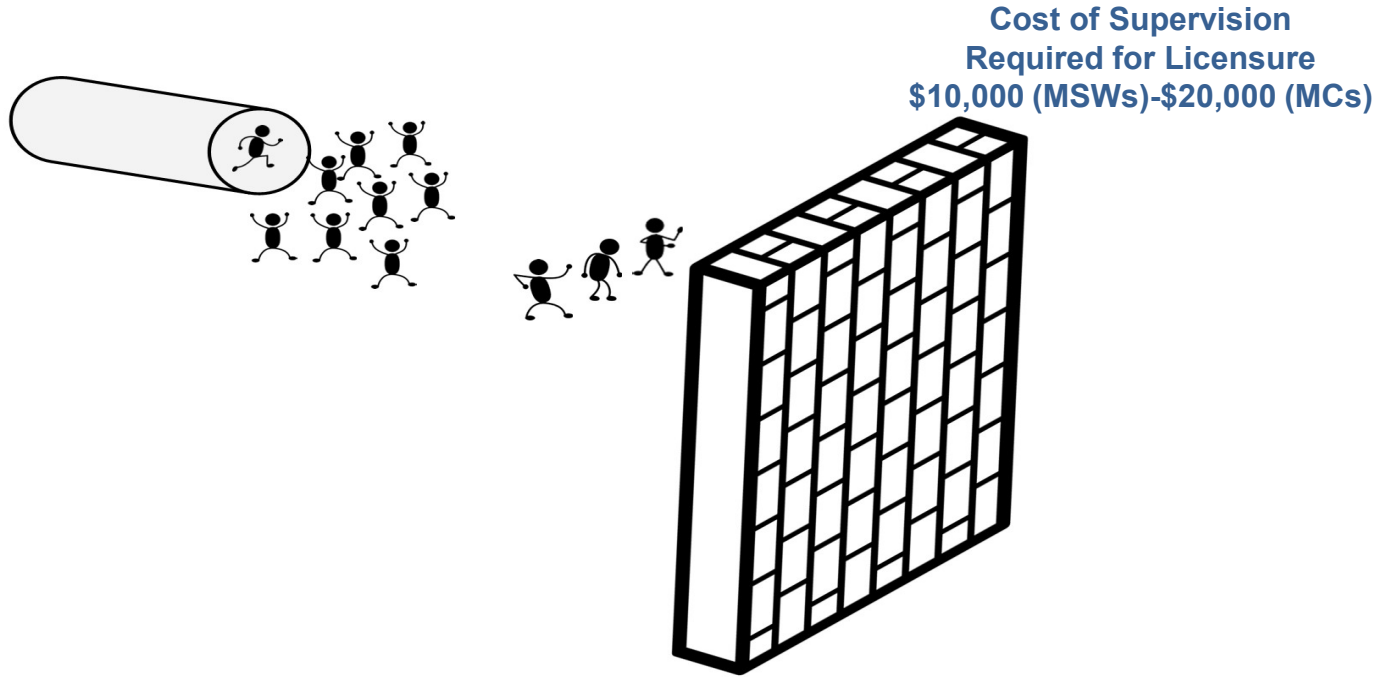
Significant Shortages in All BH Professions

Key Findings

Aging Workforce	Insufficient Diversity
Inadequate Pipeline	Cost of Supervision to be a Licensed Therapist



Barrier to Licensure

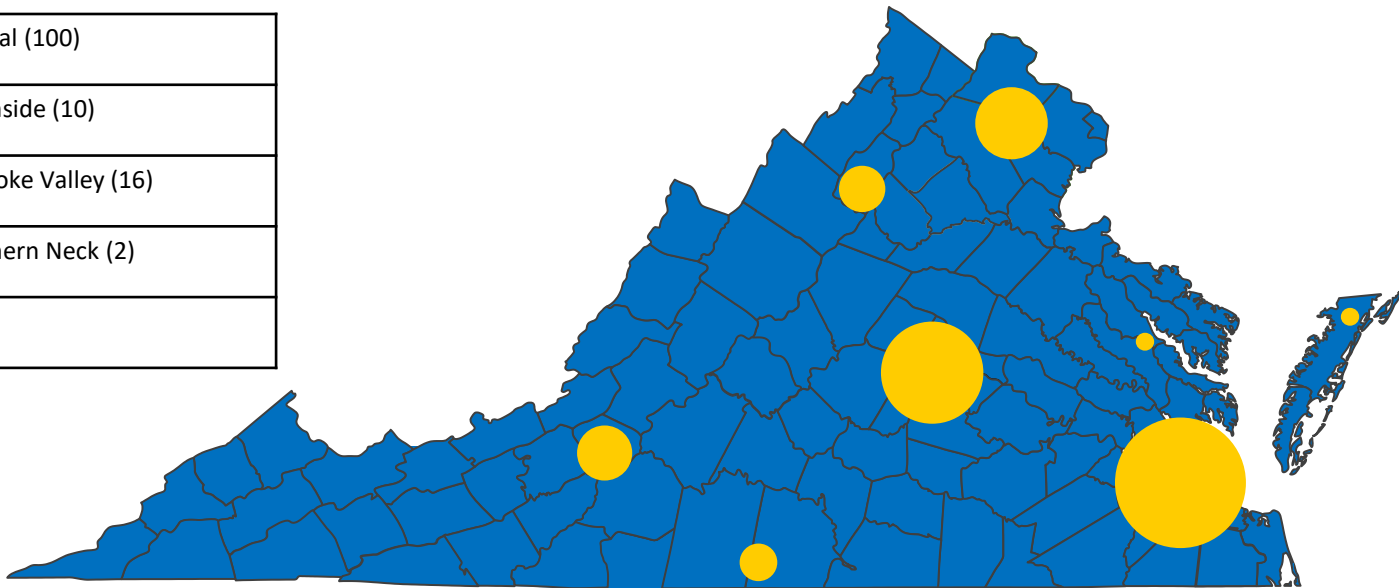


Boost!

- **Pays for supervision required for licensure** of MSWs and MCs and exam prep.
- In return, *Boost* enrollees commit to practice in Virginia for 2 years, once licensed.
- Prioritizes therapists who are persons of color, fluently bilingual, or practice in a mental health professional shortage area.
- Launched in September 2022 and **77 are already licensed** with more coming soon!

314 Enrollees by Region

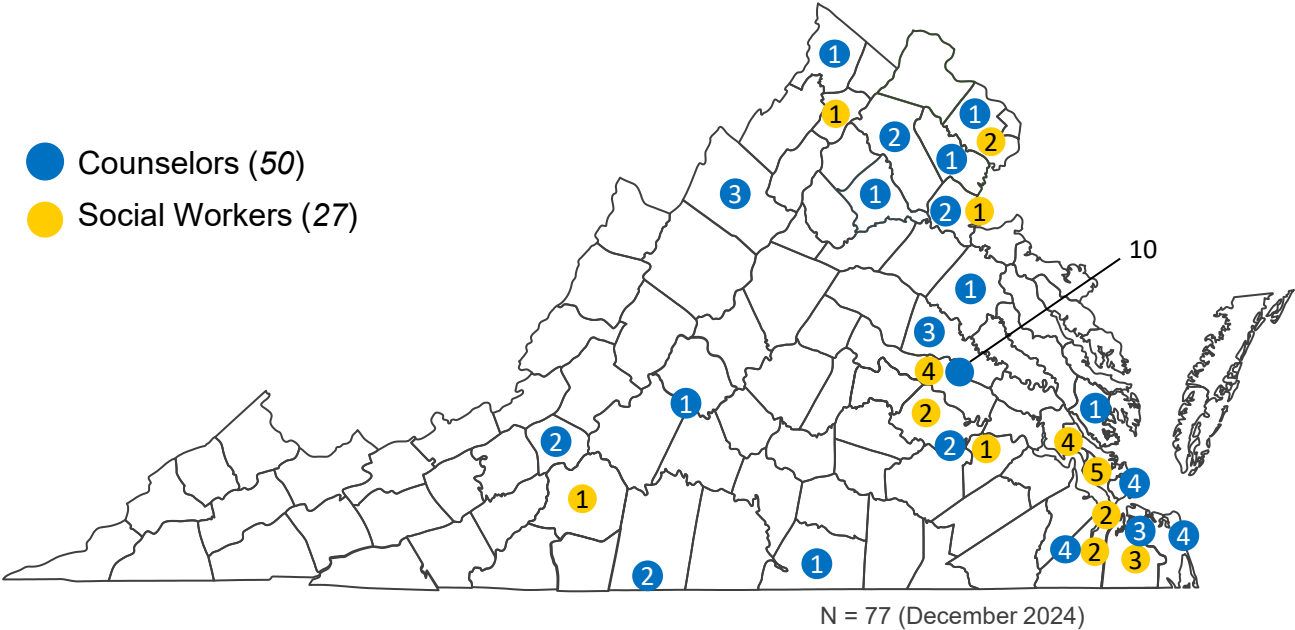
Hampton Roads (130)	Central (100)
Northern (42)	Southside (10)
Northwest (12)	Roanoke Valley (16)
Eastern Shore (1)	Northern Neck (2)
Southwest (1)	



Profile of *Boost!* Enrollees

- 71% are people of color; 11% are bilingual
- 50% are first-generation graduates (*parents did not complete a 4-year college program*)
- 35 years old (*average*)
- Majority female (86%)
- Average salary of \$52,700
- 86% carry student loan debt with an average debt load of \$111,000
- 100% paid out of pocket or would have had to for their supervision prior to *Boost!*

Newly Licensed *Boost!* Therapists



Licensure is the Goal

Licensure as an LCSW requires

- ✓ 3000 clinical hours
- ✓ 100 supervised hours
- ✓ Passing the licensure exam

Different rules apply to the timing of licensure exams for counselors and social workers.

- **Counselors** can take the licensure exam at any point after they graduate with their Masters of Counseling degree, including during their residency.
- **Social workers** are only allowed to take their exam after their required supervision and clinical hours have been completed.

Social Workers

- *Boost!* Participants have expressed anxiety over testing
- Glaring disparities in licensure exam pass rates among racial groups (*ASWB 2022 report*). The greatest was between white test takers (84% pass rate) and black test takers (45%).
- 41% of *Boost!* Social Work Enrollees are first generation graduates and 72% are black
- These factors led VHCF to focus its TA efforts on helping *Boost!* enrollees prepare for their exams. Researched test prep services and their success rates.

Lessons Learned

- All *Boost!* enrollees need help with understanding the pathway to licensure
- Licensure exam prep should be given to all *Boost!* enrollees
- Obtaining applications from rural areas requires targeted marketing
- Some enrollees experience life changes that impact their participation
- Program is not a fit for everyone-requires a steady pace to finish in a timely manner

Feedback from *Boost! Social Work* Enrollees

- “*Boost 200* eliminated my need to work two jobs which enabled me to fully invest in my professional growth and personal well-being.” -**B. Thompson, LCSW**
- “This program is a Godsend...without it, I would not have been able to complete my supervision.” - **M. Johnson, LCSW**
- “*Boost 200* offered exam prep that was crucial to my passing the LCSW licensure exam. I am forever grateful to have been provided the opportunity to be a participant of the *Boost 200* program.” -**F. Blocker, LCSW**

Feedback from *Boost! Social Work* Enrollees

- “The team was very helpful in answering any questions or concerns I had regarding my hours and the licensing process.” -**K. Virella, LCSW**
- “Without *Boost 200*, becoming an LCSW would have just been a dream. *Boost 200* has given me an opportunity to make my dream of becoming an LCSW a reality. Thank you soooooooo much, *Boost 200!*”
- **J. Gomes, Social Worker**

Future Focus for *Boost!*

- Seek funding for more *Boost!* slots in the FY26 state budget and from private funders
- Collaborate with key partners to promote *Boost!* to potential applicants from rural areas
- Educate all licensed *Boost!* therapists on the Behavioral Health Loan Repayment
- Continue to track, monitor and support the timely progress of *Boost!* enrollees' clinical and supervision hours
- Track *Boost!* graduates to ensure they meet their 2-year service commitment

Questions?

Trinette Randolph
Boost! Program Manager

Trinette@vhcf.org

804.773.8037

**CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDED DECISION
December 20, 2024**

BOARD MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Teresa Reynolds, LCSW, Chairperson
Elke Cox, LCSW, Vice-Chairperson
Kimberly Jackson, Citizen Member
Joan Landolt, LCSW

Martha Meadows, LCSW
Denise Purgold, LCSW
Sherwood Randolph, LCSW

CLOSED MEETING:

Ms. Jackson moved that the Board of Social Work convene in closed session pursuant to §2.2-3711(A)(27) of the *Code of Virginia* to consider an agency subordinate recommendation. She further moved that James Rutkowski, Jaime Hoyle, Jennifer Lang, Charlotte Lenart, Krystal Blanton, Sharniece Vaughan, and Rebecca Walker attend the closed meeting because their presence in the meeting was deemed necessary and would aid the Board in its consideration of the matters. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

RECOMMENDATION:

David Benjamin, LCSW Reinstatement Applicant

Case No.: 228683

David Benjamin submitted a written response to the recommended decision. The board discussed and considered the agency subordinate's recommendation to deny Mr. Benjamin's application for reinstatement.

RECONVENE:

Ms. Jackson certified that, pursuant to §2.2-3712 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Board of Social Work heard, discussed or considered only those public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and only such public business matters as identified in the original motion.

DECISION:

Ms. Purgold made a motion to accept the recommendation of the agency subordinate as presented. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.