

Counselor, Social Worker, & Marriage and Family Therapist Board

Budget Testimony

Senate Finance Subcommittee on Workforce

April 28, 2015

Chairman Beagle and Members of the Senate Finance Subcommittee on Workforce, I'm Brian Carnahan, Executive Director of the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board.

Thank you on behalf of the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board (CSWMFT Board) for allowing me the opportunity to provide testimony and address any questions that you may have.

Overview of Board:

The mission of the CSWMFT Board is to protect the citizens of the State of Ohio from unqualified and incompetent counselors, social workers and marriage and family therapists. The Board accomplishes this mission through the establishment of

requirements for minimal competency for entry into three separate but related licensed professions. The Board has the statutory authority to grant licenses and registrations for counselors, social workers and marriage and family therapists, and oversees the administration of professional examinations through vendor partners. The Board also has the responsibility for establishing and enforcing practice standards and codes of conduct for all three professions. To ensure appropriate continuing competence, the Board pre-approves Ohio continuing education programs and providers necessary for meeting continuing education requirements.

There are currently over 36,000 licensed and registered individuals including: over 16,480 Licensed Social Workers, 8,265 Licensed Independent Social Workers, 3,870 Licensed Professional Counselors, 5,224 Licensed Professional Clinical Counselors, 215 Independent Marriage and Family Therapists and 144 Marriage and Family Therapists with active licenses. The Board has over 500 individuals actively registered as Social Work Assistants. Over 500 individuals are registered as Social Worker Trainees and over 600 individuals registered as

Counselor Trainees, who are master's program students working towards licensure as social workers and professional counselors.

The Board has a staff of 13 full time employees, which includes an Executive Director, a Deputy Director, two Investigators, an Administrative Assistant, five Application Coordinators, who process new applications, a Renewal Coordinator, and two additional positions, one dedicated to audits and another to public inquiries and customer service. Our staff manages the licensing process for all three professions; Board investigators investigate complaints that arise out of all three professions; the renewal coordinator is responsible for the renewal of licenses for all three professions, while the remaining staff work with all three professions.

Recommended Budget:

We believe the Board may meet its obligations with the level of funding in HB 64 depending on health insurance increases and the impact of complicated licensure denial or discipline cases that result in hearings. Additionally, the Board must move from its current location at the LeVeque Tower to the Riffe SOT. The

owners of the LeVeque wish to proceed with renovation plans, which include the space occupied by the Board. The Board may experience modest increases in rent as a result of the required move.

The Executive Budget Recommendation in its current form will:

- Fund the operations of the Board with the goal of protection of the public;
- Fund three professional standards committees and staff for licensing counselors, social workers and marriage and family therapists;
- Allow for the annual processing of over 3,000 new license applications, 15,000 license renewal applications, 1,600 continuing education program applications, and 300 continuing education provider applications and renewals per fiscal year;
- Support the investigation of over 300 complaints per fiscal year;
- Fund tracking of over 3,000 licensing examination requests and results, over 3,000 transcripts, 3,000 criminal records checks and over 4,000 supervision documents per fiscal year;

- Assist in the improvement of IT and enhance efficiency and effectiveness of processes.

Budget Information:

The Board is self-sufficient and our revenues result from licensing and renewal fees. The Board does not receive any general revenue funds (GRF).

The Board anticipates that revenue will moderately exceed its spending authority. Projected revenues will be \$1,336,236 in fiscal year 2016 and \$1,362,960 in fiscal year 2017. The recommended spending levels in the executive budget are \$1,287,029 in FY 2016 and \$1,301,462 in FY 2017. Revenues should exceed income by at least \$49,207 in FY 2016 and by \$61,498 in FY 2017.

Operational Issues:

- The Board has not raised licensure application or renewal fees since 1985;

- We changed our PC and server maintenance to DAS-OIT support from a vendor. Access to additional services and support was the major impetus for the change;
- Hearings costs are increasing as more licensees and applicants elect to request hearings, as allowed by law under Chapter 119. The Board is watching this situation closely to ensure sufficient resources are available to meet the costs.
- We continue to cut mailing costs by using email and online applications and forms. The vast majority of social work applications are received online. The applications for counselors and marriage and family therapists will be moved online as soon as possible;
- Discontinuation of license “wallet cards”. The wallet card is a small card indicating the license status of a licensee. Eliminating the card will reduce costs, allowing us to hold the line on fee increases but also ensuring the online verification system is used for license verification;
- Web site updates to enhance access to application and renewal processes and information for licensees to stay in compliance.

Supporting the Board: The CSWMFT Board is one of 25 Boards and Commissions that rely upon the Central Service Agency. The Central Service Agency provides human resources, payroll and fiscal processing for the participating boards and seven additional commissions/agencies. These 25 boards have used shared services since the late 1960s when the Central Service Agency was created and housed at the Board of Cosmetology. Combined, these twenty-five boards regulate over 399,000+ individuals, business firms, and schools throughout Ohio, but through the use of the Central Service Agency are able to provide effective and efficient service to the citizens of Ohio with minimal staffing needs. The boards also share a common licensure tracking system that is maintained and operated by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). This web-based system was created in 2002 and allows the boards to provide online renewal, online application, online licensure verification and the ability to generate valuable reports related to licensure. We look forward to a future version of the system and the additional efficiencies such a system will enable.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.