



Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

State Board of Licensed Social Workers

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2025 Board of Licensed Social Workers Budget presentation follow up

February, 2025

To: Joint Ways and Means Committee, Education Subcommittee

From: Raymond Miller, BLSW Executive Director

RE: 2025 – 2027 Budget follow up

What was my senate confirmation process like? (the confirmation process is much more public. How does that feel? Are the right questions asked?)

Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz and the Education subcommittee, I was appointed by the through an interview process. I was not required to attend a senate confirmation.

I did ask a Board member, who did go through a confirmation process. The Board member felt the process was formal. The Board member experienced some stress, but stated they expected the process to be somewhat stressful. The Board member commented that they were not able to make a direct connection between Board service and some of the questions that were asked.

Provide additional Board of Licensed Social Workers (BLSW) customer service data:

Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz and the Education subcommittee, here are the stats for our application processing times as of 2/21/2025:

All application types:

- Submitted applications waiting for staff review: 20
- Oldest application submission date: 9 days

CSWA applications only:

- Submitted applications waiting for staff review: 8
- Oldest application submission date: 9 days

Also attached is the document “BLSW_application_processing_times_2024_2025”. This document is a graph of BLSW’s customer service application processing time improvements since I accepted the position of Executive Director on November 2023.

What kind of complaints does BLSW receive?



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Co-Chairs Sollman and Ruiz and the Education subcommittee, BLSW has received the following types of complaints during the last 2 months:

Two Unprofessional conduct complaints

One Breach of confidentiality complaint

Three Ethics complaints

One client abandonment complaint

One client terminated from services complaint

Please let us know if you have questions or would like further detail

Sincerely,

Raymond Miller
Executive Director
Oregon BLSW



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Memo

November 7, 2024

To: Office of Governor Tina Kotek

From: Raymond Miller, BLSW Executive Director

RE: Board of Licensed Social Workers (BLSW) Success Stories: November 2024

This memo is a short summary of some of the successes BLSW has enjoyed since August 2023.

The Board of Licensed Social Workers (BLSW) has experienced significant successes over the past 18 months. In August 2023, BLSW had 416 applications waiting to be processed. The oldest application was 112 days waiting to be processed. Legislators were getting regular contact from Oregonians. Less than half the phone calls to BLSW were answered. Voicemails were responded to in around 72 hours or no response at all. Email response was around 64% with an average of over 3 business days to respond. Application processing times were 2 months on average with some applications waiting up to 6 months.

Today, all applications are processed within 30 days. Legislators haven't contacted BLSW for an application status in over 8 months. Over 80% of all phone calls are answered immediately. Most voicemails are returned within 24 hours. Most emails are answered within 24 – 48 hours, depending on the complication of the request.

In April of 2024, BLSW successfully engaged in two highly effective proactive communications to Oregon's regulated Social Workers. BLSW also sends out a quarterly BLSW newsletter. BLSW also started intermittent emails. These emails communicate information BLSW has identified, through data collection, as parts of the licensing process causing social workers difficulty and helps social workers understand the licensure process resulting in an easier path to licensure.

BLSW collaborated with the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) to secure grant funding to waive application fees and CSWA renewal fees from February 2023 through January 2024. During that period, fees were waived for over 660 CSWA applications, 621 LCSW applications, 124 LMSW applications, 340 CSWAs transitioning to LCSWs, and 1092 CSWA renewals. OHA states:

“BLSW was the first licensing board willing to discuss the possibility of waiving licensing fees using American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to provide financial relief to a workforce destabilized by the COVID-19 Pandemic. This led to a positive partnership and the very first (to my knowledge) time that a state health licensing board has waived licensing fees statewide. This program created interest from other states who are hoping to implement similar programs including Texas and Louisiana. Since my team has collaborated with BLSW, they have been positive thought partners in working to address workforce barriers for Oregon's social workers.”



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Here are some testimonials from BLSW's valued partners:

"I have certainly seen a significant improvement in turn around times on CSWA applications getting processed within 30 days from finalization on applicant side of things which has been a significant help. It's allowed us to get folks hired more timely and get them onto the units within a reasonable amount of time rather than waiting months. I appreciate how accessible the staff are at BLSW and able to quickly address questions that we have that come up, and genuine openness to collaborate and solve issues as things arise. BLSW is miles ahead of where they were prior to you taking the helm over there."

"from both my direct interactions with you and BLSW and with what I've heard from other's interactions, yes, I would definitely say the BLSW is responding well to our needs. Not only have you and BLSW been quick to respond to requests, but the CSWA applications have been getting done at least within 30 days, which is a huge improvement from previous years. You've also made an effort to come in person, listen to what our service needs are, and then followed up on supporting those needs. Your collaboration and improvement of the BLSW, especially within this short period is impressive and extremely appreciated, and has made it so our newly hired social workers are able to start employment at OSH far more seamlessly. Thank you"

"I had the pleasure of working with BLSW Director Ray Miller this past spring, when he responded to an email request for a presentation.... Member organizations had struggled with retention and recruitment and understanding the backlog contributing to the delays in getting social work licensing. Ray responded within a day to my request and set time aside for discussion to better understand the needs of the audience he would be presenting to, and to seek ways to learn what their needs were as employers so he could better serve the industry sector. His sincerity and desire to develop processes to reduce the backlog, and engage employers impressed consortium members, many who stayed after the presentation to have continued conversations with Ray on his work at the Board. Sometimes government agencies have a reputation of being out of touch or unresponsive to groups they are charged with serving. Ray's approachable leadership style, and genuine interest in serving the public left consortium members with a positive impression of the Licensing Board."

"I've had wonderful experiences with the board this past year with the increase in staff and more timely responses and communication with board staff members. There have been several experiences where I was able to talk with a staff member same day to clarify questions and concerns. As a supervisor I appreciate their support whenever it's needed. I had to work with a board staff member last year regarding an associate concern and our experience was positive. They were empathetic and understanding of the associate situation and worked collaboratively with me and the associate to help come up with a reasonable plan and resolution with the concerns. The board seems to be doing more outreach and education lately in regards to rules and procedures for



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the supervision process with their newsletters which have also been extremely easy to read and helpful for us supervisors by offering information in an easy to read and relevant format. I want to acknowledge that when the board has the staff and support they need they are able to provide guidance and support to those of us doing the front line work which is extremely important in order for us to protect the safety of our community members and those who us social workers are working with directly.”

Sincerely,

Raymond Miller
Executive Director
Oregon BLSW

Application Tracking - Past Year

