

335.010 Purposes -- Exemptions -- Amnesty period.

- (1) It is the purpose and policy of the Commonwealth of Kentucky to protect the public from being misled by incompetent and unauthorized persons, and from unprofessional conduct on the part of qualified social workers by providing regulatory authority over persons who hold themselves out to the public as social workers.
- (2) The purpose of KRS 335.010 to 335.160 and KRS 335.990 is to promote high standards of professional performance for those engaged in the profession of social work by regulating the title and practice of social work, and by setting standards of qualification, training, and experience for those who seek to engage in the practice of social work.
- (3) KRS 335.010 to 335.160 and KRS 335.990 shall not be applicable to employees of the State Department of Education or local boards of education who meet the certification requirements in the area of social work as established, or which may be established, by the Kentucky Board of Education. KRS 335.010 to 335.160 and KRS 335.990 shall not be construed to apply to, limit, or restrict the regulation of the title, setting of standards, qualifications, training, or experience of those who seek to engage in the practice of social work and who have been, or will be, certified by the Kentucky Board of Education for the position for which they have been employed.
- (4) KRS 335.010 to 335.160 and KRS 335.990 shall not require persons employed by the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the director or administrative head of a social service agency or division of a city, county, or urban-county government, or applicants for such employment to be licensed.
- (5)
 - (a) KRS 335.010 to 335.160 and KRS 335.990 shall not require persons employed by an organization that is exempt from federal income taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and provides evidence of its tax-exempt status, to be licensed.
 - (b) KRS 335.010 to 335.160 and KRS 335.990 shall not be construed to apply to, limit, or restrict the regulation of the title, setting of standards, qualifications, training, and experience of those engaged as employees of a tax-exempt organization in the practice of social work.
 - (c) The exemption provided in this subsection shall not apply to the practice of clinical social work, which shall be undertaken only by a certified social worker licensed in accordance with KRS 335.080 or a licensed clinical social worker licensed in accordance with KRS 335.100.
- (6)
 - (a) KRS 335.010 to 335.160 and 335.990 shall not require persons employed by child-caring facilities and child-placing agencies, as defined in KRS 199.011, that are contracted with the Commonwealth of Kentucky for foster care services, or applicants for such employment, to be licensed.
 - (b) The exemption provided in paragraph (a) of this subsection shall not apply to the practice of clinical social work, which shall be undertaken only by a certified social worker licensed in accordance with KRS 335.080 or a licensed clinical social worker licensed in accordance with KRS 335.100.

- (7) KRS 335.010 to 335.160 and 335.990 shall not prohibit volunteer health practitioners from providing services under KRS 39A.350 to 39A.366.
- (8)
 - (a) KRS 335.010 to 335.160 and 335.990 shall not be construed to apply to the activities and services of a student intern or trainee in social work who is pursuing a program of studies in social work at an accredited institution of higher learning if these activities are performed under supervision and constitute a part of the program of study.
 - (b) If the student intern or trainee in social work is studying or training in the practice of clinical social work, the board shall promulgate administrative regulations in accordance with KRS Chapter 13A to define supervision standards for student involvement in clinical social work to ensure public safety. Before promulgating administrative regulations under this paragraph, the board shall consult with a working group of social work professionals and educators that includes at least one (1) practicum education director.

Effective: July 15, 2026

History: Amended 2026 Ky. Acts ch. 77, sec. 2, effective July 15, 2026. -- Amended 2012 Ky. Acts ch. 158, sec. 77, effective July 12, 2012. -- Amended 2007 Ky. Acts ch. 96, sec. 18, effective June 26, 2007. -- Amended 1996 Ky. Acts ch. 362, sec. 6, effective July 15, 1996. -- Amended 1980 Ky. Acts ch. 188, sec. 261, effective July 15, 1980. -- Amended 1978 Ky. Acts ch. 155, sec. 82, effective June 17, 1978; and ch. 288, sec. 7, effective June 17, 1978. -- Created 1974 Ky. Acts ch. 279, sec. 1.