**Section 1470.95 Continuing Education**

a) Continuing Education Hours Requirements

1) Every licensee who applies for renewal of a license as a Licensed Social Worker or Licensed Clinical Social Worker shall complete 30 hours of continuing education (CE) relevant to the practice of social work or clinical social work. At least 3 of the 30 hours must include content related to the ethical practice of social work and at least 3 of the 30 hours must include content related to cultural competence in the practice of social work.

2) A prerenewal period is the 24 months preceding November 30 of each odd-numbered year.

3) CE requirements shall be the same for Licensed Social Workers and Licensed Clinical Social Workers.

4) One CE hour shall equal one clock hour.

5) Courses that are part of the curriculum of a university, college or other educational institution shall be allotted CE credit at the rate of 15 CE hours for each semester hour or 10 CE hours for each quarter hour of school credit awarded.

6) A renewal applicant shall not be required to comply with CE requirements for the first renewal of an Illinois license.

7) Social workers or clinical social workers licensed in Illinois but residing and practicing in other states shall comply with the CE requirements set forth in this Section.

b) Approved Continuing Education (CE)

1) CE hours shall be earned by verified attendance (e.g., certificate of attendance or certificate of completion) at or participation in an in-person program or course ("program") that is offered or sponsored by an approved CE sponsor who meets the requirements set forth in subsection (c), except for those activities provided in subsections (b)(2), (3) and (4).

2) CE credit also may be earned by verified completion (e.g., certificate of attendance or certificate of completion) of a remote program (e.g., self-study, book-study, or computer/online based course) that is offered by an approved sponsor who meets the requirements set forth in subsection (c). Each remote course shall include an examination.

3) CE credit may be earned through postgraduate training programs (e.g., extern, residency or fellowship programs) or completion of social work related courses that are a part of the curriculum of a college, university or graduate school of social work.

4) CE credit may be earned for verified teaching in a college, university or graduate school of social work approved in accordance with Section 1470.30 and/or as an instructor of CE programs given by approved sponsors. Credit will be applied at the rate of 1.5 hours for every hour taught and only for the first presentation of the program (i.e., credit shall not be allowed for repetitious presentations of the same program).

5) CE credit may be earned for authoring papers, publications or books and for preparing presentations and exhibits. The preparation of each published paper, book chapter or presentation dealing with social work or clinical social work may be claimed as 5 hours of credit. A presentation must be before a professional audience. Five credit hours may be claimed for only the first time the information is published or presented.

c) Approved CE Sponsors and Programs

1) Approved sponsor, as used in this Section, shall mean:

A) The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) and its affiliates;

B) The Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) and its affiliates;

C) American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy or its affiliates;

D) Employers licensed under the Hospital Licensing Act [210 ILCS 85];

E) Professional Counseling Continuing Education Sponsors approved by the Division in accordance with the rules for the administration of the Professional Counselor and Clinical Professional Counselor Licensing and Practice Act [225 ILCS 107] (68 Ill. Adm. Code 1375.220);

F) Clinical Psychologist Continuing Education Sponsors approved by the Division in accordance with the rules for the administration of the Clinical Psychologist Licensing Act [225 ILCS 15] (68 Ill. Adm. Code 1400.85);

G) Any other regionally accredited school, college or university, community college or State agency that provides CE in a form and manner consistent with this Section; or

H) Any other person, firm, association, corporation or other group that has been approved and authorized by the Division pursuant to subsection (c)(2) upon recommendation of the Board to coordinate and present continuing education courses or programs.

2) Entities seeking approval as CE sponsors pursuant to subsection (c)(1)(C) shall file an application, on forms supplied by the Division, along with the application fee specified in Section 1470.55. The applicant shall certify on the application the following:

A) That all programs offered by the sponsor for CE credit will comply with the criteria in subsection (c)(3) and all other criteria in this Section. A sponsor shall be required to submit a CE program with course materials for review prior to being approved as a CE sponsor;

B) That the sponsor will be responsible for verifying attendance at or completion of each program and provide a certificate of attendance or completion as set forth in subsection (c)(9);

C) That, upon request by the Division, the sponsor will submit evidence (e.g., certificate of attendance or completion or course materials) as is necessary to establish compliance with this Section. Evidence shall be required when the Division has reason to believe that there is not full compliance with the statute and this Part and that this information is necessary to ensure compliance.

3) All programs shall:

A) Contribute to the advancement, extension and enhancement of the professional skills and scientific knowledge of the license in the practice of social work or clinical social work;

B) Foster the enhancement of general or specialized social work or clinical social work practice and values;

C) Be developed and presented by persons with education and/or experience in the subject matter of the program;

D) Specify the course objectives, course content and teaching methods to be used; and

E) Specify the number of CE hours that may be applied to fulfilling the Illinois CE requirements for license renewal.

4) Each CE program shall provide a mechanism for evaluation of the program by the participants. The evaluation may be completed on-site immediately following the program presentation or an evaluation questionnaire may be distributed to participants to be completed and returned by mail or email. The sponsor and the instructor, together, shall review the evaluation outcome and revise subsequent programs accordingly.

5) An approved sponsor may subcontract with individuals and organizations to provide approved programs.

6) All programs given by approved sponsors shall be open to all Licensed Social Workers and Licensed Clinical Social Workers and not be limited to members of a single organization or group.

7) Continuing education credit hours used to satisfy the CE requirements of another jurisdiction may be applied to fulfill the CE requirements of the State of Illinois.

8) To maintain approval as a sponsor, each sponsor shall submit to the Division, by November 30 of each odd-numbered year, a renewal application, the renewal fee specified in Section 1470.55 and a list of courses and programs offered within the last 24 months. The list shall include a brief description, location, date and time of each course given.

9) It shall be the responsibility of a sponsor to provide each participant in a program with a certificate of attendance or completion. The sponsor's certificate shall contain:

A) The name, address and license number of the sponsor;

B) The name and address of the participant;

C) A brief statement of the subject matter;

D) The number of hours attended in each program;

E) The date and place of the program; and

F) The signature of the sponsor.

10) The sponsor shall maintain attendance records for not less than 5 years.

11) The sponsor shall be responsible for assuring that no renewal applicant shall receive CE credit for time not actually spent attending or completing the program.

12) Upon the failure of a sponsor to comply with any of the foregoing requirements, the Division, after notice to the sponsor and hearing before and recommendation by the Board (see 68 Ill. Adm. Code 1110), shall thereafter refuse to accept for CE credit attendance at or participation in any of that sponsor's CE programs until the Division receives assurances of compliance with this Section.

13) Notwithstanding any other provision of this Section, the Division or Board may evaluate any sponsor of any approved CE program at any time to ensure compliance with requirements of this Section.

d) Certification of Compliance with CE Requirements

1) Each renewal applicant shall certify, on the renewal application, full compliance with the CE requirements set forth in subsections (a) and (b).

2) The Division may require additional evidence demonstrating compliance with the CE requirements (e.g., certificate of attendance or certificate of completion). This additional evidence shall be required in the context of the Division's random audit. It is the responsibility of each renewal applicant to retain or otherwise produce evidence of compliance.

3) When there appears to be a lack of compliance with CE requirements, an applicant shall be notified in writing and may request an interview with the Board. At that time, the Board may recommend that steps be taken to begin formal disciplinary proceedings as required by Section 10-65 of the Illinois Administrative Procedure Act [5 ILCS 100/10-65].

e) Continuing Education Earned in Other Jurisdictions

1) If a licensee has earned CE hours offered in another state or territory not given by an approved sponsor for which the licensee will be claiming credit toward full compliance in Illinois, the applicant shall submit an out-of-state continuing education approval form, along with a $25 processing fee, prior to participation in the program or at least 90 days prior to expiration of the license. The Board shall review and recommend approval or disapproval of the program using the criteria set forth in subsection (c)(3).

2) If a licensee fails to submit an out-of-state CE approval form within the required time frame, late approval may be obtained by submitting the approval form with the $25 processing fee, plus a $10 per hour late fee, not to exceed $150. The Board shall review and recommend approval or disapproval of the program using the criteria set forth in subsection (c)(3).

f) Restoration of Nonrenewed License. Upon satisfactory evidence of compliance with CE requirements, the Division shall restore the license upon payment of the required fee as provided in Section 1470.55.

g) Waiver of CE Requirements

1) Any renewal applicant seeking renewal of a license without having fully complied with these CE requirements shall file with the Division a renewal application along with the required fee set forth in Section 1470.55, a statement setting forth the facts concerning non-compliance and request for waiver of the CE requirements on the basis of these facts. A request for waiver shall be made prior to the renewal date. If the Division, upon the written recommendation of the Board, finds from the affidavit or any other evidence submitted that extreme hardship has been shown for granting a waiver, the Division shall waive enforcement of CE requirements for the renewal period for which the applicant has applied.

2) Extreme hardship shall be determined on an individual basis by the Board and be defined as an inability to devote sufficient hours to fulfilling the CE requirements during the applicable prerenewal period because of:

A) Full-time service in the armed forces of the United States of America during a substantial part of the prerenewal period;

B) An incapacitating illness documented by a statement from a currently licensed physician, advanced practice nurse or physician assistant; or

C) Any other extenuating circumstances.

3) Any renewal applicant who, prior to the expiration date of the license, submits a request for a waiver, in whole or in part, pursuant to the provisions of this Section shall be deemed to be in good standing until the final decision on the application is made by the Division.

(Source: Amended at 47 Ill. Reg. 12077, effective July 26, 2023)