



NEW JERSEY DIVISION OF
CONSUMER AFFAIRS

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**Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for
Mental Health Professionals**

Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

July 15, 2020

Providers are encouraged to check the Division of Consumer Affairs [website](#) for additional information.

The State of New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub is [here](#).
The NJ Department of Health COVID-19 Information Hub for Health Care Providers is [here](#).

Coronavirus disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) is the disease caused by a new coronavirus first detected in humans in December 2019. The State of New Jersey has implemented extraordinary measures to combat the spread of the disease, including through actions taken by Governor Philip D. Murphy to expand the capacity of New Jersey’s healthcare system to meet increased demand.

On July 13, 2020, the New Jersey Division of Consumer Affairs launched an [Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals](#), which is now open to eligible recent graduates of social work and counseling education and training programs located in any state who have not yet taken their licensing exams, and to applicants who have taken and passed the applicable examination but who have not yet satisfied other requirements for licensure.

This document includes basic information that recent graduates need in order to take advantage of this opportunity, including additional information about the eligibility requirements.

Applicants can apply on the Division of Consumer Affairs website [here](#).

Q: Which mental health professions have been added to the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program?

The program is now open to social workers (LSWs) and associate counselors (LACs).

Q: I graduated from my professional education program in 2018 but didn’t get a license. Am I eligible for the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals?

No. Individuals are eligible only if they graduated within six months of applying, except that all otherwise qualified individuals who graduated on or after December 1, 2019, will have until October 12, 2020, to apply (notwithstanding the six month limitation). Regardless of your graduation date you may still be eligible for a standard license.

Q: I received my healthcare professional degree in another state or country. Do I qualify for the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals?

Social work and professional counselor graduates of accredited education and training programs located in any state are eligible.

Graduates of programs that do not meet these criteria, including programs located in other countries, are not eligible for emergency graduate licenses at this time, but may be eligible for standard licenses.

Q: If I have taken and failed my licensure examination, can I still obtain an emergency graduate license under the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals?

No. Eligibility for emergency graduate licenses is limited to applicants who have not previously taken and failed their licensing exam.

Q: If I am granted an emergency graduate license and then fail my licensure exam, will I lose my emergency graduate license?

Yes. The holder of an existing emergency graduate license is required to cease practicing upon receiving notice that they failed to pass their licensing examination.

Q: What information will I need to apply for my emergency graduate license as part of the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals?

All applicants will need to create an account to access the Division's online application system. Once you log in, the application form will ask you to provide and certify the truth and accuracy of the following information:

- Name
- Gender
- Date of birth
- Social Security Number
- Address
- Citizenship status
- Educational history
- Criminal history information
- Information about current illegal use of controlled dangerous substances

Q: How is the emergency graduate license application process different from the standard application process?

Applicants for emergency graduate licenses under the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals submit an abbreviated application and are not required to pass an examination or undergo a criminal history background check. The only fee that is required is the fee for the standard application, which must be submitted before submission of the emergency graduate license application.

Q: How can I apply for an emergency graduate license as part of the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals?

First, you must initiate the process of applying for a standard license. Please go [here](#) to begin this process. Once you have done so, click [here](#) to complete an emergency graduate license application.

Q: I have been arrested or convicted of a crime. Can I still participate?

You may not be eligible for this program if you have been arrested or convicted of certain crimes. You will need to explain the circumstances of any arrests or convictions when you apply for an emergency graduate license. When applying for the standard certification, you will need to provide additional documentation, such as court and police records.

Applicants for an emergency graduate license are required to submit information that may result in the denial of their application, as a matter of the DCA Director's discretion. Such information also may delay the Division's processing of an application.

Q: How long will it take to get an emergency graduate license as part of the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals, and what will my license look like?

If your application is complete and you qualify for licensure, DCA's goal is to provide you with a license promptly. Your license will come in the form of an email confirmation with an emergency graduate license number stating that your emergency graduate license is active. You will not receive a paper license, but your emergency graduate license number will be displayed as "active" on the Division's licensure look-up system.

Processing may take longer for some applicants.

Q: How much time do I have to submit my application for an emergency graduate license?

You must apply within six months of graduation, except that all otherwise qualified individuals who graduated on or after December 1, 2019, will have until October 12, 2020, to apply (notwithstanding the six month limitation). The Division may stop accepting new applications at any time so interested graduates are encouraged to apply now.

Q: I don't have malpractice liability insurance or other insurance. Should I get coverage?

The Division recommends that all holders of emergency graduate licenses under the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals secure suitable insurance, although it is not required as a prerequisite to obtaining an emergency graduate license. Certain healthcare professionals involved in the response to COVID-19 may have some protections from liability under state law, but the protections are limited, and generally will not include defense and indemnification.

Q: How long will my emergency graduate license be valid?

The Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals will automatically expire upon the end of the public health emergency and the state of emergency declared by Governor Murphy in Executive Order No. 103 (2020), whichever is later, but it may be terminated earlier by the Division of Consumer Affairs.

For individual holders of emergency graduate licenses issued as part of the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals, the graduate license automatically expires upon their failure of the applicable licensing examination.

If the Division of Consumer Affairs determines to end the Emergency Graduate Licensure Program for Mental Health Professionals, or a part of it, before the program automatically expires, the Division will notify emergency graduate licensees. Social work emergency graduate licenses will remain in effect for 120 days after the Division makes its determination, and associate counselor emergency graduate licenses will remain in effect for 30 days after the Division makes its determination.

Holders of emergency graduate licenses are strongly encouraged to continue to pursue standard licensure (including passing licensure examinations and submitting any required documents) via the standard application process, as soon as practicable. This will minimize the risk of a gap between the expiration of your emergency graduate license and the issuance of your standard license.

Q: Will I need to apply for two licenses, the emergency graduate license and the standard license? When will I apply for each license?

You will first need to submit the preliminary portion of an application for a standard license (i.e., submit a passport-style photograph, pay a fee, and complete an application questionnaire), because *initiating* an application for the standard license is a precondition for obtaining an emergency graduate license. We have done this to ensure that you start the process of applying early, and to reduce the amount of time that you may be unlicensed and unable to work between when your emergency graduate license expires and when you receive your standard license. Once you have initiated an application for a standard license, you will need to apply separately for an emergency graduate license.

Holders of emergency graduate licenses are strongly encouraged to continue to pursue standard licensure (including passing licensure examinations and submitting any required documents) via the standard application process, as soon as practicable. This will minimize the risk of a gap between the expiration of your emergency graduate license and the issuance of your standard license.

Q: Will I need to pay two application fees - one for my standard license and one for my emergency graduate license?

No. The Division will not charge fees for emergency graduate license applications. You will only need to pay one fee, at the time you apply for your standard license.

Q: Will I need to pay for and undergo two criminal history background checks—one for my standard license and one for my emergency graduate license?

No. The Division will not require emergency graduate licensees to undergo a criminal history background check in order to obtain an emergency graduate license. You will only need to undergo the check as part of your application for your standard license.

Q: Will the Division arrange for employment or volunteer opportunities for me?

No. If you receive an emergency graduate license through this program, the Division encourages you to utilize your school and existing network to identify work opportunities in New Jersey.

Q: Where will I be able to work once I have an emergency graduate license?

As an emergency graduate licensee, you are permitted to work in any setting subject to scope of practice and supervision requirements of your respective licensing board.

Q: As a holder of an emergency graduate license, will I need to be supervised?

Yes. Holders of emergency graduate licenses who intend to provide social work services must comply with all scope of practice and supervision requirements imposed upon LSWs by the Social Workers' Licensing Act of 1991, N.J.S.A. 45:15BB-1 through -13 and the regulations promulgated thereunder, N.J.A.C. 13:44G. Supervision of clinical social work services provided by emergency licensed LSWs must be provided by a New Jersey licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) who is compliant with the requirements of N.J.A.C. 13:44G-8.1.

Holders of emergency graduate licenses who intend to provide counseling services must comply with all scope of practice and supervision requirements imposed upon LACs by the Professional Counselor Licensing Act, N.J.S.A. 45:8B-34 through -50, and the regulations promulgated thereunder, N.J.A.C. 13:34-10.1 through -19.27. Supervision must be provided consistent with the requirements of N.J.S.A. 45:8B-50, and N.J.A.C. 13:34-13.1 through 13.3.

Q: As a holder of an emergency graduate license, will my work experience count toward my required hours of supervision for licensure as a licensed clinical social worker or licensed professional counselor?

Holders of social work emergency graduate licenses who are providing social work services and who want their supervised practice hours to be counted toward the 3000 hours required for LCSW licensure must submit to the Board of Social Work Examiners a supervision plan for review and approval. If the plan is approved by the Board, hours accrued under supervision may be counted towards the 3,000 hours of direct supervision required for licensure as an LCSW.

Holders of associate counselor emergency graduate licenses who are providing counseling must submit to the Professional Counselor Committee a written supervision plan for review and approval. If the plan of supervision is approved by the Committee, hours accrued under supervision may be counted toward licensure as a licensed professional counselor.

If the holder of an emergency graduate license fails the applicable licensing examination, the Board of Social Work Examiners and the Professional Counselor Examiners Committee reserve the right to reject some or all of the hours accrued during the period of emergency licensure.