

ALC – Occupational Licensing Review Subcommittee
Occupational Entity Questionnaire

Responses to the following questions are due via email to Subcommittee staff no later than the 15th of the month immediately preceding the month the occupational authorization is scheduled for review by the Subcommittee.

1. Would consumers be at risk of substantial harm if Arkansas did not have this occupational authorization? What instances of specific and substantial harm have been documented in the past year?

Consumers would be at risk of harm if the practice of counseling/therapy was unregulated. The board has had some complaints in the past of people causing harm by providing counseling/therapy services without a license. Working with clients who have suicidal ideation, homicidal ideation and chronic mental illness requires education and training to prevent harm to clients and the public. Consumers need to be able to verify that a person providing counseling/therapy has adequate training and licensure to provide those services.

2. How many complaints were made to the occupational entity by consumers being harmed by unauthorized practitioners? What specific action was taken by the occupational entity?

From July 2022 through June 2023 there were 4 complaints pertaining to people providing counseling services without a license. When a complaint of this nature is filed the board issues a letter inviting the individual to apply for a license with our board and requesting them to stop advertising or practicing as a counselor/therapist until such license is granted.

3. How many complaints were made to the occupational entity by consumers being harmed by authorized practitioners? What specific action was taken by the occupational entity?

From July 2022 through June 2023 there were 75 complaints filed pertaining to licensees. All complaints are reviewed by the disciplinary action and review committee

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of the board, to determine a course of action to address the complaint. The course of action may be any of the following:

Referral for further investigation

Recommend dismissal

Recommend letter of caution

Recommend consent agreement

Recommend hearing

4. Were any applicants who otherwise met authorization requirements denied an authorization in the past year? If so, why?

All applicants for licensure, meeting all the requirements for licensure, are granted a license. If an applicant applies for licensure and does not meet licensure requirements, the applicant is given a year to complete the process and can extend the application for a second year if needed. Application extensions are usually due to the applicant needing to take additional coursework or requiring additional time to pass the national examination.

5. How much does the occupational entity collect annually in fees, and what are annual expenses? How much money does the occupational entity have in reserves?

As of June 30, 2023

Annual income: \$597,708.92

Annual expenses: \$410,515.76

Fund balance: \$1,152,868.00

6. If the occupational entity has a positive amount in reserves, when was the last time reserve funds were used? For what purpose?

Reserve funds were used in FY2021 and FY2022 to purchase a new online licensure platform and upgrade to server.

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7. Does the occupational entity have any other sources of revenue? Could occupational authorization fees be reduced without causing the occupational entity to be underfunded?

There are no other sources of revenue. Fees were reduced in 2020 and have been reduced again in compliance with Act 114 of 2023.

8. How many applicants for the occupational authorization fail each year? Does the occupational entity track how many applicants that do not progress are veterans, women, or minorities?

Data is not available by state, to the board. National exam providers track pass/fail rates by universities.

9. Can applicants complete the training requirements for this occupational authorization with vocational or non-traditional education (e.g., apprenticeships)? What percentage of applicants complete apprenticeships?

This occupation cannot be completed via vocational or non-traditional methods. Apprenticeships are not something that is done with this occupation. Addressing and treating mental health issues require a master's level education with internships, licensure, and supervision.

10. In what ways would removal of the occupational authorization or reduction of occupational authorization requirements be harmful to current authorization holders?

Board oversight of this licensure is necessary to ensure counseling/therapy services are being provided by practitioners with adequate training, education and experience that meet the national standards adopted for the profession. Licensure of the profession is needed to protect the public and provide an avenue for investigation of potential unethical, fraudulent, or harmful practices. Without a licensure board for this profession, consumers would have no method to seek corrective action for harmful practices unless the consumer had financial means to pursue legal action in civil courts.

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Anyone currently licensed would be harmed by this as all present licensees have invested years of education and finances into being able to provide these services in Arkansas.

Individuals would no longer seek education meeting the national standard if it was not required. This could cause the licensure standard in Arkansas to decrease below the national standard for the profession.