

# Redbook

## LBO Analysis of Executive Budget Proposal

### Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board

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# LBO Redbook

## Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board

### Quick look...

- The Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board has a staff of 16 and licensed roughly 44,000 professionals at the end of FY 2024.
- The Board is governed by 21 members appointed by the Governor with daily operations overseen by an executive director.
- The Board receives no money from the GRF; it is entirely supported by fees.
- Executive budget recommendations total approximately \$4.5 million over the biennium.

FY 2022 Actual	FY 2023 Actual	FY 2024 Actual	FY 2025 Estimate	FY 2026 Introduced	FY 2027 Introduced
<b>Fund 4K90 ALI 899609, Operating Expenses</b>					
\$1,814,585	\$1,828,946	\$1,744,266	\$2,190,000	\$2,161,054	\$2,291,375
% change	0.8%	-4.6%	25.6%	-1.3%	6.0%

### Agency overview

The Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board was established in 1984. Originally responsible for licensing counselors and social workers, the Board's responsibility was expanded in 2004 to include licensing marriage and family therapists. H.B. 33 of the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly further expanded the Board's responsibilities to include the licensure of art therapists and music therapists.

The Board's governing authority consists of 21 members appointed by the Governor, including four professional clinical counselors or professional counselors, four independent marriage and family therapists or marriage and family therapists, four independent social workers or social workers, two art therapists, two music therapists, and five members representing the public. The Revised Code outlines additional membership requirements. Members are appointed for three-year terms and may be reappointed. The Board is divided into five separate professional standards committees representing counselors, social workers, marriage and family therapists, music therapists, and art therapists. The full Board must hold a regular meeting every three months to discuss issues such as finances, personnel issues, administration, and other board issues. Additional meetings may also be held. The committees also meet as necessary to discuss concerns of their respective professions. Board members receive a per diem for each day employed in their official duties and are reimbursed for necessary and actual expenses.

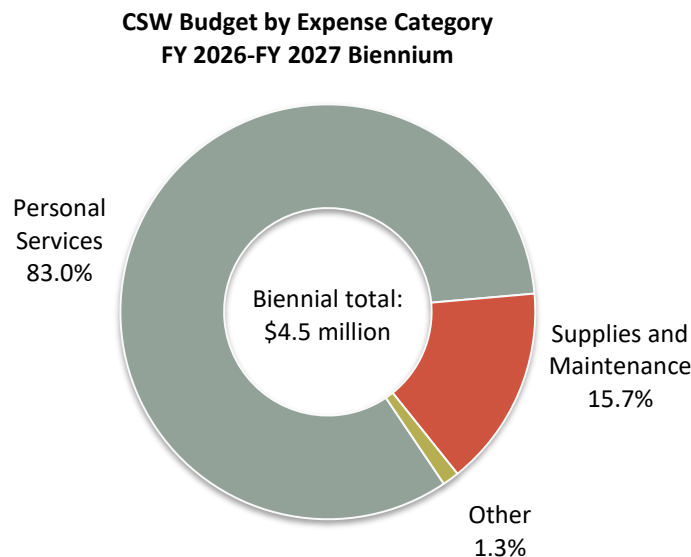
The Board's daily operations are the responsibility of an executive director who is appointed by the 21-member governing authority. Including the Executive Director, the Board has 16 full-time staff members and one intern.

## Analysis of FY 2026-FY 2027 budget proposal

The Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board's operations are funded by a single appropriation item within Fund 4K90 – item 899609, Operating Expenses. The executive budget proposes funding of about \$2.16 million in FY 2026, a decrease of 1.3% from FY 2025 estimated expenditures and about \$2.29 million in FY 2027, an increase of 6.0% over FY 2026. According to the Board, the recommendations will allow the Board to maintain operations and address eLicense system enhancements to ensure efficiency of license issuance and renewals and to implement the Counseling Compact and Social Work Compact.

### Executive recommendations by expense category

As a regulatory agency, personal services is the largest expense category of the Board. As seen from the chart below, 83.0% of the executive budget recommendations for the FY 2026-FY 2027 biennium are for personal services, 15.7% are for supplies and maintenance, and the remaining 1.3% are for the other category, which includes purchased personal services and equipment.



### Operating revenues and expenses

All the Board's revenue comes from fees. Fee revenues collected by the Board are deposited into the Occupational Licensing and Regulatory Fund (Fund 4K90). Many occupational licensing and regulatory boards and commissions, including the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board, use Fund 4K90 as an operating account into which receipts are deposited and from which expenses are paid. Each licensing board or commission is generally

expected to be self-sufficient, i.e., generate enough revenues to cover its expenses. The Board's annual revenues and expenditures from FY 2019 through FY 2024 are shown in Table 1.

	FY 2019	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Revenue	\$2,100,909	\$1,886,880	\$2,189,470	\$2,344,603	\$2,333,800	\$2,372,029
Expenses	\$1,475,360	\$1,644,418	\$1,604,186	\$1,814,585	\$1,828,946	\$1,744,266
Net	\$625,549	\$242,462	\$585,284	\$530,018	\$504,854	\$627,763

The Board issues several different types of licenses. Licenses issued by the Board are required to be renewed on a biennial basis. In addition to the regular licenses listed in Table 2, the Board also issues temporary licenses for a fee of \$20 each for certain professions. Temporary licenses may be issued in certain instances. For example, they may be issued to students who have completed the educational requirements for licensure but are awaiting the actual awarding of the degree or licensees who have applied for licensure and are waiting to take a scheduled examination.

License Type	Fee
Independent Social Worker	\$100
Social Worker	\$80
Social Worker Assistant	\$60
Professional Counselor	\$80
Professional Clinical Counselor	\$100
Marriage and Family Therapist	\$80
Independent Marriage and Family Therapist	\$100
Licensed Professional Music Therapist	\$100
Licensed Professional Art Therapist	\$100

## Licensure

To carry out its regulatory responsibility, the Board establishes standards of practice and licenses qualified practitioners of social work, counseling, and marriage and family therapy. The Board began accepting art and music therapist applications on July 3, 2024. As of January 2025, the Board has licensed 386 music therapists and 225 art therapists.

Table 3. Active Licenses by Type, FY 2022-FY 2024

License Type	FY 2022	FY 2023	Percent Change	FY 2024	Percent Change
Social Worker	16,409	16,661	1.5%	17,477	4.9%
Independent Social Worker	9,705	10,499	8.2%	11,455	9.1%
Social Worker Assistant	298	305	2.3%	320	4.9%
Professional Counselor	4,127	4,726	14.5%	4,911	3.9%
Professional Clinical Counselor	7,073	7,720	9.1%	8,664	12.2%
Marriage and Family Therapist	174	207	19.0%	224	8.2%
Independent Marriage and Family Therapist	338	479	41.7%	556	16.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>38,124</b>	<b>40,597</b>	<b>6.5%</b>	<b>43,607</b>	<b>7.4%</b>

The Board utilizes the online eLicensing system, which is administered by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS). Funding for eLicensing comes from Fund 4K90 line item 100673, Professionals Licensing System, which is also under DAS. eLicensing operational costs are not reflected directly in the boards' budgets but are instead directly billed out of this line item. However, a board may still be directly assessed a charge for any unanticipated licensing upgrades or enhancements.

## Investigation and enforcement

The Board's regulatory obligations also include investigating complaints about issues of incompetent, unethical, and impaired practitioners. In FY 2024, the Board opened 473 investigations.

## Continuing education

Each licensee (except social work assistants) must complete 30 continuing education hours during the two-year license cycle. Social work assistants are required to complete at least 15 hours of continuing education.

## FY 2024-FY 2025 updates

S.B. 90 of the 135<sup>th</sup> General Assembly entered Ohio into the Social Work Licensure Compact, which facilitates the interstate practice of regulated social workers. This allows Ohio to issue multistate licenses and recognize multistate licenses issued in other compact states. The Board is anticipating receipt of Counseling Compact privilege applications starting in the second half of 2025. Social Work applications will follow at some later date to be determined.