California Licensure Checklist for Post-Graduate Undocumented Therapists

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The Hours Phase

If you are a therapist pursuing LCSW, LMFT (MFT), LPCC, or LEP licensure in California, use this checklist to track your requirements toward California licensure.

Confirm Your Foundation Before Continuing (More Info)

- ☐ Confirm your Board of Behavioral Sciences (BBS) Associate registration is active and in good standing
  - ☐ Log into BreEZe to verify your ASW, AMFT, or APCC registration status. An expired registration means your hours will not count and your license is inactive.
- ☐ Confirm your SSN/ITIN is on file with BBS
  - *Required for licensure application. If you obtained a new SSN (e.g., via DACA or an adjustment of status), update your BBS record promptly.*
- ☐ Review the Registrant Continuing Education (CE) Requirements and FAQs Document
- ☐ **[Critical]** Confirm your supervisor(s) hold an active CA license and have completed BBS supervisor training
- ☐ Hours under an unqualified supervisor may be disqualified. Verify before accruing further hours. You can verify a license status here.

Accruing & Documenting Supervised Hours

- ☐ Obtain professional liability (malpractice) insurance
- ☐ Maintain a detailed, up-to-date hours log
- ☐ Track direct client hours, supervision hours, setting, population, and date for every entry as you complete them. **Do not log retroactively**.
  - *Suggested Tool: TrackYourHours.com helps track all BBS-eligible hours and generates BBS-approved documents.*
- ☐ Track hours by category (individual, group, telehealth, crisis, etc.) per BBS requirements
  - ***Some license tracks have minimums by category***.
    - ☐ See: *Important Answers to Frequently Asked Questions for Associate Clinical Social Workers*
    - ☐ See: *Important Answers to Frequently Asked Questions for Associate Marriage and Family Therapists and MFT Trainees*
- ☐ Track individual supervision hours separately from group supervision
  - ***BBS has specific ratios for each licensure type—i.e., individual vs. group supervision hours count differently***.
- ☐ Ensure your work setting is BBS-approved for accruing hours
  - ☐ ***Not all settings qualify***. *Confirm with your supervisor or BBS if you change employers or volunteer sites.*

- ☐ Check in with your supervisor regularly to review your hours log together
  - ***Suggestion: Check your documentation and hours log every 1-2 weeks.***
    - *Catching documentation errors early prevents issues at application time.*
- ☐ Know your target hour total and track your progress toward it
  - ☐ ***Goal: 3,000 hours***

Coursework Gaps (If Any Remain)

- ☐ Confirm all required California-specific coursework was completed in your degree program
  - *Topics include human sexuality, spousal/child abuse, aging/long-term care, and others depending on license type.*
- ☐ Complete any missing required courses at a BBS-approved institution
  - *Community colleges and accredited continuing education providers are often the most accessible option.*

Prepare for and Pass the California Law & Ethics Exam

- ☐ Review BBS Law & Ethics study materials and relevant CA BBS codes
  - Recommended prep courses: ***Therapist Development Center***; ***Highpass Education***
- ☐ Schedule and pass the California Law & Ethics exam.
  - ***Law and Ethics Exam FAQs***
  - ☐ Pass or attempt the law and ethics exam prior to renewing your associate license.
  - ☐ Pass the law and ethics exam to become eligible for the state licensure clinical exam.

Apply for Exam Eligibility and Prepare for the Clinical Exam

- ☐ Review your respective licensure handbook:
  - ☐ **LCSW Track Handbook**
  - ☐ **LMFT Track Handbook**
- ☐ Obtain supervisor verification forms and have all supervisors complete and submit them to you
  - ☐ Signed Supervision Agreement
  - ☐ Signed Letter of Verification of Employment as a Volunteer
  - ☐ Signed In-state Experience Verification Form
  - ☐ Signed Weekly Logs of Experience Hours
- ☐ Apply for exam eligibility with BBS once your hours are complete.
  - ☐ Follow and read through the checklist and FAQ for each application type:
    - ☐ **LCSW Application for Licensure**
    - ☐ **LMFT Application for Licensure**
- ☐ Identify the correct clinical exam for your license track

- LCSW: ASWB Clinical Exam
- LMFT: California MFT Clinical Exam

☐ Begin studying for the clinical exam before your hours are complete

- *Overlapping study with your final months of hours reduces overall time to licensure.*
- *Recommended prep courses:*
  - ***Therapist Development Center***
  - ***Highpass Education***

☐ Register for and pass the clinical exam

- *Exam scores are sent directly to BBS by the vendor. Confirm receipt in BreEZe.*

Once You Have Passed the Clinical Exam, Submit the BBS Licensure Application

☐ Review the Application for Initial License Issuance

☐ Complete Live Scan fingerprinting at a BBS-approved site

☐ ***If you already did this for your associate registration, check with BBS if a new scan is required.***

☐ Submit the complete licensure application and pay required fees via BreEZe

☐ *A fee reduction or waiver may be available. Contact BBS to ask.*

☐ **Monitor your BreEZe account for deficiency notices and respond promptly**

☐ *Missing documents or correction requests from BBS will stall your application. Check regularly.*

☐ **[Final step]** Confirm your license has been issued and is active in the BBS public license lookup

- ***Do not practice independently until the license is confirmed active.***

After Licensure

☐ Obtain professional liability (malpractice) insurance before independent practice

◯ *Required before seeing clients without supervision.*

☐ Set up your license renewal calendar (every 2 years)

☐ *Note your renewal date and plan for **36 CE hours, including required topics**.*