

## Continuing Education Requirements for Wisconsin Social Workers

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*For more information from the School  
Social Work Practice Guide visit:  
[http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw\\_sswguide](http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw_sswguide)*

School social work licensure through the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) is necessary for social work practice in Wisconsin public schools. Social work certification or licensure through the Department of Safety and Professional Services (DSPA), formerly the Department of Regulation and Licensing, is necessary for social work practice in Wisconsin community-based settings. Just as these two certifications are separate and distinct, the continuing education requirements for each are as well.

Continuing education requirements for all DPI-licensed educators changed, effective July 2004, through the establishment of PI 34: the Wisconsin Quality Educator Initiative. Equivalency clock hours (ECHs) are now no longer accepted for continuing education requirements. Educators initially certified after July 2004 are required to develop and complete a professional development plan each 5-year cycle. Educators initially certified prior to July 2004 have a choice of continuing education options for certification renewal:

1. Obtain six credits every five years, or
2. Complete the professional development plan.

School social workers may select any courses they feel pertain to school social work practice. More information is available at <http://tepd.dpi.wi.gov/licensing/licensing-application-forms>.

While certification through the DSPA is not necessary for school social work practice, some school social workers choose to be certified (or clinically licensed) through DSPA. Maintenance of this certification is dependent upon obtaining at least 30 hours of continuing education within every two-year certification cycle, which runs from March 1<sup>st</sup> of one odd-numbered year to February 28<sup>th</sup> of the next odd-numbered year (e.g., March 1, 2011, to February 28, 2013).

Acceptable continuing education topics for renewal of certification through DSPA include:

1. Social work practice, knowledge, and skills,
2. A field or subject area allied with and relevant to the practice of social work,
3. Theories and concepts of human behavior and the social environment,
4. Social work research, social policy and program evaluation, or social work practice evaluation,
5. Social policy and program administration or management,
6. Social work ethics,
7. Professional boundaries, and
8. A subject of current importance as designated by the Social Workers Section.

At least four of these hours must be in the area of social work ethics, including professional boundaries.

Documentation of attendance must be maintained by the social worker for at least four years. Evidence of attendance is not required when a social worker applies for certification renewal, but social workers must be prepared to:

1. Demonstrate how each staff development event contributed to their professional development in one or more of the seven areas listed above, and
2. Provide original documents upon request in the event of an audit by DRL.

Social workers may be disciplined for not completing the continuing education requirements.

The DSPS does not pre-approve continuing education programs nor does it provide forms to document attendance.

The National Association of Social Workers-Wisconsin Chapter provides additional guidance on the continuing education requirements for social workers certified or licensed through DSPS at <http://www.naswwi.org/continuing-education>.