



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

State Board of Licensed Social Workers

3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 240

Salem, OR 97302-6310

(503) 378-5735

Fax: (888) 252-1046

[oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov)

[www.oregon.gov/blsw](http://www.oregon.gov/blsw)

June 1, 2024

## Board of Licensed Social Workers (BLSW) Strategic Plan

**BLSW Mission:** The Board of Licensed Social Workers protects Oregonians through the licensing and regulation of Social Workers.

**Executive Director message:** In my message, I want to acknowledge where BLSW was a year ago and where we are today. The goals and strategies below, will explain BLSW's plans for the future. BLSW is currently evolving from embracing the governor's DEI vision through education to implementing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as part of everything we do. BLSW has chosen to include the DEI plan as part of the strategic plan because BLSW's long term strategic vision is to include DEI in everything we do. Customer service is also extremely important to BLSW. I am proud of BLSW's journey from application processing times of more than 6 months, a year ago, to currently 30 days for CSWA applications and 60 days on all others as well as no backlog on Supervision reports and more. BLSW is committed to a sustainable workforce. BLSW has experienced more than our share of change in the 6 months I have been Executive Director. Change management best practice has been essential to maintaining positive morale. BLSW embraces having those that do the work lead the change. As Executive Director, I have implemented regular check-ins and an open-door policy. Also, the use of licensing software has been the key to being great stewards of the public trust. BLSW is using SMART goals with the R (relevant) component originating from feedback from both BLSW staff and the Oregonians we serve. As Executive Director of the Oregon Board of Licensed Social Workers, I applaud the staff for their diligence, commitment and dedication to the Oregonians we serve. Great Job Team!!!

### Improve customer service for Oregonians

#### GOAL #1: Improve Customer service for Oregonians

Background: In June 2023 Oregon's regulated social workers were reporting application processing times of up to 6 months. Legislators were regularly contacting with requests for application updates from those waiting. BLSW had a reputation for lack of response to both



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

State Board of Licensed Social Workers

3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 240

Salem, OR 97302-6310

(503) 378-5735

Fax: (888) 252-1046

[oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov)

[www.oregon.gov/blsw](http://www.oregon.gov/blsw)

telephones and emails. BLSW was understaffed and experienced an unexpected increase in applications. Today, CSWA applications are processed within 30 days with all other applications processed within 60 days. Legislators haven't contacted BLSW for an application status for over 3 months. In April of 2024, BLSW successfully engaged in proactive communications to Oregon's regulated Social Workers. This communication helps social workers understand the licensure / certificate process and results in an easier path to licensure.

**Strategy:** Reduce all application processing times to 15 days or less.

Currently, BLSW is experiencing more work than the staff can manage. BLSW is in the process of hiring 2 limited duration (LD) OS2's to match current demand. BLSW will also implement specific Key Performance Measures as these additional staff members balance the current workload.

**Strategy:** 24-hour response to voicemails.

Currently BLSW's voicemail response time is more than 24 hours due to lack of staff to meet the current demand. BLSW will assign 1 of the Limited Duration OS2's to answer phones half time.

**Strategy:** 3-day response to emails.

Currently BLSW's email response time is more than 3 days. BLSW will assign 1 of the limited duration OS2's to reply to emails half time.

**Strategy:** Immediate communication when systemic issues discovered.

BLSW discovered, through data collection, that licensees were frequently having difficulty navigating the license / certification process. BLSW recently implemented a very successful infrequent email campaign in which BLSW identifies, through data collection, parts of the licensing process causing social workers difficulty. BLSW sends out infrequent emails to social workers which informs them how to correctly navigate these difficulties along with best practices.

BLSW will proactively communicate with Social Workers to determine what information is most useful and continue to email tips and best practices to make the licensing / certification process easier for social workers.



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

State Board of Licensed Social Workers

3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 240

Salem, OR 97302-6310

(503) 378-5735

Fax: (888) 252-1046

[oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov)

[www.oregon.gov/blsw](http://www.oregon.gov/blsw)

## Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

### GOAL #2: Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Oregon's shared prosperity is determined by how well every community and every resident does. We are all interconnected meaning the success of the State of Oregon is determined by the success of every community and resident. Oregon's collective prosperity suffers when any resident is excluded.

BLSW is moving toward the governor's vision of embedding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in all we do. From proactively reaching out to underrepresented communities to encourage participation in job announcements and Board openings to creating alternate paths to licensure designed to be inclusive of underrepresented communities.

Our historically and currently underserved and under-resourced communities, include Oregonians who identify as:

- Native American, members of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes, American Indian, Alaska Natives
- Black, African, African American
- Latina, Latino, Latinx, Hispanic
- Asian
- Pacific Islander (including Compact of Free Association Citizens)
- Immigrants, Refugees, Asylum-Seekers, Deferred Status Holders, Temporary Protected Status
- Undocumented, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), "Dreamers," Non-Immigrant Visa Holders
- Linguistically diverse, English language learners (ELL)
- Economically Disadvantaged
- People with disabilities
- LGBTQIA2S+
- Farmworkers, Migrant Seasonal Workers

### Definitions:



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

State Board of Licensed Social Workers

3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 240

Salem, OR 97302-6310

(503) 378-5735

Fax: (888) 252-1046

[oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov)

[www.oregon.gov/blsw](http://www.oregon.gov/blsw)

**Racial Equity** means closing the gaps so that race can no longer predict any person's success, which simultaneously improves outcomes for all. To achieve racial equity, we must transform our institutions and structures to create systems that provide the infrastructure for communities to thrive equally. This commitment requires a paradigm shift on our path to recovery through the intentional integration of racial equity in every decision.

**Diversity** means honoring and including people of different backgrounds, identities, and experiences collectively and as individuals. It emphasizes the need for sharing power and increasing representation of communities that are systemically underrepresented and under-resourced. These differences are strengths that maximize the state's competitive advantage through innovation, effectiveness, and adaptability.

**Equity** acknowledges that not all people, or all communities, are starting from the same place due to historic and current systems of oppression. Equity is the effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs in order to achieve fairness in outcomes. Equity actionably empowers communities most impacted by systemic oppression and requires the redistribution of resources, power, and opportunity to those communities.

**Inclusion** is a state of belonging when persons of different backgrounds, experiences, and identities are valued, integrated, and welcomed equitably as decision-makers, collaborators, and colleagues. Ultimately, inclusion is the environment that organizations create to allow these differences to thrive.

**Strategy:** Alternate path to licensure

BLSW has discovered that the current path to licensure was developed without a focus on Equity. BLSW has created an alternate path to licensure subcommittee which expects to deliver recommendations to BLSW which will create a more equitable alternate path to licensure for Oregon's underrepresented Communities.

**Strategy:** Targeting recruiting for representation of underrepresented communities.

Currently, BLSW send recruitments to advocates of underrepresented communities as part of our recruiting process. Most recently BLSW sent job announcements for an OS2 position to the NAACP, Black Therapist & Company, IMAGINE BLACK, the Oregon Community Foundation, and



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

State Board of Licensed Social Workers

3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 240

Salem, OR 97302-6310

(503) 378-5735

Fax: (888) 252-1046

[oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov)

[www.oregon.gov/blsw](http://www.oregon.gov/blsw)

the Association of Black Social Workers. BLSW also made sure that the announcement was open over the weekend as that is when underrepresented communities frequently look for jobs.

BLSW also consulted with community members on the wording of the recruitment to be inclusive. Vidcruiter is viewed as negative among most candidates of color because it allows the employer to see one's diversity and allows for possible bias. In this recruitment, vidcruiter was used, but to create a more inclusive experience, I worked with HR recruiting to make a video of myself, as an African American Executive Director, with a DEI message of inclusivity to be viewed before the interview.

BLSW will continue to evolve its efforts to increase the percentage of applicants from underrepresented communities that apply for BLSW positions.

**Strategy:** Targeted recruiting for BLSW board members from underrepresented communities.

BLSW has reached out to underrepresented communities to apply for the 2 open Board position we currently have open. BLSW will continue to proactively contact advocates for underrepresented communities to solicit applications for possible open positions.

**Strategy:** Engage the board with DEIB education

BLSW plans to present DEI presentations at each Board meeting.

## Performance Feedback for Employees

### GOAL #3: Performance Feedback for Employees

As Executive Director, I have implemented regular staff check ins, an open-door policy and staff driven process improvements. I have also implemented monthly 1 on 1's with staff designed to improving morale and for me to receive feedback as part of a healthy change management process. These combined actions are designed to move the BLSW team towards quarterly performance feedback which will be implemented this quarter.

**Strategy:** Implemented quarterly performance feedback



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

State Board of Licensed Social Workers

3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 240

Salem, OR 97302-6310

(503) 378-5735

Fax: (888) 252-1046

[oregon.bls@blsw.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.bls@blsw.oregon.gov)

[www.oregon.gov/blsw](http://www.oregon.gov/blsw)

As a new Executive Director, I have implemented change management best practices and have had regular check-ins with BLSW staff. To continue this progression, BLSW will begin quarterly performance feedback this quarter.

## Performance Reviews for Agency Directors

### GOAL #4: Performance Reviews for Agency Directors

As a recently hired agency director, I will be working with DAS for compliance.

**Strategy:** Contact DAS to start Director Performance Reviews.

As a new agency director, I will contact DAS to start my Director Performance Reviews.

## Managing Information Technology

### GOAL #5: Managing Information Technology

Currently BLSW's licensing solution is experiencing multiple inefficiencies which result in valuable staff time spent on rework. BLSW is planning an upgrade that will more closely align with BLSW's need for licensing software that better serves our customers. BLSW is also planning to update our website to improve communication with Oregon's regulated Social Workers and further streamline the licensure / certificate process.

**Strategy:** Upgrade from current licensing system.

BLSW needs a new licensing system which will complement the efficiencies we have implemented. BLSW will be working with the Chief Financial Office, the Legislative Fiscal Office and the Legislature for funding to support a more robust licensing system.

**Strategy:** Revise the BLSW website.



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

**State Board of Licensed Social Workers**

3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 240

Salem, OR 97302-6310

(503) 378-5735

Fax: (888) 252-1046

[oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov)

[www.oregon.gov/blsw](http://www.oregon.gov/blsw)

It has been reported to BLSW by social workers that they find it difficult to find and use information specific to licensing and the licensing process on the BLSW website. BLSW plans to revise the information on the website to make it more organized and easier to follow. BLSW plans to start this activity in January 2025 and complete the project by July 2025.

## Agency planning

### GOAL #6: Agency planning

BLSW has experienced an almost doubling of licensed social workers the Board serves to over 8500 regulated social workers with no increase in staff. Licensing software has helped, but the work still outpaces the current staff's ability to keep up. This past legislative session, BLSW asked for and was granted an expenditure increase to hire 2 full time1 year limited duration positions. To continue BLSW's customer service goals, BLSW will need one more full time permanent OS2 staff member.

**Strategy:** Match BLSW staff to current workload

BLSW currently has more work than staff capacity and a backlog of work. The legislature approved an expenditure increase to hire 2 full time1 year limited duration positions. BLSW is in the process of hiring 1 of the OS2's and will hire the other by 7/1/25. These OS2's will match the current workload and work through BLSW's backlog.

BLSW plans to request 1 full time permanent OS2 in the next legislative session to match current workload to be hired sometime in the next biennium.

## Community engagement

### GOAL #7: Community engagement

BLSW regularly seeks to engage community to partner with BLSW current and future processes. BLSW has engaged the Association of Black Social Workers and regularly communicates with the National Association of Social Workers (NASW). In addition, as Executive Director, I regularly solicit feedback from Oregon's regulated Social Workers. From feedback on any possible legislation or process changes to regular updates on how BLSW is serving Oregonians.



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

State Board of Licensed Social Workers

3218 Pringle Road SE, Suite 240

Salem, OR 97302-6310

(503) 378-5735

Fax: (888) 252-1046

[oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov](mailto:oregon.blsw@blsw.oregon.gov)

[www.oregon.gov/blsw](http://www.oregon.gov/blsw)

**Strategy:** Implement community engagement feedback into BLSW daily operations and Board decisions.

BLSW will proactively reach out to community for feedback and will update this strategic plan after receiving community feedback.

**Strategy:** Implement community engagement feedback into BLSW daily operations and Board decisions.

BLSW will proactively reach out to community for feedback and will update this strategic plan after receiving community feedback.

Sincerely,

Raymond Miller  
Executive Director  
Oregon BLSW