



# Virginia Department of Planning and Budget **Economic Impact Analysis**

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**18 VAC 140-20 Regulations Governing the Practice of Social Work**  
**Department of Health Professions**  
**Town Hall Action/Stage: 6370 / 10512**  
March 16, 2026

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The Department of Planning and Budget (DPB) has analyzed the economic impact of this proposed regulation in accordance with § 2.2-4007.04 of the Code of Virginia (Code) and Executive Order 19. The analysis presented below represents DPB’s best estimate of the potential economic impacts as of the date of this analysis.<sup>1</sup>

## **Summary of the Proposed Amendments to Regulation**

The Board of Social Work (Board) proposes to add to the regulation: 1) that “[licensed baccalaureate social workers] LBSWs and [licensed master's social workers] LMSWs may practice generalist social work,” and a definition of generalist social work.

## **Background**

According to the Department of Health Professions (DHP), the proposed amendments are for clarification in response to questions from the Office of the Attorney General. The proposed definition of generalist social work is:

... non-clinical practice at the case management level which involves engaging, assessing, intervening, evaluating, supporting, educating, and organizing with and on behalf of individuals, families, and collections of people. Work may include case management services with individuals, families, and groups, community development, organizational development, and evaluation to ensure that services are useful, effective, and ethical.

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<sup>1</sup> Code § 2.2-4007.04 requires that such economic impact analyses determine the public benefits and costs of the proposed amendments. Further the analysis should include but not be limited to: (1) the projected number of businesses or other entities to whom the proposed regulatory action would apply, (2) the identity of any localities and types of businesses or other entities particularly affected, (3) the projected number of persons and employment positions to be affected, (4) the projected costs to affected businesses or entities to implement or comply with the regulation, and (5) the impact on the use and value of private property.

## Estimated Benefits and Costs

DHP does not believe that the proposed clarifying language would have a substantive impact on the work performed by social workers. To the extent that the proposed language reduces confusion among readers of the regulation, it would be beneficial.

## Businesses and Other Entities Affected

The proposed amendments concern the 73 LBSWs, and 1,552 LMSWs in the Commonwealth as well as readers of the regulation.<sup>2</sup>

The Code requires DPB to assess whether an adverse impact may result from the proposed regulation.<sup>3</sup> An adverse impact is indicated if there is any increase in net cost or reduction in net benefit for any entity, even if the benefits exceed the costs for all entities combined.<sup>4</sup> As there would be no increase in net cost or reduction in net benefit for any entity, no adverse impact is indicated.

## Small Businesses<sup>5</sup> Affected:<sup>6</sup>

The proposed amendments do not adversely affect small businesses.

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<sup>2</sup> Data as of December 31, 2025. Source:

<https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/about/stats/2026Q2/04CurrentLicenseCountQ2FY2026.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Pursuant to Code § 2.2-4007.04(D): In the event this economic impact analysis reveals that the proposed regulation would have an adverse economic impact on businesses or would impose a significant adverse economic impact on a locality, business, or entity particularly affected, the Department of Planning and Budget shall advise the Joint Commission on Administrative Rules, the House Committee on Appropriations, and the Senate Committee on Finance.

<sup>4</sup> Statute does not define “adverse impact,” state whether only Virginia entities should be considered, nor indicate whether an adverse impact results from regulatory requirements mandated by legislation. As a result, DPB has adopted a definition of adverse impact that assesses changes in net costs and benefits for each affected Virginia entity that directly results from discretionary changes to the regulation.

<sup>5</sup> Pursuant to § 2.2-4007.04 of the Code of Virginia, small business is defined as “a business entity, including its affiliates, that (i) is independently owned and operated and (ii) employs fewer than 500 full-time employees or has gross annual sales of less than \$6 million.”

<sup>6</sup> If the proposed regulatory action may have an adverse effect on small businesses, Code § 2.2-4007.04 requires that such economic impact analyses include: (1) an identification and estimate of the number of small businesses subject to the proposed regulation, (2) the projected reporting, recordkeeping, and other administrative costs required for small businesses to comply with the proposed regulation, including the type of professional skills necessary for preparing required reports and other documents, (3) a statement of the probable effect of the proposed regulation on affected small businesses, and (4) a description of any less intrusive or less costly alternative methods of achieving the purpose of the proposed regulation. Additionally, pursuant to Code § 2.2-4007.1, if there is a finding that a proposed regulation may have an adverse impact on small business, the Joint Commission on Administrative Rules shall be notified.

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**Localities<sup>7</sup> Affected<sup>8</sup>**

The proposed amendments neither disproportionately affect any particular locality, nor affect costs for local governments.

**Projected Impact on Employment**

The proposed amendments do not substantively affect employment.

**Effects on the Use and Value of Private Property**

The proposed amendments neither substantively affect the use and value of private property, nor affect costs related to the development of real estate.

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<sup>7</sup> “Locality” can refer to either local governments or the locations in the Commonwealth where the activities relevant to the regulatory change are most likely to occur.

<sup>8</sup> § 2.2-4007.04 defines “particularly affected” as bearing disproportionate material impact.